

## Government E-Services In Algeria Between Reality And Improvement

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### Abstract:

This study aims to shed light on the role of e-services as a new pattern to improve the quality of public services provided to citizens, owners of companies, and to realize the importance of the success of e-government implementation projects in the development of government e-services provided.

Most importantly, states that have developed their government E-services, have had a great efforts and that have a positive impact on the improvement of public services provided to citizens and the ease of doing business by owners of companies, unlike Algeria which still ranks late in this field.

**Keywords:** e-government; government e-services; public administration; citizens; owners of companies.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The information technology revolution that happened in the 21st century has caused a tremendous development in the means, technologies and devices of communication. Furthermore, it impacted various activities in the field of public administration which created the beginning of the gradual transition from basic activities to electronic activities. In addition to that, it marked the development of all businesses in government departments, by simplifying and transferring them qualitatively from traditional, usual and stereotypical methods to electronic and technical methods using information systems and communication networks such as the Internet and intra-net.

On the same line of thought, this development has called for an introduction of information technologies into government work by adopting e-government projects within the general perception of linking citizens with various government agencies in order to provide government information and services of various kinds automatically through the government's website. The use of communication and information network applications programs through their websites to improve performance, increase the speed and effectiveness of implementation, and reduce the costs and expenses of government services and activities.

The e-government is an ideal means for governments for the reason that it enables them to take care of the interests of their citizens, including individuals and institutions, using advanced technology without the need for service applicants to move between government departments, and instead they can complete transactions between government departments electronically, as stated in the definition of the World Bank In 2005 for e-government: « it is the process of institutions using information technology (such as Internet networks, the broad information network), which has the ability to change and transform

relations with citizens from access to information, which provides more transparency and more efficient management of institutions ».(zaki,2009,p.19) .

This opens up equal opportunities for everyone to benefit from the information and services that are provided through fast methods such as e-mail.

The governments of developed and developing states are currently in the race to experiment with building an e-government system, as this concept formed the focus of the strategy for promoting governmental and non-governmental work in various states of the world.which means "preparing for greater and faster interactions with citizens and ensure better knowledge management" (OECD, 2001, p. 19). ,and it also means « The process of changing and transforming relationships from institutions and citizens through information technology, with the aim of providing the best for citizens and enabling them to access information, which provides more transparency, reduces corruption, maximizes returns and reduces expenses ».(alhosh,2006,p.27)

At the level of Arab governments, they mostly focused their efforts on providing all the necessary ingredients, whether at the level of infrastructure requirements or qualifying national responsables capable of introducing advanced technology, in addition to discussing ways to use its applications in various state agencies and institutions. The first country that achieved the highest rank at the Arab level is Bahrain, followed by the United Arab Emirates in second place, then Kuwait in third place, followed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman...

Algeria's experience on the other hand, was known as part of its adoption of the effort to build an e-government system based on Some reforms that included the telecommunications sector and the modernization of government administration, which was immediately followed by the "Electronic Algeria Project" initiative and its establishment of government websites in order to improve the provided public services and bring citizens closer to the administration.

### **The statement of the problem**

The states that have the tendency towards adopting the e-government system in order to improve their government performance, focus on improving the investment climate and raising the social level of individuals within their framework which depends on the quality of government e-services. In this article, we sought to reveal the results of e-government implementation in Algeria, and the stages to which it has reached compared to some Arab and foreign states. On this basis, the following main problem arises: What is the reality of electronic services in Algeria in light of the efforts to implement the e-government system? And what are the lessons learned from international experiences that can be used in this regard? To answer these questions, we will discuss the following topics.

## **2. Experiences Of Foreign states In the application of E-Government**

### **2.1 ranking of states by the e-government development index**

The classification of states in this field is based on the e-government index and its sub-indicators, which are often relied upon to measure the levels of achievement made by those states. In addition to that, it is also used to assess the development in any member state during a specific period. (Abebe & others,2011,p1-3 )

According to the e-government development indicators, there was a group of pioneering states in this field, most notably South Korea, Australia, and Singapore, which greatly developed their e-government services. Among the outstanding results achieved by the increase in the ease of doing business index, which reflects the significant improvement in the business climate in these states, It should be noted that the improvement and development of government e-services is linked to the extent of readiness and development of the e-government system, as stated in some literary studies in this regard by reducing the administrative burdens that hinder the citizen and the owners of companies.

**Table 1.** development of electronic services in pilot countries for the period 2012-2018.

World rankings of the Ease of Doing Business Index 2018	Government e-services index				Country
	2018	2016	2014	2012	
03	1,000	0,7754	0,6614	0,8562	<b>Denmark</b>
14	0,9722	0,9783	0,9291	0,8627	<b>Australia</b>
04	0,9792	0,9420	0,9764	1,00	<b>South Korea</b>
07	0,9792	1,00	0,89760	0,9739	<b>England</b>
10	0,9444	0,87680	0,7008	0,8431	<b>Sweden</b>
13	0,9653	0,9420	0,77170	0,8824	<b>Finland</b>
02	0,9861	0,9710	0,9921	1,00	<b>Singapore</b>
01	0,9861	0,9420	0,8425	0,7843	<b>New Zealand</b>
31	0,9792	0,9420	1,00	0,8758	<b>France</b>
34	0,9514	0,8768	0,9449	0,8627	<b>Japan</b>

**Source:** International Organization Data on e-government (2012-2018)

Based on the previous table, it is notably evident that all the leading countries have made great progress in developing their public electronic services provided through the Internet continuously in recent years, which has had a positive impact on the improvement of the business environment, especially for developing countries, such as Singapore, which has recorded very advanced levels throughout the mentioned period, with an index of 0.9873%

on average which made rank as the second country in the world in terms of ease of doing business. Furthermore, it developed its e-government services in 2015 by launching a new service called "Corpass" which is said to enable owners of institutions and other organizations to use one digital identity for the company instead of multiple registration identities for the purpose of conducting e-government transactions instead of the Singpass service that is used only for personal transactions. Through the "Corpass portal", the service of using login IDs has become easier, safer and more dependent on the licensing system for electronic services issued by government agencies using a single digital ID number for local official bodies, organizations, and companies. Consequently, a foreigner who wants to access government e-services directed to business enterprises, and the management of more than 200 government e-services by 60 government agencies requires the completion of the login process by (Corpass). (Today Online,2016,p1)

South Korea, as well, with an average of 97.44%, had ranked fourth in the world in terms of worker practice, then Australia and New Zealand.

## **2.2 Successful International Experiences In The Application Of E-Government**

Developed countries have made advanced steps by relying mainly on strong leadership in undertaking the construction and implementation of policies and strategies developed for the e-government system. These advanced steps are based on the educational, cultural and service level of the members of their societies. In light of these advantages and components acquired by leading countries in the field of e-government, which enabled them to achieve the highest ranks and best results, we can consider them as examples of successful experiences in the course of implementing e-government.

### 2.2.1 The experience of Australia

The first signs of adopting an e-government strategy in Australia appeared in December 1997. The Australian government held its first ministerial meeting on the necessity to provide all priority services on the Internet. In December 2001, about 90% of the Australian government departments started going online. This made it rank among the four leading countries in the field of using electronic commerce to provide government services in 2002.

After the period between 2004-2005, the e-government initiative noticed some obstacles and challenges that were immediately studied and evaluated by the Australian National Audit Office, which concluded with a set of important results, namely:

The disruption of the level of ensuring cybersecurity within Australian government departments and agencies, in terms of managing and handling errors assessed. (Australian National Audit Office, 2003, p28-33 )

- Despite the multitude of methods used by government agencies to collect information and improve the electronic services of their websites; however, they found it difficult to determine the costs of running the websites, whether by relying on a cost-benefit analysis method, or on determining productivity gains, or on investment returns.
- Most government agencies have not developed effective measurement methods in order to determine whether the site was designed in an efficient way or not to provide government services. (Australian National Audit Office, 2004, p18-19 )
- The inability of government agencies to determine the results that can be achieved from investing in e-government, in terms of reducing costs and achieving high efficiency. (Australian National Audit Office, 2005, p4-6 )

It should be noted that the e-government authority who are responsible for leading and implementing e-government projects adopted the electronic authentication system in 2003 in order to achieve the following goals: (Australian National Audit Office, 2009, p2 )

- Achieving best practices, raising levels of electronic security, and increasing the number of e-government exchanges.
- Facilitating the process of coherence used in the methods of interaction between government agencies in the field of electronic certification.

The E-Government authority in Australia has also worked on strengthening its capabilities regarding communications infrastructure, through its adoption of the “cloud computing” model. In other words, the intensification of computing mechanisms followed by the United States of America, which is a model that enables the demand to access the network everywhere, with the participation of All operating computing resources (networks, servers, storage, applications and services ...) which can be provided quickly and with less effort in managing, or interacting with service providers. On the same line of thought, this had provided the opportunity for the government to provide services more efficiently (www.finance.gov.au,2014,p8), and resulted in an increase in the communications infrastructure and government e-services index by 0.7646 and 0.9783 in 2016, after it was estimated 0.7098 and 0.9038 in 2005 respectively. With regard to the human capital index, it remained at its best levels during the period 2005-2016, at the rate of "0.9900" and "1.000", respectively, and the development of the level of the e-government index, which achieved its best level during the year 2016 at a rate of 0.9143 by comparison to previous years. (united nations survey,2016,p154)

### **2.2.2 Singapore 's experience**

The government of Singapore had taken its first steps in the field of e-government since during the year 2000. It worked to develop an action plan aimed at computerizing all its government agencies and departments, by providing 1,600 keys for public services related to the electronic services provided. This program was also followed by another plan for e-government work from 2003 to 2006, which was established in order to support the strategy

of its first scheme, as it focused on increasing government network interconnection, achieving customer satisfaction and communicating with citizens.

The government of Singapore has also continued its efforts in the field of e-government by undertaking the implementation of another plan for the period of 2006-2010, where a future strategy has been put with the aim to create a competitive environment with regard to the partnership between public and private companies in renewing projects, and developing the capabilities of the private sector, especially in the field of information and communication technology. (iGov,2010,p.21)

In 2007, the authority in charge of implementing e-government projects increased its investments in the communications infrastructure in the public sector, with the industry's contribution to developing modern information and communication technology solutions, in addition to Singapore's participation in cooperation forums and exchange of experiences on e-government at the international level. On the same line of thought, other countries shared the same experience of e-government as in Singapore, including the Arab Gulf states, by working with companies working in the field of information technology and communication in Singapore, they also gained great experience in the field of developing e-government solutions.( Lark Yang,2007,p.15)

In light of technological developments and the increasing complexities in the government's work environment, and the emergence of some external pressures and forces, the Egovernment Authority has begun implementing another plan in the time span from 2011 to 2015 in order to meet these challenges, which included embodying some of the following tasks: (gov.sg,2015 )

- Raise the level of cooperation and dealings between government agencies and departments, the private sector and citizens.
- Using the best methods of information and education for the public, by using their voices and suggestions in order to develop public policies in this area, as it developed

during this period techniques for securing the field of transactions over the Internet by increasing the processes of confronting new threats and strategic attacks.

### **3. E-Government Experiences In Some Arab Countries**

In this context, we will attempt to showcase the experience of Tunisia , Morocco and Algeria which all had witnessed improvements in the application of e-government.

#### **3.1 The Experience Of Tunisia**

The e-government transformation initiative was launched in Tunisia in 2006 by putting in place the first stages of establishing an electronic administration based on information and communication technology, developing websites for public administrations from the third generation websites, and then followed by a plan to develop the e-management strategy in 2009-2014.( [www.ministeres.tn](http://www.ministeres.tn))

In this context, the Tunisian government developed the legislative and regulatory framework in 2011 that keeps pace with the development of electronic transactions and services, the most important of which are the Law on Protection of Personal Data, Information Safety, Exchanges and Electronic Commerce, Decree No. 41 of May 26, 2011 related to access to administrative documents, and the law on electronic transfer of funds. Electronic payment and the law of electronic crimes and the preparation of the basic law to set the general framework for electronic exchanges between public administrations .

By the end of the first trio of the year 2013, the Tunisian eGovernment Authority has reached to the provision of 150 electronic administrative services and 25 interactive e-services directed to citizens, public administrations and private companies, and to make them available through the Tunisian government portal website and mobile phone, and the integrated administrative network project for public procurement has also been completed and implemented. Electronic, the electronic unified wallet for foreign trade, the civil system, the public consultation website, the reporting website for corruption cases, the electronic

coincidence, the National Agency for Information Safety and the open data portal. (<http://css.escwa.org>)

The results of the e-government indicators in Tunisia reflect the continuous improvement towards an increase in most e-government indicators for the period 2010-2016. The e-government development index rose by a difference of 0.0843 compared to what was achieved in 2010 (United Nations e-government 2010\_2016) and among the most prominent factors that led To achieve an increase in the levels of the e-government index, as it is represented in the effective contribution of the e-government services index, human capital and e-participation.

The reason for the slow growth of the telecommunications infrastructure index in Tunisia is the government's policy of rising subscription rates for mobile phones and, consequently, the rise in the rate of fixed telephone subscriptions for Internet users.

### **3.2 The Experience Of Morocco**

In 1997, in what was called the e-management program, the experience of implementing an e-government structure in Morocco began. The e-government authority in Morocco subsequently attempted to establish a national policy for information and communication technology, as another e-government initiative was placed into place in October 2009, coinciding with the introduction of the 2013 Digital Morocco Plan.

The high rate of illiteracy and the lack of knowledge and confidence in digitisation processes, which adversely affected the level of use of e-government services and their status in the face of the challenge of implementing interoperability projects, represented by linking public agencies and administrations to the horizon, were among the most prominent difficulties faced by Morocco before 2008.

With the aim of re-engineering and activating all processes to serve citizens and private companies, e-government projects have been governed in order to ensure that the necessary means are provided and the decisions taken are effectively implemented. (OECD ,2010,p.17)

In this context, during the period 2013-2014, the e-government authority in Morocco achieved several achievements in the provision of 60 electronic services through three channels: the national portal, the mobile application portal and the citizen call center, and the completion of the portal project for integrated public expenditure management, the electronic document request window. (E-gov-ma,2011)

The Moroccan government has also worked on creating the legislative framework for e-government, especially those related to electronic authentication, such as Law No. 53-05 corresponding to Decree No. 1-7-129 of 2007 relating to the electronic exchange of legal data, and the general conditions for working with an electronic signature certificate in addition to preparing for draft data protection laws of personal and e-commerce security.( [www.e-gov.ma](http://www.e-gov.ma))

### **3.3 The Experience Of Algeria**

In 2004, the Algerian Department of Telecommunications set out a proposal to build a telecommunications network with a total investment of \$2.5 billion to mobilize all energies and activities in order to transfer employment, transfer skills, supply and information systems and to be one of the most important achievements in this field in order to Increase the length of the optical fiber terrestrial network from 7244 km to 47,000 km in June 2013, updating the national network in terms of access points to a rate of 14%. (<http://www.mptic.dz>,2014 )

According to data from the International Organization for 2010-2016, there has been a positive growth in e-government indicators since 2010, with the exception of fixed-line subscription rates. However, this is insufficient if it is compared to the rates of communications infrastructure indicators in Tunisia and Morocco, which may reflect the failure of the policy followed by the management of the Algeria Telecom Program in improving the telecommunications infrastructure, by focusing on increasing fixed-line subscriptions rather than increasing the percentage of Internet users, to support government

e-services (services from a "shop-one-store", smart service devices, mobile phones, and national contact centers) that should have been given priority in this area.

The results achieved at the end of the specified period for the implementation of the electronic Algeria project did not reflect what was drawn and planned in advance, especially if we look at the situation of the telecommunications sector that was diagnosed to be expected to achieve its established objectives. However, the completion of some of the projects included in the e-government strategy outline was delayed, the most important of these projects did not reach their main objectives due to the weak leadership of the public authorities in facing the obstacles and challenges that faced the project before and during the implementation of most government e-transformation projects.

The electronic Algeria project remains a project that has not yet been completed, similar to some of the milestones achieved in this context, despite the end of the timetable set for it due to the slow procedures and implementation projects and the failure of some of them, such as the "a computer for every family" project, and electronic financial transactions are still in the process. Despite the efforts made by the state to popularize electronic financial transactions at the level of financial and commercial banks, there remains a large group of economic dealers and citizens who are afraid of using the magnetic card to withdraw their money, because of the many errors caused by the electronic withdrawal device and the great delay in improving its accounts. And the limited legislative aspect specialized in this area . (Belarbi,laaredj ,p.09)

In general, the findings of the e-Algeria project can be further clarified on the basis of the results of the e-government implementation indicators provided by the international organization in Algeria. And if we compare the results of these indicators with their counterparts in Tunisia and Morocco, the low e-government indicators in Algeria are better than what Algeria has achieved in this region.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

By observing the experiences of leading international countries in the field of e-government, which have been able to achieve remarkable innovations in terms of increasing the usage of government websites, strengthening their communication networks and enhancing their human resource capacities, improving their measures of the level of e-government growth and the the level of e-government development, and this experiences have shown that there is a low level of implementation of e-government in Algeria which ranks badly in comparison with other developing countries, whether at the international or Arab level, it is still far from the required levels regarding the index of electronic services, communications infrastructure, and e-participation, which hardly reflects the level of electronic readiness required to adopt the e-government system and raise the level of aspirations of citizens and company owners.

Some lessons can be drawn from international experiences through which Algeria can improve the levels of its e-government services, which we mention as follows:

- Continuous implementation of e-government initiatives and projects and the development of plans and strategies that are consistent with the modernity of ICT technologies.
- Establishing a legal framework for protecting personal information and data, which binds government institutions to the conditions and methods of their use, disclosure and preservation.
- Building additional and complementary strategies for previous e-government programs and plans.
- Building systems for sharing the national database, which contains information that link citizens, the business sector, public administrations all together... etc., and making it available on the government portal website and on civil service centers.

- Leading and designing websites for public services through the use of appropriate assessment and evaluation approaches by government departments and agencies to evaluate the quality and reliability of the services offered.
- Ensuring that the international standards are applied in building government websites, collecting and arranging electronic services according to the sectors and fields that branch from them (education, health ...) and put them in an organized and unified electronic form.
- Giving attention to raising the percentages of the basic stages that make up the e-services index (the stage of the emergence of government sites on the Internet pages, the stage of interconnected services between government agencies and departments, and the stage of mutual services).
- Raising the level of customer satisfaction (citizens, customers...) about e-government services, by developing the communication infrastructure and diversifying the channels of access to the services provided online.
- Adopting a cloud computing system and open data (open government websites) for better management with other applications, networks, programs and services in order to facilitate interactions with service providers.
- Attending international meetings and forums for cooperation and exchanging experiences on successful e-government experiences.
- Establishing strategies that support the development of the partnership between the public and private sectors and the capacity of the latter in the field of information technology industry.
- Developing aspects of interaction and cooperation between agencies, public administrations, the private sector and citizens, using the best methods of information and auditing.

- Governance of e-government projects, and the establishment of e-government programs among the priorities and concerns of government projects.

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