

On government performance management development strategies based on E-government

LI Ping¹, GAO Ming-ming²

(1. Law School, Shantou University, Shantou 515063, China;

2. Zhongshan Radio and Television College, Zhongshan 528400, China)

Abstract: Both E-government and performance management are important tools for government reform. They have a lot in common. How to integrate their development is crucial. This article will give a brief description of our government status quo of performance management combining with the support of E-government to government performance management, and discuss on three strategies of government performance management development based on E-government, which are customer-driven strategy, information-sharing strategy and team-making strategy. We can apply these three strategies to effectively support government performance management development.

Key words: E-government; performance management; strategy

1. Government performance management overview

Simply from the pure view of linguistics, performance contains achievement and benefit; from the view of management science, it is the result from organization expectation, and is the organization effective output in different levels for achieving its goal; in the area of economic management activity, it refers to the result and effect of social economic management activities; in the area of human resource, it refers to the ratio of input and output from subject behavior or result; if it is used in public sectors to measure the effect of government activities, it includes multi-goal.

Generally accepted, performance contains economy, efficiency and effectiveness, that is the “3E”. Economy refers to the minimum degree of input cost; efficiency refers to the ratio of input and output; and effectiveness means the contribution of the output to finally achieve the organizational goal. Since new public administration, equality problem has been attached more importance and become the important index to measure government performance. It is called “4E” together with the “3E” mentioned before. Therefore, government performance refers to government’s result, effectiveness in its social and economic management activities and efficiency of its management job; it is the government’s managing competence in the course of exercising its functions and realizing its purpose; it contains four aspects which include: political performance, economic performance, cultural performance and social performance.^[1] The complexity of government’s functions and diversity of civil benefits decide that government performance is a goal system containing multi-index.

So what is the performance management? Performance measurement study team of American national performance evaluation has made a classical definition of performance management. The so-called performance management is “using performance information to assist in making consentient performance index, make arrange

LI Ping (1952-), female, professor, LLM, director of Local Government Development Research Institution, Shantou University, Guangdong Provincial Key Bases of Humanities and Social Science, Vice-principal of Law School, Shantou University; research fields: governance and E-government.

GAO Ming-ming (1982-), male, Master, teaching assistant, Zhongshan Radio and Television College; research fields: E-government and public policy.

for preferential gradation of the distribution of resources, tell the manager to maintain or change the set of goal or plan and report the managing process which is successful in accordance with the goal.” The so-called government performance management is the whole name of a series of activities of using scientific methods, standards and procedures to set down the government’s forward goal and near future goal, the strategy to achieve its goal and the criterion to evaluate its performance, consequently managing and evaluating the operation of administrative organization.^[2] In short, it is to set and carry out the plan or goal of government public service and management, and to make a systematic evaluation on the achieved outcome.

Government performance management has the typical character of process and systematization: government performance management is a sequential process containing some links of management activities. Performance appraisal is just a link among government performance management, and a whole government performance management runs through the planning, implementing, evaluating and so on in the process of government management. We can understand government performance management from these three aspects of the macro level, medium level and micro level. It includes cognizance of work achievement and contribution of government staff; management evaluation of each government branch and particular government organization; performance appraisal of the whole government.

2. Current problems in Chinese government performance management

Though Chinese government performance management has made some achievement, currently there are still a series of remarkable problems. It can be summed up as follows:

(1) Neglect of leading modern administrative logos in

Some local governments regard performance management just as pure management tool, and their value orientation of performance management still bases on previous administrative pattern, lacking of exploration and exertion of logos and methods contained in government performance management such as result oriented, customer oriented, responsibility mechanism, power-sharing management, democratic management and so on. Performance management utility is hard to exert effectively.^[3]

(2) Trend to equate performance management and performance appraisal

Some government sectors will associate with performance appraisal habitually on mentioning performance management, or they will simply equate performance management and various grade table, work report and so on, and very few of them will regard it as a kind of continuous and systematical manage flow. In fact, performance management includes stages of performance plan, performance monitoring, performance assessment, performance feedback, performance stimulation, performance development and so on. Whether for performance appraisal or performance assessment, they are just one stage of performance management.

(3) Paying more importance to individual performance than team performance

The purport of government performance management is to achieve government’s strategy and goal by means of achieving individual goal to promote government’s entire goal. However, in fact the managers always put the cart before the horse. The year-end assessment content in some governments is mostly individual assessment, and very little or even none assessment of sector and government’s entire performance.

(4) Still lack of public participation

Chinese government performance appraisal subject is comparatively singular, which is still in the government range, whether for assessment of subordinates by superiors, assessment between colleagues or self-assessment. It is obvious that if the public, as the object of this government action, don’t participate in it

widely, performance appraisal is hard to be objective and accurate.

3. The support of E-government to government performance management development

The so-called E-government is application of modern electronic information technology and management theory to continuously innovate and improve traditional government affairs so as to achieve efficient government management and service.^[4] Developing E-government has become the important means to enhance government management and service competence and civil satisfaction, and thus government performance management development can't break away from this brand-new environment either. In fact, among four e-government's applying area of G2C (Government-Citizen), G2B (Government-Business), G2G (Government- Government) and G2E (Government- Employee), G2E contains the application of government performance management.

More important, E-government performs important supporting function in government performance management, which is reflected in three levels:

(1) Firstly, E-government supports government performance management in logos. The logos E-government emphasizes, like Customer-oriented, Project-Based, One-stop Service, Seamless Government, Democracy and Fairness, High Response and so on, can be and should be lead into government performance management process without exception to reform the lack of modern public administration logos for traditional performance management. "And E-government, supported by information technology, achieves information sharing in larger scale so as to implement the democratic administration idea. The new flow of administration on Internet is a powerful weapon for government to keep pace with the times and face all kinds of challenges".^[5]

(2) Secondly, E-government supports government performance management in method. The methods like project management, information resources management, cooperating work and so on are widely used in the process of E-government constructing and operating, and these instrumental methods can also be transplanted into government performance management.

(3) Finally, E-government supports government performance management in technology. The technology mentioned here specially refers to network information technology. Applying these technologies surely can make government performance management more convenient, more effective, with wider application and more public participation.

In order to get out of difficulties, they should try hard to search for a strategy to improve government performance management. Three supporting functions mentioned above make government performance management development by dint of e-government development to be possible and also a necessary means.

4. Three strategies of government performance management development based on E-government

E-government is a brand-new carrier for government performance management reform. When we are considering how to choose the strategies for government performance management development, we must combine fully with the E-government characters to achieve the integration of E-government and performance management. I think government performance management development base on E-government can follow three strategies below:

(1) Customer-driven strategy

As we know, government performance management contains three processes of setting down performance goal and plan, implementing performance plan and performance appraisal. Customer-driven is a core logos in new public management movement. One principle of the "Enterpriser Government" pattern Osborne and Gabler put

forward is the government driven by customers: to satisfy the need of the customers but not bureaucracy politics. As a core value to distinguish E-government from traditional government, customer-driven has important guidance on government performance management. Customer-driven strategy requires that in the whole process of performance management government must keep in close and full touch with the public all the time.

In the process of setting down performance goal, government should communicate with customers and the public at first to make the public needs and wishes clear, so that the performance goal can receive their recognition and support. As the public representative and official executor, government must consider the public opinion fully before making plan and widely set up the institutional channel to accept interest expression. In the process of implementing performance plan, government must keep in dynamic and continuous touch with the public, betimes know the information and feedback the public send, and make timely and effective response to the public feedback. Government performance appraisal must attach importance to public satisfaction. A good performance appraisal index includes not only the “3E” (Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness) quantitative index each country generally use now, but also a series of qualitative indexes like fairness, democracy, service quality, public satisfaction and so on.^[6]

E-government not only supports government performance management in logos to apply customer-driven strategy, but also supports it in feasible technologies. All-directional information technology like telephone, mobile communication, Internet, digital TV, calling center makes it simple and easy for government to know the public needs timely and widely. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in E-government even provides the tool for government to analyze public behavior and know their needs, which helps to develop individuation relation between public and government and makes government design and provide specific service mode and service content according to different conditions, to create particular service experiment for the public.

(2) Information-sharing strategy

Effective communication between government and the public must base on information-sharing. Performance appraisal as the core link in the process of government performance management, its key element is performance information. Government performance information generally refers to all information government produces, collects, collates, transmits, issues, uses, stores and clears.^[7] Performance information includes object information reflecting the aspects of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and so on in government activities and also subject information reflecting the aspects of public satisfaction and so on. Modern government performance management attaches more and more importance to subject information collecting and analyzing, and it is required that subject information not only is as rich and multivariate as possible, but also it can reflect the real condition of performance appraisal objects as accurately as possible. It is obvious that only opening real information of government affairs fully and safeguarding civil right to know can insure that the public give an objective judgment to appraisal objects. If we want to achieve government performance information resource sharing, we must set up a technical platform for government performance information resource sharing based on developing government information resource and government performance information resource. It is noticeable that performance information sharing includes not only government outward information sharing and opening, but also government internal information sharing.

Performance information of each government sector is inputted into information database according to certain rules, and each sector is permitted to access information data with one another according to different rights. As the government performance management hinge, performance appraisal sector not only can pick up information data of each sector at will, but also can concentrate and abstract government performance information resource by means of e-government technique, and provide wrought high-quality information pith for the public

and relevant objects so as to make up for the flaw of tangled and complicated government affairs information resource after they are collected respectively. It also can synthesize and sum up information resource by means of e-government technique to provide systematized and specialized performance information for the public.

(3) Team-making strategy

Traditional performance management overemphasizes individual performance and always ignores the great importance of team performance and organization performance. Traditional government affairs adopt function-oriented mode, in which each sector has well defined division of work and clear power and responsibility, and they act strictly according to authority scope ruled in advance by reason. But E-government adopts the completely different logic—project-oriented, which in fact is task-oriented. The so-called task in public service area refers to every specific undone affair from the public. Project-oriented means government sectors regard projects as the same with every task. Government sectors exist as the institution responding to the task. Project-oriented emphasizes team cooperation, which means that “sector” concept diminishes to certain extent but “team” concept is emphasized. The team is a workgroup to finish specific task, which can be the union of several personnel in the same sector, or the union of horizontal trans-sectors or vertical trans-levels sectors and personnel, and cooperating work is emphasized in the team and between teams. Based on e-government, performance management needs to pay more attention to team performance whose basic unit is task team and form overall performance management mode to drive individual performance by team performance. It radically avoids personnel’s neglecting overall situation for highlighting individual performance which has happened in single individual performance management, and also prevents from neglecting individual value, ability and developing potential for overemphasizing team performance. The management operation to drive individual performance by team performance should follow a settled flow, which is at first to determinate the dimensionality for performance appraisal in team level and individual level, and then to divide weighted proportion of team performance and individual performance, next to separate the key elements of assessment based on this, finally to consider how to weigh these elements by specific assessment indexes.

The application of three strategies discussed above runs through the whole process of government performance management and accords with the developing rule of E-government. Leading customer-driven strategy in can insure government performance management in accordance with modern administrative value and direction; leading information-sharing strategy in can effectively and really support government performance management especially performance appraisal; leading team-making strategy in can not only accord with e-government working mode, but also effectively enhance communication and cooperation among government, individuals and sectors, so as to enhance government performance.

References:

- [1] ZHUO Yue. (2004). Initial research on public sector performance appraisal. *China Administration*, (2).
- [2] XUE Jie. (2007). Simple discussion of our government performance management. *Accountant Friend*, 14.
- [3] CAO Hui-yong, NIE Hai-yan. (2007). *Status Quo of our government performance management and its countermeasure research*, Heihe Press.
- [4] XU Xiao-ling, YANG Lan-rong. (2007). *E-government introduction*. Wuhan Press, 19.
- [5] WANG Yu-kai. (2006). *E-government in China—Logos-strategy and process*. National Administrative College Press.
- [6] LI Na-jun. (2006). E-government: Government performance communication channels research. *Present Manager*, 5.
- [7] YAN Jia-hua, etc. (2005). *Public policy research—Explanation in cultural sight*. Changsha: Hunan People Press.

(Edited by Lily and Frank)