



## **A public administration view on SDI performance: lessons from e-government**

Glenn Vancauwenberghe and Geert Bouckaert  
K.U.Leuven, Public Management Institute

As the development of spatial data infrastructures (SDI) is still a relatively young phenomenon, the knowledge and experiences with measuring and evaluating this phenomenon is rather limited. In order to tackle this lack of experiences, models and frameworks from other fields or disciplines can be of great value. The high attention that is paid to performance of public administration has led to an extensive collection of useful models and frameworks. Subsequently, these models were adopted and adjusted in the context of 'electronic' public administration (e-government). We therefore argue that both the public management literature in general as the e-government literature in particular can contribute to a better understanding of SDI performance.

Although performance has always been a central issue in public management, there is no consensus on the meaning of performance. In order to create some clarity on the meaning of the concept, a distinction can be made between the depth of performance and the span of performance (Bouckaert and Halligan, 2008). The depth of performance refers to the level on which performance can be measured and managed. Here, a distinction can be made between micro, meso and macro levels. Performance on micro level deals with the performance of an individual organisation. At meso level, performance can be measured within a policy field or a policy chain. Macro performance is government-wide. Given that the development of spatial data infrastructures affects several levels of public administration, it is recommended to measure SDI-performance at all these levels.

Whereas depth of performance refers to the vertical dimension of performance, span of performance covers the horizontal dimension. Performance in the public sector can be expressed in terms of input, process, output and outcome. Based on these factors, several ratios can be determined: economy, productivity, efficiency, effectiveness,... (Luts et al., 2008). Although these ratios are generally useful in understanding SDI performance, it is not easy to put them into practice in the context of SDI. Most of the adjustments made in e-government literature are in fact largely related to the operationalisation of this horizontal dimension of performance (Osimo, Zinnbauer and Bianchi, 2007; Heeks, 2006). In particular the issue of how to define the output of e-government receives special attention (Codagone and Undheim, 2008). Since the objectives of SDI are defined in various ways, both practice and theory can take advantage of these e-government models and frameworks to comprehend performance in an appropriate way.

The objective of this presentation is to assess the value of existing public administration and e-government models and frameworks in evaluating the performance of spatial data infrastructures. Nevertheless, we may not neglect the specific characteristics of SDI and SDI assessment (Grus et al, 2007). It is only by taking into consideration these specificities, that contributions from other disciplines or other fields can be useful and valuable.

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