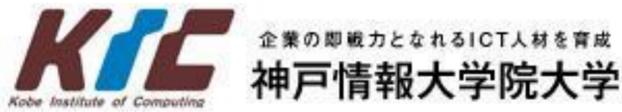


A CENTRAL PROCESS MANAGEMENT REPOSITORY AND WORKFLOW SYSTEM FOR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT: A FOCUS ON THE EASTERN CAPE



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Introduction

Background of the study

A business process is a set of linked activities which collectively transform inputs into outputs that deliver value to a service beneficiary. The management of these business processes can be described as a well-organized method to classify, design, implement, document, quantify, and govern all forms of business processes to accomplish steady, targeted outcomes aligned with the organizational strategic goals and service delivery model [1]. In the context of business process management, a central repository and workflow system can be defined as a single nexus for easy access to processes and management thereof [2]. This platform serves as a single source of standardized information about processes of an organization.

ICT landscape in South African public sector

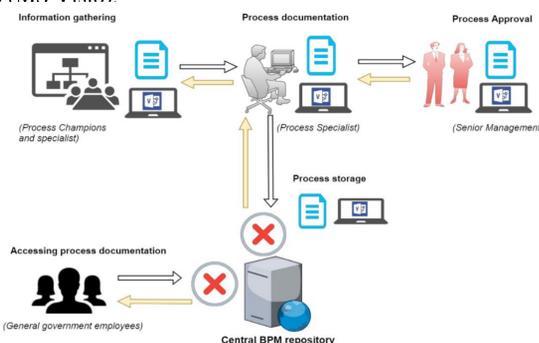
According to the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision for 2030, there is an urgent need to build a capable state that strives to improve the quality of service provided to citizens [3]. One of the key pillars was highlighted as digital transformation of the public service [3]. The South African (SA) government has various policies and statutory bodies that allow a much more conducive environment for the introduction of ICT Innovations and interventions. These include Government Information Technology Officer's Council (GITO), State Information Technology Agency (SITA), and Department of Public Services and Administration (DPSA) in charge of implementing and facilitating e-Government and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) projects at government institutions. Additionally, in the year 2006 the South African government adopted a Free Open Source Software (FOSS) policy [4]. The Global IT Report ranks the ICT environment in SA 33rd out of 139 nations. These rankings include business & innovation, political and legislative framework [5] Furthermore, ICT usage in government is ranked at 105th and ICT social impact 112th out of 135 countries [5]. This is an indication that much needs to be done in terms of e-Government initiatives, most particularly Government-to-Government (G2G) programmes. These programmes are aimed at increasing internal operations of government entities to reduce inefficiencies and service delivery costs [6].

BPM in South African public sector

From the year 2011 to 2016, the DPSA has developed and revised the Operations Management Framework for public service delivery [7]. In the framework, one of the key building blocks for operations design is business process management and it forms an important part of the South African government operations management value chain for public service.

Problem Statement

Despite the creation of an enabling environment through regulatory frameworks and support mechanisms both internally and externally, departments still find it difficult with the continuous improvement and delivery of quality services to citizens [8]. The Eastern Cape Provincial departments are unable to map services provided to ensure effective and efficient delivery. These processes are either undocumented or they are documented using a standalone process modelling tool like Microsoft Visio (MS Visio).



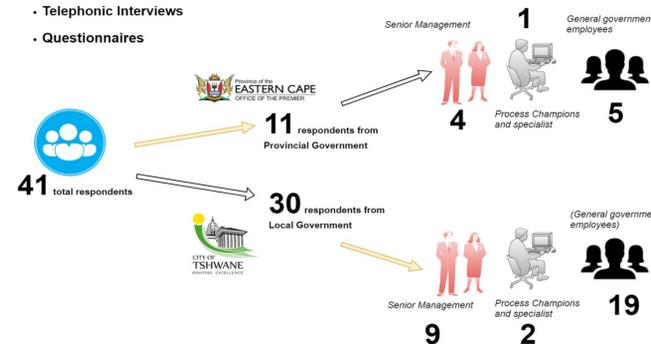
Methods

The objectives of the research was to increase service quality and the ability for Eastern Cape provincial departments to continuously improve operations. Additionally, to create a centralized process repository for the Eastern Cape provincial departments. Furthermore, the research envisages to enable the Eastern Cape provincial departments to record data about risks and potential improvements of each process using standard operating procedures.

This study followed the survey method – which in essence questions individuals and describe certain aspects or characteristics of a population. The method was most appropriate for testing the notion of Business Process Management in Government, reflecting on the attitude of concerned population, and establish the level of satisfaction with current situation.

The research data collection was conducted using the following methods:

- Telephonic Interviews
- Questionnaires

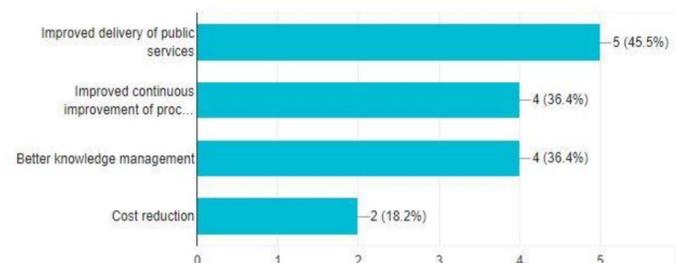


Results

In order to obtain more clarity on BPM implementation in the two government organizations, respondents were asked about the method of mapping and documentation of processes within their various departments. 81,8% of the respondents confirmed that they are using MS Visio or word to map and document processes, whilst remaining used paper(9,1%) and others said they not mapping or documenting their processes(9,1%).

We further examined by asking respondents what are the possible root-causes resulting to the aspects considered as risk areas. This was based on the aspect each respondent identified as problematic. 72,7% said the flow of documents during the processes, whilst 18,2% said it's the interactions with other systems in the processes and 9,1% said there are many dependencies that affect how the processes flow.

Respondents were asked which aspect or area of the organization would be improved due to the introduction or adoption of central process management system. 45,5% confirmed that it would improve delivery of public services, on the other hand 36,4% evenly confirmed that it will improve continuous improvement of processes. 18,2% said it would reduce costs.



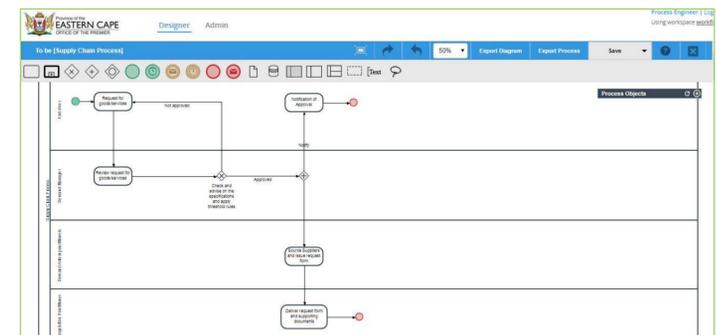
Conclusions

Recommendations for future work

BPM is still a fairly new phenomenon in government, most especially at Provincial level. This can give rise to challenges such as awareness and training of BPM in provincial departments. Standard operating procedures play an essential role in understanding how processes are performed, by who, when, and where.

The recommendation for future work should consider the aforementioned. The first recommendation is to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution onsite at one of the Eastern Cape provincial departments with actual potential users. The second recommendation is an additional functionality for standard operating procedures should be included in the central process management repository. The third recommendation would be creating impactful awareness and training internally at the provincial government. If the solution has proven to be effective, then implement it in other departments but take into consideration complexities such as change management and project management.

In summary, the central process management repository and workflow is expected to reduce turnaround time contributing to an improved delivery of public services.



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