IT Governance in Dubai Government Organizations

By

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Abstract

Nowadays, having an effective IT department that is aligned with the business needs and aspiration has become top priority in organizations striving to stay ahead. To deal with this issue, the concept of IT Governance (IT) emerged as part of the overall concept of Corporate Governance (CG) (Brown, 2006; ITGI, 2009). Researchers have found that whenever effective ITG practices exists, IT delivers added value services that support the organization in meeting their operational and strategic needs. In addition to higher return on investments and higher stakeholders satisfaction rates (Huang and Hu, 2007).

This research investigates ITG practices in Dubai Government organizations in terms of level of awareness, current practices and the main drivers. In addition, the research aim to construct a list the critical success factors (CSF) leading to effective ITG practices in Dubai Government organizations which in returns assist in Dubai Government efforts toward excellence.

The research literature review will present a detailed overview of the concept of ITG and how it emerged from a bigger concept which is CG. It will also investigate the general main drivers and benefits of ITG. In addition, a review of current industry recognized ITG practices will be conducted providing the base knowledge to study and be able to analyze ITG practices in Dubai government which will be through case study.

A case study based on semi-structured interviews was conducted on a group of Dubai government organization along with in interview with the head of IT audit from Dubai Financial Audit Department (FAD). In general, the level of ITG practices in Dubai Government organizations is between low to medium, however there are organizations with more mature ITG practices that will be presented in the paper.

The concept of ITG is recognized in Dubai Government organizations, however the establishment and effectiveness varies between them. Those with more established practices have done it differently; they have utilized a group of formal and informal ITG practices to meet their organizations unique requirements. In addition, they considered other factors such as the culture, organizational structure, skills and management engagement.

The most common formal IT practices in Dubai Government organizations are COBIT, ITIL, KPI, BSC, ISO27001 and PMI along with other internal ITG practices that lead to improved effectiveness even without the use of formal ITG practices. COBIT is the main framework due to the fact that is being used by FAD in their IT audits where the feedback from FAD head of IT audits will be discussed in this regard.

Based on the discussions, analysis and comparisons; recommendations were provided to the interviewed organizations and to Dubai government in general to improve ITG practices. The main recommendation is to ensure management support and engagement to improve the presence of IT in an organization. Also, to deal with ITG initiatives as a culture change process considering all the surrounding effects. In addition, there is no one fits all ITG framework, every organization needs to build its centralized overall framework from applicable mature ITG practices that satisfy its requirements in a continuous improvement life cycle process.