

## 6. Understanding eService strategies in countries with different level of instability: comparative study

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### Abstract:

The implementation of eGov initiatives requires a robust strategic planning to succeed. Its successfulness can be full, partial or can result in failure. The gap between strategy and implementation determines to what extent the process of the initiative has developed. The smaller the gap between strategy and reality means that more activities have been implemented successfully. In our study we undertake a comparison of eGov strategies among countries at different levels of instability. It highlights the different approaches for implementing activities, and thus directs policy makers in highly unstable societies to important aspects and to embrace gaps during the implementation process. Consequently, the lessons learned by adopting best practice from different contexts enhances the process of activities' development in an unstable environment. Our aim is to emphasise the factors that influenced strategic planning in societies with different levels of stability to adopt eService successfully. This comparison study explores the eService strategies among three cases namely: eGov Strategy in Syria, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Although the three cases are different in their levels of instability, they have geographical, cultural and demographic similarities that make them the perfect choices for our study. The comparison sources are based on the information available from government reports and documents, related online publications, portals, and United Nations' reports, surveys and statistics. The result reveals the approaches that each government had adopted in order to reach their eGov potential. We apply the Reinventing Government approach by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) as a theoretical framework. By using their ten principles of transforming governments this provides understanding about the context and issues of providing eGov services within the three case studies and to what degree each case strategy has influence on the activities implemented.

**Keywords:**

*eGovernment; eService; Instability; Strategy; Syria; Saudi Arabia; United Arab Emirates; Reinventing Government.*

# Understanding eService strategies in countries with different level of instability: comparative study

## Introduction:

eGov is a global project of technology transfer, taking designs from one context into a different context (HEEKS, 2004). However, the goals behind such project vary across countries. Although, Rabaiah & Vandijck, (2009) point out that there are many commonalities among countries, Heeks 2004 stated that eGov systems designed within the context of one country are transferred for deployment to the context of another country. Hence, governments have the tendency to learn from each other and most governments have developed detailed strategies for realizing their eGov programmes(Rabaiah & Vandijck, 2009). On the other hand Yesser, (2012) stated that *“eGov cannot be implemented individually but needs collective efforts to achieve one national objective which requires interconnection and integration between all government agencies to provide better services to the public and enhance the efficiency of public sector. Therefore, the implementation of the strategy and action plan is a collective responsibility for government as a whole”*. In addition Heeks (2006) states the importance of eGov strategy as *“to plan for eGov system and their supporting infrastructure which maximises the ability of management to achieve organisational objectives”*. With the government eService can be greatly enhanced by developing clear vision, mission, objectives and detailed action plans, hence, eService strategy determine the government process and activities to be achieved in the next few years(Al-Khouri, 2012). Therefore, every government develop a strategy which suit its citizens' requirements on one hand and its resources capabilities on the other hand, where should be updated frequently in order to overcome any emerging challenges. Hence, the development and successful adoption depends on many factors including the level of instability (Alsaeed & Adams, 2015). Moreover, comparing strategies between different initiatives that have been implemented in different societies with different level of instabilities shed light on pivotal factors and aspects of different approaches for implementation in each environment, furthermore, allow us to look at the innovation from different prospective (Alsaeed, Adams, & Boakes, 2014), hence, it may lead to a better analyses of the current problem also may suggest a better solutions for eService delivery, especially, in countries that experiencing conflict. Furthermore, policy makers in unstable countries can learn lessons from best practices implemented in a stable ones where Rabaiah & Vandijck (2009) define the best practice as the *“concept, technique, methodology, or solution that has proven reliable in achieving desired objectives, through experience, research and best available knowledge or technology and that has proven effective through replication”*.

In unstable countries where the challenges are grater, strategies in such environments should pay more attentions to a new emerging social categories (such as displaced people and refugees). United Nations (2012) suggest that *“there is a need to reach out to all citizens, particularly the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, in order to bridge the gap and maximize the utilization of online service delivery. However, governance processes for the effectiveness and benefit of all cannot be realized without a well-established coordination framework encompassing the involvement of all national and international stakeholders”*. This paper seeks to answer the questions as whether eGov Strategies have impact on a successful implementation of eService, and whether clear strategy steps could improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of eService delivery to citizens in a high level of instability countries such as Syria and how eGov in countries under stress may learn from innovations implemented in a high stable country throw adoption a certain strategy. Therefore, a comparison of eService Strategies among Countries with different level of stability (different places on stability ranking scale provided by UN) has been carried out where the focus was on the best practice and the successful implemented activities which may work as a guidance and guidelines for policy makers in unstable context. In order to answer the research question and to achieve the aim of our research, the article structured as follow. Section 2: briefly examines the benefits and challenges of eService Strategy in general and the impact on successful eService delivery in High, Medium and Low level of instability context in particular as published in the literature. Section 4: outlines the research methodology used to collect and analysis the literature. Section 5: presents the findings. Section 6: discussion is proposed. Section 7: presents the report conclusion.

## Literature Review:

Pardo, Nam, & Burke (2012) state that “E-Government continues to be recognized as a key strategy for improving government services and the effectiveness of public policies and programs”. Therefore, Joseph & Avdic (2016) argue that an effective eGov strategies is a significant step in the development and hence successful in the eGov adoption, as a consequence, some governments around the world took the leading role by adopting a certain strategy which makes it interesting to study by different governments and to learn lessons upon which it was based on. They argue that each country has a strategy focus with a different directions which related to the nature of the requirements by that country, for example, the Nordic countries set a strategy direction on the public sector reforms as the main focus, the economic reforms took second place and less on political reform. They concluded that Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland are succeeded of becoming the leading nations in the eGov ranking as a result of having adopted their strategies. In addition the public sector services has been improved efficiently and effectively in those countries due to the inclusion of the electronic information and communication technologies in their reform strategies

(Wallström, Engström, Salehi-Sangari, & Styvén, 2009). However, to overcome any challenge that may encounter, governments have developed their own eGov strategy. on the other hand, there are always new challenges that governments obliged to find solutions for, however , all attempts still beyond completions and countries sought to update eGov strategies frequently (Rabaiah & Vandijck, 2009).

Although, the strategic planning for eGov activities is very importance , there are many public authorities do not have any eGov strategy at all (Heeks, 2006). On the other hand strategies can be invoke from different context, especially, the successfully proved ones where can be adopted in a similar situation instead of sticking to a single strategy. However, the downside for this approach that the outcome could be different, "Similar e-government initiatives, implemented by different nations but aimed at achieving similar policy goals, produce different outcomes" (Eom, 2012). Furthermore, several scholars have considered eGov strategy as one of the main drivers for successful implementation. Hence, many studies evolve around this topic where some studies give a guidance on an ideal eGov strategy some other have suggested a models or frameworks to comprehending the concept from different angles. However, Table 1, includes some related researches along with the contribution to the field. Conducting a strategy must consider different aspect that influence changes such as political, economic, social and technological factors (Lee, Tan, & Trimi, 2005).

Similarly Porumbescu, Vrabie, & Ahn (2012) argue that it should be taking into account the socio-economic and political elements for the long-term and solid eGov planning as those elements have a direct Influence on Participatory eGov Applications. Furthermore, political, economic, social and technology factors are the driving factors in the formulation of eGov strategies where the Institutional arrangements and the characteristics of policy processes playing a crucial role in shaping the conducted eGov strategy (Saint-Martin, 2004; Timmermans, 2001; Peters, Pierre, & King, 2005; Hay, 2006; Eom, 2012). "Lessons drawn from developed countries indicate that political, fiscal, social, strategic and organisational issues need to be addressed when formulating plans for deploying e-government" (Weerakkody et al., 2012).

On the other hand, a different and new barriers start to arising during the strategic planning, however, if instability aspect has been involved. In such societies, where every aspect of life has been affected, the strategy informed political, socio-economic, human, organizational, infrastructure and financial elements in order for the eGov to include all (Alsaeed & Adams, 2015).

**Table 1.** Examples of recent literature in the eGov Strategy domain.

Researcher	Research topic	Methodology	Contribution
(Joseph & Avdic, 2016)	Where do the Nordic Nations' Strategies Take e-Government	Comparative qualitative analysis method among Nordic e-Government strategies	"The results show that the major focus of Nordic e-Government strategies is on public sector reforms"
(Rabaiah & Vandijck, 2009)	A Strategic Framework of e-Government: Generic and Best Practice	Qualitative cross-case comparisons of 21 eGov strategies from different countries around the world	generic strategic framework of e-government
(Al-Khouri, 2012)	eGov Strategies The Case of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Desktop research, based on the disseminations of the UAE document publications.	Proposed framework to enhance the electronic transformation of all government services in the UAE.
(Linnefell, Hallin, & Lagergren, 2014)	E-government Policy Formation – Understanding the roles of change drivers	Case study of e-government policy process in the municipality of Vasteras in Sweden	"Develop the understanding of e-government policy failure by elucidating how individuals' actions, behaviours and decision affect endeavours to improve e-government policy agendas"
(Meijer, 2015)	E-governance innovation: Barriers and strategies	Case study in The Netherlands between police and citizens.	Theoretical model of eGov strategy which include innovation process, government and citizen barriers and structural and cultural barriers.

## Instability classification:

Instabilities factors that associated with some countries will be an increasing challenge for many developing countries and failure to establish an appropriate strategy for the giving context and establish suitable mechanisms for eGov implementation might impede further development, the result would be as a consequence of increasing the pressures socially, politically, economically and technologically (International Telecommunication Union, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to distinguish between countries based on their level of instabilities as this has an impact on the level of developments through implementation stages. Classifying countries based on their level of instabilities lets policy makers be aware of the arising barriers, hence, a suitable strategy may conduct as a result. On the other hand, the world peace keep changing over time as suggested by Institute for Economics and Peace, (2014), they state that *"World peace has deteriorated, falling gradually every year for the past seven years. This trend has been driven predominately by deteriorations in internal peace indicators, especially those relating to safety and security, although external indicators have also slightly deteriorated"*. According to their report, the Institute for Economics and Peace (2015) argue that the world has become a less peaceful place. Where they rank 162 countries by measuring the elements of security in society, extent of conflict and the degree of militarisation as the base for measuring nation's instabilities. Their report shows that the levels of peace have fallen by 5% since 2008. However, Syria scored bottom on the scale *"Syria has swapped places with previously bottom-ranked Afghanistan and now appears as the least peaceful country in the world"* according to the Institute for Economics and Peace (2014). Table 2, contains global peace index elements that influence the level of instability in Syria between 2011-2015. On the other hand, The United Arab Emirates has appeared on the opposite side of Syria on the peace measuring scale with mark of stable in politics for the last years. However, the Arabic Spring which erupted in many Arabic countries in 2011 did not affect the UAE, but opened the government's eyes to tighten security. Hence, the Institute for Economics and Peace (2014) state that *"The indicators of levels of internal peace have however stayed much the same over the seven-year period"*.

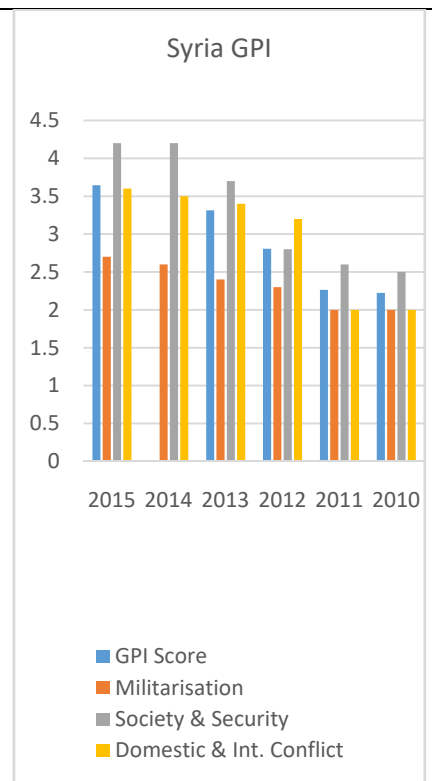
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*The UAE has not suffered from internal conflicts or terrorist activity in these years and enjoys low levels of violent crime and homicides"*. Table 3, contains global peace index elements that influence the level of instability in the UAE. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has kept improving its level of global peace index from 121 in 2010 to become 95 in the year 2015.

This figure indicates that Saudi Arabia becomes more peaceful, despite been located in a hostile geographical location. The increases practically reflects the improvement on the Societal Safety and Security as a result an increase reductions on the level of crime and violent demonstrations (Institute for Economics and Peace., 2014). See Table 4. Based on the Global Peace Index we classify countries depending on their level of instabilities into three components each one has a set of countries sharing a common status of instability as following: High (H), Medium (M) and Low (L).

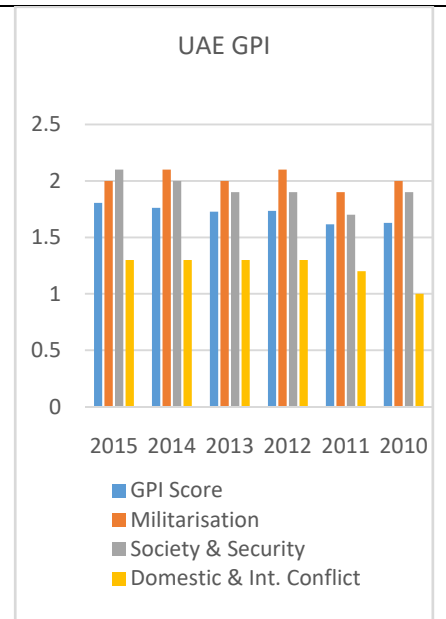
**Table 2. Syrian Global Peace Index.**

Syria					
Year	GPI Score	Country rank	Combined Major Factors 1-5 (L to H)		
			Militarisation	Society & Security	Domestic & Int. Conflict
2015	3.645	162	2.7	4.2	3.6
2014	3.584	162	2.6	4.2	3.5
2013	3.313	160	2.4	3.7	3.4
2012	2.806	152	2.3	2.8	3.2
2011	2.263	118	2	2.6	2
2010	2.223	115	2	2.5	2



**Table 3. United Arab Emirates Global Peace Index.**

UAE					
Year	GPI Score	Country rank	Combined Major Factors 1-5 (L to H)		
			Militarisation	Society & Security	Domestic & Int. Conflict
2015	1.805	49	2	2.1	1.3
2014	1.762	44	2.1	2	1.3
2013	1.727	37	2	1.9	1.3
2012	1.735	38	2.1	1.9	1.3
2011	1.615	29	1.9	1.7	1.2
2010	1.628	28	2	1.9	1



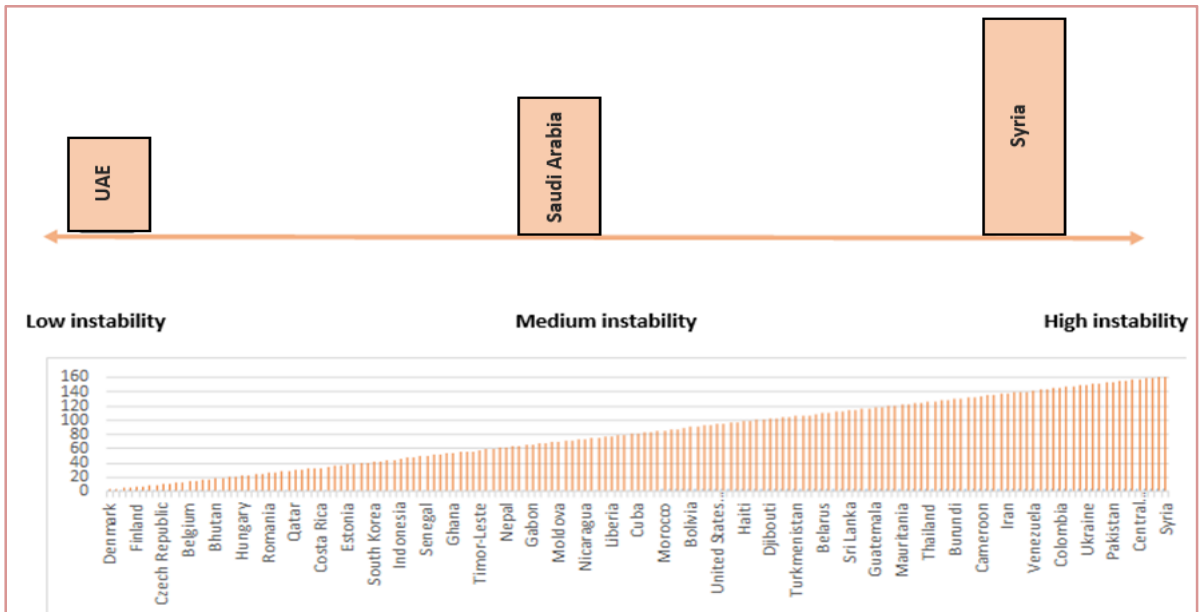
From each component we chose one country for further investigation namely: Syria which represents the high level instability, Saudi Arabia which represents the medium level instability and UAE which represents the low level instability. Figure 1.



## Saudi Arabia

**Saudi GPI**

Year	GPI score	Militarisation	Society & Security	Domestic & Int. Conflict
2015	2.0	2.1	2.2	1.8
2014	2.0	2.1	2.1	1.8
2013	2.1	2.1	2.3	1.8
2012	2.2	2.2	2.5	1.8
2011	2.1	2.1	2.6	1.7
2010	2.2	2.2	2.6	1.9



**Figure 1.** Syria, UAE and KSA as High, Medium and Low level of Instability

## Reinventing Government:

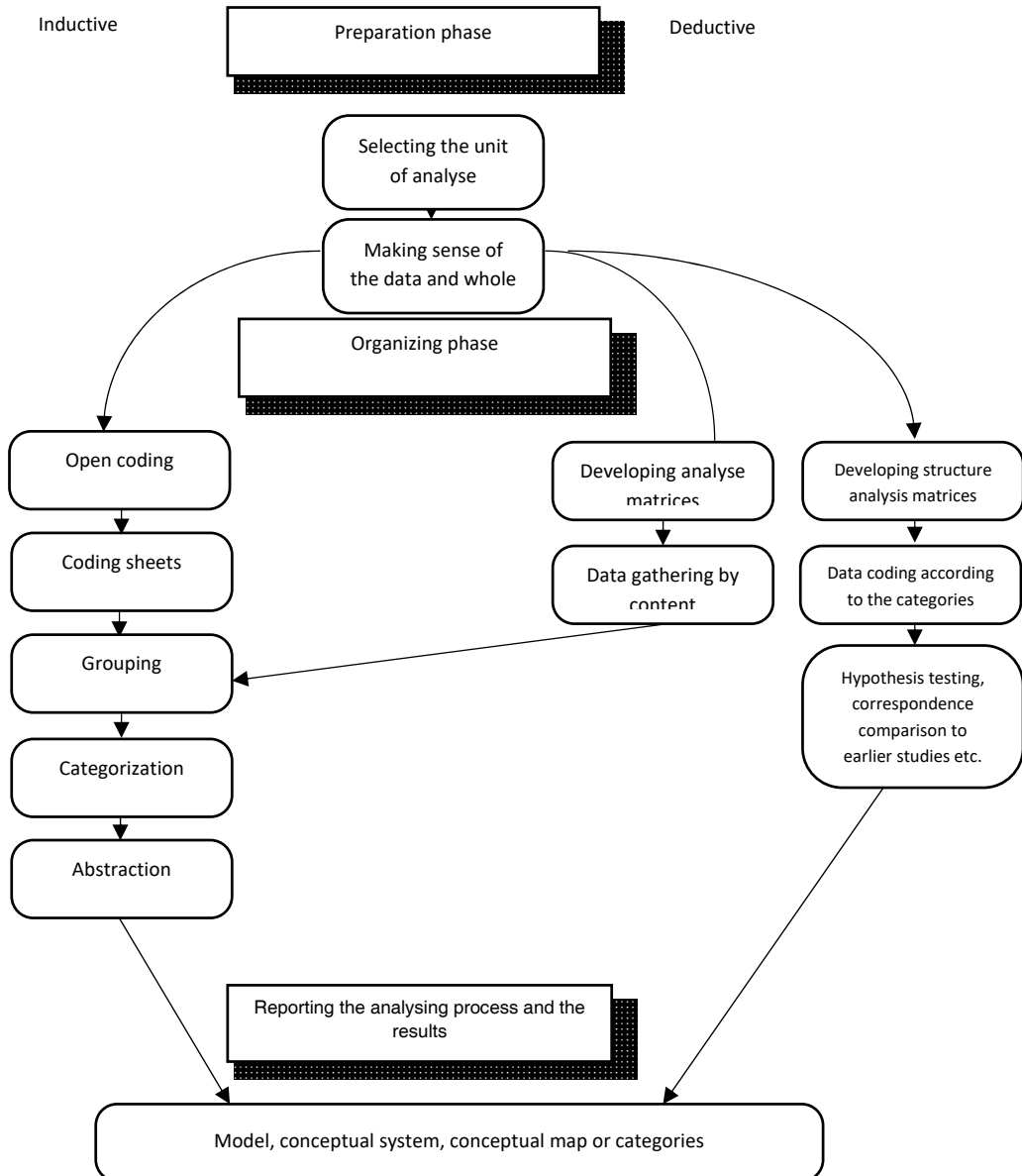
In their book, Osborne and Gaebler (1992) have drawn a road map on how a motivated and entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector. From the USA government real life examples, they have integrated, in ten principles, a vision and blueprint for governments' policymakers to succeed in a better service delivery and to work as guidelines to help for public sector transformation and to show ways of how government should function. We apply this approach on our study as a theoretical framework, guided by their principles, to understand the context and issues of providing eGovernment services within the undertaking case studies and to understand as to what degree each case strategy has influenced on the implemented activities. On the other hand we were also motivated by the similarities between societies going through changes, such as Syria, and societies driven by innovations in their transformation process, such as UAE and Saudi Arabia. Fukuyama (2004) argues that governments keep changing constantly either by creating new institutions or by transforming and reshaping the existing ones into a better from. In their book Osborne & Gaebler (1992) they looked at the motivation of reinventing government for innovation as a mechanism to make a communal decision (such as motorway, bridge ,homeless ) and effective way

of providing services that benefits all people (such as police , fire fighter, water system ) and way of solving a collective problems (such as drugs, crime, poverty ). However, their principles are powerful conceptual tools that unleash different ways of thinking and can be tested as an analytical tool by tackling the most common problems and provide ways for improvements.

We summarise the ten principles by (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992) as following:

1. Catalytic Government (steering rather than rowing): its rules will not be to provide direct services but to create networks and leverage resources.
2. Community Owned Government (Empowering rather than Serving): communities to be the main players in service delivery to improve government performance.
3. Competitive Government (Injecting Competition into Service Delivery): competition rather than regulation to improve the quality and the effectiveness of the government services and ending the government's monopolies.
4. Mission-Driven Government (Transforming Rule-Driven Organizations): public organizations should be driven by their mission, not by their rules and their budgets.
5. Results-Oriented Government (Funding Outcomes, Not Inputs): focused on outcomes, and recommend new ways of measuring and rewarding outcomes.
6. Customer-Driven Government (Meeting the Needs of the Customer, Not the Bureaucracy): perceive the needs of customers and give them a choice of producers.
7. Enterprising Government (Earning rather Than Spending): earn money instead of taxes.
8. Anticipatory Government (Prevention rather Than Cure): prevent problems rather than delivering services to correct them.
9. Decentralized Government (From Hierarchy to Participation and Teamwork): transfer decision-making authority to those individuals who are in the best position to develop effective and innovative solutions to problems.
10. Market-Oriented Government (Leveraging Change through the Market): utilize a market mechanism instead of an administrative program to provide goods and services to the public

### Methodology:



**Figure 2.** Preparation, organizing and resulting phases in the content analysis process (Elo & Kynga, 2008).

This report used a document analysis study, using a qualitative inductive analysis method, initiated by collecting secondary data published via the undertaking studied government's different channels. We Followed the ( Elo & Kynga ,2008) approach in collecting and analysing the data, look at figure 2. They point out that "Inductive content analysis is used in cases where there are no previous studies dealing with the phenomenon or when it is fragmented". Hence, as there is no test on a previous theory as such we neglected the detective approach in our study. Furthermore, Chinn & Kramer (1999) argue that, in the inductive approach a general statement may emerge as a consequence of the observations of a particular instances that are combined into a generic phenomenon. Furthermore, the reason for conducting a secondary data collection, due to the nature of the data of each case where the huge amount of data makes it unfeasible for any individual researcher to collect on their own. However, this way saves a significant amount of time, especially, we had to rely on the United Nations surveys and governments published documents which makes it essential as it can adequately capture the past change and developments. And furthermore, for a validity and reliability reasons there is no need for re-examining the secondary data as it already pre-established degree of validity. For each strategy we mapped the finding to the ABCDE Strategy model found by Haines (1995). Where each letter is an abbreviation of each of its components as following: Assessment, Baseline, Components, Delivery and Evaluation. The ABCDE model is operationalized and controlled by a set of questions: Where we are, where we want to be, how we will do it, how are we doing. Figure 3 depicts the elements of the ABCDE model. Based on the model elements, our investigation took place and thus, generated a work log for the comparison process. Hence, the comparison process among cases was conducted in order to distinguish implemented strategies. The qualitative analysis results allowed us to understand similarities and differences of the eGov strategies in the three undertaking cases and the leading motivations and strategic planning that are not explicit in the secondary data. However, Initial data for this study were collected through detailed documentations obtained from the official site of the cases, web portals, TV related programs. three separate cases were prepared and studied and a final report was produced which offering a rich descriptions of the real world of the factors that resulted as an outcome of adopting a specific strategy in the studied countries which in turn have impact on the development of the eService in countries with different level of instabilities. We estimated that the comparative case studies fits well the nature of our research. Yin (2014) stats that multiple case study is a variant that includes two or more observations of the same phenomenon. This variant enables replication that is, using multiple cases to independently confirm emerging constructs and propositions. The primary advantage of case study research is giving a deeper understanding of a specific instances of a phenomenon. Using these cases in a comparison process to reveal complementary aspects of the phenomenon enables extension and result is more robust, generalizable outcome. We process the comparative study to identify, analyse and explain similarities and differences across examples of eGov initiatives that are on different level of instability. By conducting a comparative case studies we

Where we are	Where we want to be	How we will do it	How are we doing	
Assessment	Baseline	Components	Down to specifics	Evaluate
Environmental Scan	Past, Present, Future	Mission & Vision	Performance Measurement	Performance Management
Background information	Significant issues	Values / Guiding Principles	Targets / Standards of Performance	Review Progress
Situational Analyse	Align / fit with capability	Key Objectives	Initiatives and Projects	Take Corrective Actions
SWOT	Gaps		Action Plan	Feedback upstream – revise plans
Context assessment	Problem statements			

### Case studies and findings:

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on how eGov Strategy has impacted on eService delivery in countries with different level of instabilities and will reveal the factors that may reduce the gap between government strategies and policies related to implementation of eServices and applications on one hand, and the eServices that have been delivered on the other hand, also to explore the barriers/ enablers that e-Government strategies are facing to provide e-Services to citizen in the above environment, we carried out three case studies in eGov implementation in three different countries. The chosen cases namely: UAE, Saudi Arabia and Syria (see figure 1).

○ **eGov Strategy of United Arab Emirates (Low Level of Instability Case )**

United Arab Emirates considered to be one of the most advanced and world-class ICT infrastructures due to the highest investing in adopting and implementing ICT in its government (Al-Khour, 2012). United Arab Emirates utilizes the world leading eGovernment program to develop its own initiatives with the consideration of the UAE federal level to transform all government services and make them available electronically through various channels. However, Government of UAE (2012) stated the vision of the Federal eGovernment Strategy as following: "Enhance the competitiveness of the UAE by adopting world class practices in all areas of eGoernment". As a result the United Nations (2014) report that United Arab Emirates ranked within the top 10 countirs in Western Asia and 32 globally and comes second after Bahrain within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The result comes as the clear vision and mission for the eGovernment to be carried as well as the consequences of the high GDP, high literacy rates, small populations and a keen desire by the Policy Maker to invest in and develop their online national portals, in returen the UAE government will offer their citizens advanced e-services and information accessible in an easy way. The United Nations (2014, 2012,2010) indicating the changes in the eGov EGDI and the ranking for the eGov of the UAE as the table (4) shows below:

**Table 4.** UAE ranking and EGDI changes

EGDI 2014	Rank 2014	EGDI 2012	Rank 2012	Rank Change 2012-2014	EGDI 2010	Rank 2010	Rank Change 2010-2012
0.7136	32	0.7344	28	- 4	0.7344	49	+ 21

Historically, the eDirham was first eService programm delivered at a federal level in 2001. eDirham was an electronic card to collect fees from citizens. In 2004 the primary telecom company in UAE namly Etisalat established the infrastructure for the eGovernment. In cooperation with Etisalat, eGovernment portal was launched in 2005. Several Minesterial and Federal decrees been issued to enhance the eGovernment trnsormation. In 2006 a minesterial decree been issued to transfer eGovernment program from the Minstry of finance to the Minstry of Governmental Sector

Development. In 2011 Federal Decree issued for assigning eGovernment program to the General Authority for Regulating the Telecommunications Sector. Further work has been adopted to enhance the eGovernment provision and to electronically transform all public services through a two-year action plan; UAE has announced a revised eGovernment Transformation Strategic Framework in 2012. The mission of the UAE Federal eGovernment Strategy has been established as follows: "Innovative eGovernment, committed to enhancing the competitiveness of the UAE and providing world-class multi-channel services based on the expectations of customers through a coherent and efficient government; taking advantage of an advanced digital infrastructure and highly qualified human resources within a smart framework of governance". Strategic Framework comprises numerous strategic initiatives that resulted from analysing the current development approach through three primary dimensions namely: Environment which covers infrastructure and regulatory policies factors that may affect the growth of ICT, Readiness which focuses on the capacity of technology, organisation and human resources of federal agencies to use ICT and their ability to adopt eGovernment and Usage which focuses on providing eServices to citizens through different channels. the three-dimensional framework has been used because it reflects global practices in this area and reflecting the Mission stated above. However, policy makers of the UAE eGovernment suggested that it is essential to identify the gap between the current situation and the targeted vision which contributes to proposing a set of initiatives to bridge this gap. Firstly analysing the Environment dimension focuses on the penetration rates and the use of ICT, regulatory environment for the ICT sector, work patterns across the government agencies and leadership and political system. The key findings of this phase; study shows that citizens are using ICT more than businesses, thus, conducting awareness promotion is necessary at this stage to increase the rate of penetration figures of broadband usage among different user categories. The study also shows that very high increase of using mobile phone suggests adding it as an alternative channel of eServices provision. Furthermore, a suggestions have been made towards enhancing the broadband connectivity and develop a cloud computing services due to the fact that UAE has achieved an advanced and complex stage of eGovernment development. In addition, the Laws and legislations that concerned the ICT sector were revised and updated to be more efficient. The work patterns across the government agencies should adopt the cooperative attitude by exchange experiences and knowledge and in term of leadership/ political system the suggestions made towards emphasising the importance of the Federal eGovernment and work progress towards the UAE Vision 2021 and Implementing the initiatives identified in the Government Strategy 2011-2013 as eGovernment initiatives eTransformation as an example. Secondly analysing the Readiness dimension focuses on several issues 1-technical readiness where the study shows that there is a need to implement and develop an interoperability framework and data model due to the absence of enterprise architecture among federal agencies. 2-governance and operational readiness: The study shows that most of the government agencies have absence of governance structures and no clear strategy to define business



requirements and to measure performance this suggest establishing representatives of the IT and business departments within all government agencies to monitor the progress in the implementation of IT projects and to develop policies for information technology to be adopted by those agencies. 3-human resources' readiness: the study suggested that training is required among staff of various agencies to improve skills and knowledge of IT. Finally analysing the Usage dimension focuses on several issues such as government services, eServices channels and customer experience where the study indicates many negative impact on the level of service delivery such as replication of service development projects and initiatives and failure to use the Emirates ID card on a large scale, absence of a comprehensive governance framework and failure to use shared applications. The study suggests that the focus should be on the most impactful services to customers in order to prevent replication, to enhance cooperation among government agencies in providing the services through standardised enterprise architecture, to provide eServices through multiple electronic channels and expanding the electronic channels to include social networking sites and service kiosks, to improve the eGovernment portals, hence, this will attract more users, and finally to design the services in accordance with the needs of each user. See figure 7 below. As a result of the current situation study and identifying the gaps between the current situation and the targeted vision and based on the elements of vision and mission, all of that have been contributed to proposing a set of 38 initiatives to bridge this gap. These initiatives conducted from five strategic objectives that are distributed to the above mentioned dimensions. The strategic objective for the Environment dimension is to enhance the electronic maturity level of government agencies. The strategic objective for the Readiness dimension is to promote governance by creating structures and supporting operational consolidation; and providing them with world-class human skills, to design and construct infrastructure and shared applications to increase cooperation among government agencies and reduce the cost of IT projects and to enhance the UAE's competitiveness in eGovernment. Finally the strategic objective for the Usage dimension is to improve the level of electronic transformation of government services in the country. "This strategy was drafted with the objective to build a world-class federal eGovernment that will contribute to upgrading the competitiveness of the United Arab Emirates and help make the UAE one of the best countries in the world according to the UAE Vision 2021"(Government of UAE, 2012).

- **eGov Strategy of Saudi Arabia (Medium Level of Instability Case )**

The government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has an early experience of implementing a national eService in 1998 which was the SADAD program. SADAD was the national e-payment gateway; so when the government issues a particular bills than citizen may interact with the SADAD program to pay their bills digitally. The program was successful and still functioning with some enhancement. Another example of a successful eService implementation was the Smart Cards initiative by the

Ministry of Interior which issues the national ID cards with an electronic chip for storing personal information in a central database. Both eServices were delivered before assigning the eGovernment program to YESSER. The government adopted "YESSER" as the national e-Government program. YESSER Program start functioning where most activities took place in and after 2005 under the supervision of Ministry of Communication & Information Technology and the participation of Ministry of Finance. However, Yesser is an Arabic derived name which means to "Simplify" (Basamh, Qudaih, & Suhaimi, 2014). The main role of the Yesser program is to implement the Saudi Arabia's e-government initiative and to be responsible for implementing the infrastructure of all related projects, to define the common standards, legislation and guidelines, the communication and training of management and staff and the implementation of eService and all related projects in the hope of moving toward modernization and transformation of government administration and to enhance service delivery to all stakeholders. At the beginning the focus was more on large cities such as Medina, Riyadh, and Mecca. So far the e-government program "Yesser" has developed a National e-government Strategy and (first and second) Action Plan covering the periods of 2006 to 2010 and 2012 to 2016. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2012) stated the vision of the eGovernment Strategy of the second action plan as "Enabling everyone to use effective government services, in a secure integrated and easy way, through multiple electronic channels". As a result, a very good progress has been made which puts the Saudi in an advance place relative to other countries in the United Nations e-government assessment. The Portal built by Yesser also is a world class where it offers one-stop-shop with 24 hours a day services. The United Nations (United Nations, 2014),(United Nations, 2012),(United Nations, 2010) surveys indicating the progress in the eGov EGDI and the ranking for the Kingdom of the Saudi Arabia as the table (5) shows below:

**Table 5.** Saudi Arabia eGov ranking and egdi changes

<b>EGDI</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>EGDI</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Rank Change</b>	<b>EGDI</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Rank Change</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2012-2014</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2010-2012</b>
0.6900	36	0.6658	41	+ 5	0.5142	58	+ 17

The current situation of the successful implementation of eServices indicates that 2125 services are available and 50% of them are full transactional. The work of the e-government program has been recognized internationally and some has won an international awards such as the Government Service Bus (GSB) and the e-transformation. The mission of the KSA eGovernment Strategy has been established as: To build a sustainable e-government workforce, to improve government efficiency, to improve the experience of the public in their interactions with government, to develop a culture of collaboration and innovation. “The e-government action plan is implemented in alignment with

other National Strategies (Development Plan, the National ICT Plan and other sectoral based national strategies)" (Yesser, 2012). The above missions are supported by a set of strategic objectives that forms the Strategic Framework which comprises a set of strategic initiatives that resulted from analysing the current development approach. However, policy makers of the KSA eGovernment suggested that it is essential to identify the gap between the current development and the targeted vision which contributes to proposing a set of initiatives to bridge this gap, these initiatives are grouped into six work streams.

- **Human Capital, Communications and Change Management:**

The initiatives under this stream focus on building a communications plan amongst the government employees and leaders and communication program for all agencies to be up to date with the eGovernment experiences, establishing human resources by identifying the experienced e-government professionals and increase the roles of women in the eServices management to cover the shortage of human resources in the public sector, to provide training centre for staff and leaders on project management and ICT technical skills and to expand the current Yesser Centre of Excellence for Research and Development (CERD), to create an annual awards program to appreciate agencies on their successful eGov implementations, to implement a collaboration and cooperative attitude environment to share and re-use experience and knowledge amongst government institutions and agencies and finally running a learning and training workshops to develop the skills of leaders in government agencies will result in support of the achievement of the Vision of the eGovernment where Yesser will be responsible for providing material and support.

- **eServices:**

The study shows there is need to implement and develop eService roadmap by each government agency and to be published to show all available eServices, on the otherhand the impenention should be based on eService prioarity, private sector plays crucial roles to provide high quality e-government services, the need for develop and implement a world class portal which includes accessibility and best practice guidelines, hence, all government agencies should upgrade to its standards, conducting public awarness is nessasery at this stage which could be done by impleminting a communications program for the public and for the employee, develop and implement a multiple channels for eServices delivery such as SMS , Mobile or kiosks

### ▪ **National Shared Applications:**

The key found for stream is the need for developing a National Shared Applications framework with a standardized templates, defined methodology and commitment by all agencies to use the application also coordinate and evaluate applications such as eRecruitment, government employees application, national address record system, eID system, geographic information system and unified university registration application, however, this could be achieved by providing access to government agencies database that are running those applications .

### ▪ **Infrastructure:**

Most importantly for this stream is to develop an international standard for all eService operational, connecting data to the Government Service Bus (GSB) which allows the government agencies to communicate effectively, also the implementation of message gateway system using SMS and email for communication and for eService delivery are essential, to develop guidance and accessibility guidelines standards, develop a cloud computing strategy, develop an open source strategy, implement a secure network connectivity, government central database, design and build an m-government portal and provide digital signature based on e-identity.

### ▪ **eParticipation:**

The key found here is to develop a social media communication with public and business and to open gate for sharing the public views throw this method, also this tool may be used as a central eParticipation by eGov agencies to grasp the importance form blogs and feedback.

### ▪ **Institutional Framework:**

Finally the current study suggest under this stream is to build an eService framework strategy which allows a wider facilitation of access and to support the existing framework for public private partnership, furthermore, the framework must include a better use of the shared infrastructure and national shared applications which in turn required a constant technical oversight.

As a result of the current situation study also identifying the gaps between the current situation and the targeted vision and based on the elements of vision and mission have been contributed to propose a set of 46 initiatives grouped into six streams to bridge this gap. The timeline for implemeniting those inititaves spans over five years 2012-2016 where some activities been implemented in parallel and some in sequences acourding to the importance and priority.

## ○ **eGov Strategy of Syria (High Level of Instability Case)**

The heavy load of the government administration was the main motivation for the Syrian government to implement eGov initiative which was due to the increase of the demand by citizens for more and better services as well as the government limited resources, the sought for economic and social development, the facing of international economic challenges, the need for increasing the role and size of the civil society organizations and the need for adoption of technologies on a wider scale(Suleiman et al., 2008).

In 2002, eGov initiative first activities was started where a joint project between the Ministry of Communication and Technology (MOCT) and the United Nation of Development Program (UNDP) was launched to increase the penetration rates for landline, mobile phone, and laptop to 30%, and for internet to 20%, as part of the ICT Strategy in Syria which both parties agreed upon. The Syrian government stated the vision of the eGov Strategy to “Providing distinguished services to the beneficiaries (citizens and business) by increasing effectiveness, productivity and transparency of government work; and providing integrated e-services accessible by multiple channels; while maintaining the protection of the beneficiaries' personal data”(Suleiman et al., 2009). The activities and strategic initiatives of the eGov were implemented based on analysing the Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of the current situation in order to create a suitable orientations for the eGov in the areas of political, organizational, human, financial and infrastructure(Suleiman et al., 2009). The stages of delivering the vision into reality goes through three stages: stage 1, during this stage the eGov activities focus on providing citizen with information on eServices by media or through publication, implement the legislative and technical frameworks, implement a central portal where all ministries complete their eService and link them to the national portal, providing citizens with basic banking eService, providing citizen with basic and important services and to develop an environment to enable different channels for providing eServices, the duration of this stage is one year from 2009 to 2010 while the duration of the Stage 2 is two years from 2011 to 2013 and during this stage the efforts concentrated on providing interactive eServices, implement horizontal interoperability framework among all ministries, implement a national central shared infrastructure, working on competing digital divide among the Syrian citizens and increase the number of channels for eService provisions. Stage 3 takes six years for implementation from 2014 to 2020 and during this stage a fully transactional eService provision should be completed, a complete reform on the government organizational level where integrated institutional structures replaces the structure of government services, provide more eServices to meet all citizens' needs. The table 6 below indicates the percentage of the expected delivery of eServices for each stage.

**Table 6.** Percentage of delivering eservices for each stage (suleiman et al., 2009)

Delivery for each stage	2010	2013	2020
Services available at the stage of publishing electronically	70%	100%	-
Basic services provided electronically	30%	80%	100%
Rate of using the available e-services	10%	30%	50%
Access to government services through new additional channels	5%	30%	70%
E-government supplies	0%	30%	60%

However, In order to go ahead with the implementation of the first and second phases, Government of Syria issued its first e-Gov Strategy in October, 2009 which has been adopted for five years plan 2011-2015, the attentions focus on the following components: the national data records (registries), key government services and high priority services, shared services and shared components and e-community of interests programmes. The project will be based on joint cooperation among: Ministry of communication and technology (MoCT), State planning commission (SPC) and united nation development programme (UNDP). The title of this project is Enhancing institutional capacity for eGov implementation which *“aims at supporting the Syrian government efforts to ensure successful implementation of the eGov strategy.”* (Lutfi, Sabouni, & Ahmed, 2010). However, The main objectives of the UNDP involvements in the above project is to support government agencies in developing their IT strategies in compliance with the national eGov initiative, to provide consulting and technical support to promote the development and usage of shared services among government agencies, to promote best eGov practices, to participate in defining the eService prioritization, to develop and operate a complete monitoring and evaluation system and to develop and implement a communication plan. The result of adopting the above strategy has been stated in the United Nations (2014, 2012,2010) Surveys where the progress in the eGov EGDI and the ranking for the eGov of Syria shown in table (7) below:

**Table 7.** Syria eGov ranking and egdi changes

EGDI 2014	Rank 2014	EGDI 2012	Rank 2012	Rank Change 2012-2014	EGDI 2010	Rank 2010	Rank Change 2010-2012
0.3134	135	0.3705	128	- 7	0.3705	133	+ 5

On the other hand, the civil war in Syria had a huge impact on implementing the eGov project smoothly, especially, at the beginning of the conflict 2011, this become even worst when few parts of the country become out of the government control in 2012. Therefore, the strategy did not go

according to plan and had to be postponed several times according to an announcement by the Ministry of communication and technology. However, since the war started few eGov activities been developed and some eServices has been implemented. The TALABY gate, is such example of eService which allows citizens to register their complaints through this gate and to receive replies, suggestions or guidance through multiple channels(TALABY Gate team, 2012).

### Insight of the findings:

The salient theme found in all cases in which has received greater attention and focus is eService channels. eGov portal is one of the many channels that citizen may utilise in getting government services which considered to be the central window for all government online services and is designed for information provision and sharing. The integrated facilities of this website allow the beneficiaries to access all eServices through one central website. Furthermore, its objectives is to facilitate citizens' navigation and use of the content. The amount and the quality of the eServices provided determined – alongside with other factors- the successfulness of eGov implementation for any government and whether it stands against the standards of the international competitiveness.

The finding shows that the UAE eGov developed its eGov portal with a strategy to build a strong government information infrastructure to achieve its maximum potential objective and to have a further development and enhancement at all level. Hence, this strategy involves connecting all government agencies and ministries to one shared data and data centre which allows for conducting intermediate operations and common applications to smoothening the integration and consequently for a better eService delivery. The number of eServices found on the UAE eGov portal is 2570 entries with a multilingual service (Arabic, English).

The finding from the Saudi's case shows that the eGov developed its main eService channel through an online portal with a strategy to decentralise the activities provided by linking each service to the correspondent government agency or ministry. The number of eServices found on the Saudi portal is 2125 with multilingual services (Arabic, English), same as the previous case it has not shown any eServices related to displaced or refugee people. However, the eDash-board portal considered to be a big development in the Saudi eServices implementation, which verifies the identity of the citizen and serves as a single sign-on portal where citizens can access all services provided through one single page

The Syrian case comparing to the previous cases is still at a primitive stage which offers mainly published information, also found that each of the Syrian ministries has its own portals for eService delivery, this indicates a clear inconsistency with the main eGov portal. However, the activities have been implemented by following the eGov Strategy are 1121 online services offered in two languages: Arabic and English.



United Nations, (2012) stated that, “ *The United Arab Emirates is among few countries that come close to a pure one-stop-shop portal with information, services and participation services integrated on one site*”, the result shows that the United Arab Emirates in 12th place and Saudi Arabia in 18th place among the frontrunners. However, the result of the eGov implementation and activities has shown the fulfilment of the strategic plan of the UAE eGov (Al-Khour, 2012).

Furthermore, the citizens of the UAE& Saudi Arabia may access the online services through many online and offline channels. Where citizens and residents may also pay traffic fines and utility bills and access many other services through the kiosks and public payment machines, which are located in malls, shopping districts and other public places. They may also pay traffic fines and utility bills through the ATMs and cash depositing machines of most banks.

Since the launch of mGovernment Initiative, the UAE Government entities have introduced applications for smart gadgets through smartphones, smart tablet computers and smart TV (UAE eGovernment, 2016). UAE government is testing a new channels to deliver services to customers and residents such as the drones which would be used as a channel for delivering Emirates ID cards, driving licences and other permits; Robots which would be used to provide status of the ID card; to locate and direct the customer to different services in big trade Centres and accept payments by credit cards. Likewise, the adoption of the mobile phone applications, but the successful adaptive applications of mobile government remain limited.(United Nations, 2014). The new mobile service by the Saudi has been adopted which called MAAK. It is considered to be the mGov platform that launched by the YESSER, the national e-Government program, but still at an early stage to be fully adopted. Even it is still low in developed countries, where the mobile market is close to saturation where some governments have driven a policy direction with high priority for the mobile channel In June 2013, the Government of the United Arab Emirates decided to change the name of their eGov initiative to Mobile Government (mGov), indicating that the government’s priority on the delivery of government service to the public through their mobile phones, anywhere and round-the-clock(Government of UAE, 2013). Also the vision of the UAE emphasises on reaching to all people in order to fill the gap in the digital divide, therefore, mGov offers the opportunity to tackle the digital divide issue which remains a critical factor in the take up of online services where the Mobile is driving change and the impact of mGov will be ground-breaking in the next few years(United Nations, 2014).

The Saudi Government also offers an Open Data Initiative, which provides citizens with documents and reports from ministries and government agencies were it available to the public that encourages eParticipation to gather public opinion through surveys, public consultations and blogs all of which provided through single one-stop-shop round the clock (United Nations, 2012). Saudi eGov also increases the channels of eService delivery to meet the demands for eServices and to reduce the



digital divide's among the public by reaching everyone within the kingdom and assuring that everyone is benefiting from the system, as an example of one application called TARASOL which is the central SMS Gateway system that allows effective communications between government agencies, ministries, and users, therefore, this will increase the channels of communications between citizens and governments. While this application operated by the Government Service Bus (GSB), TARASOL adopts a rigorous security standard with an easy, efficient and effective communication.

Following the eGov strategy, the Saudi eGov paid great attention to the citizen empowerment, Human Capital Development and digital literacy skills by establishing training centres, online training and reaching the rural areas and low-income people places and villages with the e-Training Caravans which would also play a role in narrowing the digital divide among citizens. Further implementation: Data centre, Tadawulaty procurement, National Contact Centre, Government Service Bus GSB, Government Secure Network (GSN), Cloud Computing and Digital Certification all of which are to ensure a sophisticated and world class eService around the clock at the same time provide high standard security.

On the other hand the deployment of the Emirates ID Authority's Biometric Enrolment by the Emirates ID Authority recognized as one of the world's best biometric programs, where (Al-Khouri, 2012) stated that the UAE is currently taking rapid steps in integrating its identity management infrastructure and its smart card capabilities in various public sector systems and applications that there is increasing motivation in the UAE's public sector to rely on the new identity card to provide its services. With the emphasis on the e-Participation side, the UAE government started consulting more with citizens in a bid to boost transparency and allow citizens to be more involved in the public policy making by providing the e-consultation program which becomes widespread across the country. (United Nations, 2012) Stated that, the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Korea are the only two countries that score 100 percent on whether the government takes citizen's views into decision-making.

The three cases agreed that the financial element could be a barrier to implementing such activities, on the other hand funding element play as an enabling factor in pushing the implementation towards success. The financial aspects associated with this implementation been studied by all strategies and analysed by the eGov financial strategic team, taking into account that building the eGov infrastructure is a costly undertaking that requires cross-agency cross-government planning.

## Reinventing government principles as a recommended strategy:

### ○ **Catalytic Government:**

Under this type of strategy, governments are trying to increase efficiency. its rules will not be to provide direct services but to create networks and leverage resources. explore the best kind of strategies that solves most of society's problems with the focus on providing policy, social equity, direction to the economy, and preventing discrimination. For instance, Saudi Arabia launch the government Cloud Computing Initiative in order to increase the efficiency among the government agencies by sharing reliable and secure information. Also, Tadawulaty procurement initiative is another example to the enhancement of Saudi Capital Market efficiency by raising awareness and encouraging transparency in the Saudi market.

### ○ **Community Owned Government (Empowering rather than Serving):**

This strategy focuses on empowering communities to play significant roles in service delivery to improve government performance which, in return, pushes service control out of bureaucracy and place it in the hand of the community, hence, this would strength communities as they aware of their affaires and problems more than other. The e-Training Caravan initiated by the Saudi Arabian's ministry of communication and information technology aimed at empowering the Saudi's communities with the digital literacy which would enable them to master IT and telecommunications technology that eventually, would bridging the digital gap and raising awareness about the different aspects of the new technologies.

### ○ **Competitive Government (Injecting Competition into Service Delivery):**

The strategy here relies on competition to improve the quality and the effectiveness of the government services as with the competition the service providers frequently try to keep their costs down, respond quickly to changing demands, and strive to satisfy customers, therefore, they receive public recognition when they are successful. The UAE eGov have developed projects that are compatible with the nation's telecom infrastructure and increased the number of eServices delivery channels and public access such as kiosks and mobile centres also introduces telecom competition and lift regulations on wireless and other digital technologies to accelerate their deployment.

### ○ **Mission-Driven Government (Transforming Rule-Driven Organizations):**

This strategy means that each agency is responsible to implement a clear vision on its mission, then managers should be free to find the best way to accomplish that mission as the public organizations should be driven by their mission, not by their rules and their budgets. organizations tend to give

their employees the freedom to pursue the organization's mission, resulting in systems that are more efficient, effective, innovative, and flexible. In the UAE the Platform Approach initiative provides common tools and common functionalities (security, data exchange mechanisms, electronic signature) that allow service delivery. On the other hand, local agencies are directly responsible for service provision and have to coordinate their actions with others.

- **Results-Oriented Government (Funding Outcomes, Not Inputs):**

This strategy recommends results-oriented with the focus on the outcome not on the inputs which would have new ways of measuring and rewarding outcomes by measure the quantity, quality, and cost of service deliver. This new system lead to eliminate many rules and to bring high productivity and lower costs. Several aspects are, collectively, delivering the desired output - for instant, digital devices or the Internet does not in itself determine who can use the eServices effectively where they have to accompanied with the digital skills, awareness, willingness and strategy. As an outcome, they are producing a strong tools to fight poverty, increasing literacy and protecting the environment. For example, some NGOs are delivering health and education more effectively through broadband in the unstable areas such as refugee camps.

- **Customer-Driven Government (Meeting the Needs of Customer, Not the Bureaucracy):**

Usually, government services which derived by bureaucracy are often fail to meet customers need. the strategy which aims at providing citizens with services must make a greater effort to perceive the needs of those citizens also government should give them a voice through methods such as surveys, customer contact, customer interviews and feedback to choose the service that they want. Nowadays, the fast development of technologies enhanced the way governments interacts with its citizens in order to respond to their needs more effectively. The UAE eGov is providing tools to collect feedback received from citizens concerning the improvement of their eService. Furthermore, the UAE government among the top countries around the world to takes citizen's views and consulting more with citizens to be the main sources of the government decision making process.

- **Enterprising Government (Earning rather Than Spending):**

This strategy describes how governments should use innovative methods to save spending and to adopt economic sustained and also to earn money that would otherwise need to be raised from public services that only benefit some individuals or charging users fees. Governments should seek

to invest in sustainable programs that can produce savings. In Saudi Arabia and UAE are adopting the strategy, when serving citizens, to avoid advertising-based fee-based services, avoid overwhelming and added details to the system which would increase the spending.

### ○ **Anticipatory Government (Prevention rather Than Cure):**

This strategy aims at preventing problems and which focuses on studying hazards and anticipations of the occurrence of government's future problems beforehand rather than delivering services to fix or solve them. Governments should incorporate mechanisms into their decision-making processes to plan for the future, to anticipate their upcoming obligations and recognizing the impact of short-term decisions in the future builds. The deployment of the Emirates ID Authority's Biometric Enrolment by the UAE ID Authority as part of the National ID Registration Program is recognized as one of the world's best biometric programs that would solve many future problems.

### ○ **Decentralized Government (From Hierarchy to Participation and Teamwork):**

This strategy means that transfer decision-making authority to those individuals who are in the best position to develop effective and innovative solutions to problems. These individuals are usually at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. When employees have some degree of decision making authority this will improve commitment which leads to increased productivity. The strategy adopted by Dubai is an example of transferring the decision-making authority to implementing its eGov. While the government departments focused on eService delivery, the central authority focused on building common parts such as payment, customer, support, etc. needed by all agencies which effectually integrate with the central eGovernment.

### ○ **Market-Oriented Government (Leveraging Change through the Market):**

This strategy gives the priority to utilize a market mechanism instead of an administrative program to provide goods and services to the public taking in consideration that the government does not have the resources to fulfil all of the public's needs through central control. This strategy focus on steering the decisions and activities through restructuring the marketplace instead of attempting to directly control them through administrative programs. eProcurement System in Saudi Arabia is one of the most important essential pillars of the eGov and represented by Ministry of Finance. This project provides for standardization and simplification of tendering and procurement for all government sectors.

## Conclusion:

This paper is intended to gain insight into the challenges and the factors that contribute to a successful implementation of the eGov strategy initiatives in different level of instabilities. The contribution study is mainly for understanding the eGov strategy in different level of instabilities that highlights the different approaches undertaken by policymakers in different environments in order to narrow the gap between design strategy and eService delivery by conducting in-depth comparative case studies from different countries namely: UAE, Syria and Saudi Arabia. From conducting the strategy's components for each case we able to identify the implemented activities that follows the strategic plan for each case in the undertaking environment. We also explore the different components of our methodology which we followed. From the above study, the finding shows that activities in the Low Level Instability successfully implemented and was tailed to the strategic plans which was initially decided for. Also the gap between strategy and implementation was very narrow and this gap gets wider as we move toward the High Level Instability. Activities implemented in the Medium Level Instability tends to learn from best practices of the Low Level Instability that have a positive impact in narrowing the gaps from strategy to implementations. Although the implementation of most services follows its strategy, still gap between implantation and strategy but not a huge as the one shown in the High Level Instability where implementation facing different approaches. On the other hand the strategy in the High Level Instability mostly stays as theory except of some implementation. Many factors have played roles in successfully implemented the online services in the above three environments. Furthermore, we looked at the successful implementing strategies through the lenses of the reinventing government principles by (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). The main reason behind this comparative study is to learn lessons and to adopt best practice from implementations from less level instability, furthermore, whether the successful adoption in HLI will have any impact on transforming societies towards stabilities or at least provide vulnerable and displaced people with the eServices that might ease their life.

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