

Assessing the Value of Investments in Government Interoperability

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Government investments in enhancing the interoperability of ICT systems have the potential to improve services and help governments respond to the diverse and often incompatible needs and interests of individual citizens, organizations, and society at large. These diverse needs and interests encompass a broad range of value propositions and demands that can seldom be met by single programs or assessed by simple metrics. The diversity of stakeholder needs and the complexity inherent in interoperable systems for connected government require an architecture that is up to the task. Such an architecture must include the reference models and components that can accommodate and integrate large portfolios of applications and support multiple kinds of performance assessments. The value propositions that underlie the architecture's performance assessment or reference model are fundamental. The propositions must be broad enough to span the full scope of the government program's goals, a substantial challenge. In recognition of that challenge, this chapter puts forward two perspectives for assessing the value of interoperable ICT investments, incorporating outcomes beyond financial metrics. The first is the network value approach to assessment of investments in interoperable ICT systems for government. The second is the public value framework developed by the Center for Technology in Government, which expands on the network value approach to include a broader range of public value outcomes. These approaches are illustrated in two case studies: the I-Choose project designed to produce interoperable government and private sector data about a specific agricultural market and the government of Colombia's interoperability efforts with expanded metrics based on the expansion of interoperability networks.