

## Re: [tgf] RE: TGF DELIVERABLES

26 November 2010  
11:35

Subject	Re: [tgf] RE: TGF DELIVERABLES
From	<a href="#">John Borrás</a>
To	'AndyHopkirk'
Cc	'tgf@lists.oasis-open.org'
Sent	01 November 2010 16:46

Andy

Thanks for your as usual very thoughtful contribution. If I've understood all this we could confuse ourselves with complexity if we are not careful. I don't have a readymade answer to it but it confirms my opinion that we should look to produce a generic model supported by a number, say 3-4, of scenarios for typical government/public sector set ups, which is what the List of Deliverables in the TC Charter infers. But that may be easy to say and hard to produce...-) Clearly this whole subject is something we will need to nail very early on in the next TC meeting.

BTW we had a very similar discussion about government viz-a-viz public sector when reviewing the ToR of the eGov Member Section and the accepted compromise there was to talk about "all jurisdictions of government" which is a phrase we might wish to use in the TC going forward. Something for our Editors to ponder on and come forward with a draft Glossary entry for TC approval.

John

**From:** Andy Hopkirk [<mailto:andy.hopkirk@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** 01 November 2010 15:56  
**To:** Colin Wallis  
**Cc:** tgf@lists.oasis-open.org  
**Subject:** [Bulk] Re: [tgf] RE: TGF DELIVERABLES

Hi

I concur with the notion that we get our language re scope sorted out quickly: but...

- AoG for 'all of government' sounds straightforward but is it really? Does it mean the same as AoPS = 'all of public sector', which is bigger than even the (4) main governments we have in the UK (i.e. not counting Isle of Man and the Channel Islands governments, 480+ local govs, etc etc.)?
- Likewise terms like sectors/ business areas... These may be seductively simple but again only serve to mislead in the end if one is not careful.

How to resolve?

Not sure really - these are stream of consciousness thoughts for now....

I'm reminded of some recent comments attributed to John Suffolk (UK gov CIO - kind of, given my comments just made) to the effect that of the £b17 spend in (some or all of?) UK public sector, he as as CIO had effective influence over only £b7 of it, i.e. significantly less than 50%. The remainder he had no control over and neither did central gov because it was spent under devolved spending powers to bodies who, in practice, could go their own way if they wanted to.

So, you have to ask, what's the utility of the centre deciding AoG or AoPS policy then? Could be

a bit of waste of time, eh? The 'natural units of consideration' are just not AoG or AoPS at all...

Of course one way out of this would be to remake the scenario so that AoG and or AoPS are indeed meaningful natural units: hence the suggestions recently detected that the "centre" will be "mandating" again soon...

Well, unless there is a revolutionary change to the pattern of organisation of central gov depts and the rest of the devolved 'units' in the wider public sector, I will predict that the success of this new round of mandation will be exactly the same as that of the eGIF and many other 'mandations from the centre' we've seen in years past - it won't work.

We'll end up instead at nonsense like 'mandatory guidelines' being issued by Cabinet Office or similar, of which some will just not take a blind bit of notice and do so without penalty - and rightly so, if the accountability structures remain as they are now.

One hope, therefore, for those in this 'one centre' of their effecting the changes they want across the piece might run like this...

1. control all the sizes of budgets (because that is the only effective lever you have) so that, while you can't tell them exactly what to do with their devolved budgets, you make them have to work hard to spend wisely to get what they want (continued employment, tasks completed, customers satisfied - in that order ;-))
2. provide the products/ services they have to buy to do what ever it is you pay them to do in your own shop at prices cheaper than those found elsewhere. This way, any who shop elsewhere are exposable as spendthrifts and those who do shop with you are thus controlled by your 'invisible hand' (i.e. you set the standards etc. under which your 'shop' operates).
3. "expose the spendthrifts" = all this stuff about 'open data' everywhere = exposure to public inspection and criticism, for that is more powerful than your private criticism

Beginning to sound familiar is this?... (1) = CSR outcome, average 19% cut in budgets; (2) = procurement from pre-approved suppliers and Gov Apps stores or similar 'company shops' on a preferred network = new PSN; (3) = open data initiatives and being pilloried in the press/ online forums/ blogs etc. All quite cunning really, if accurate.

So where does this leave us here....

1. as John said, not all countries are organised like the size and 'shape' of the UK - but I believe the principles below would be true in all cases
2. there are 'natural units' within which and between which useful work can be done. So the first task in scenario X (a country, county, central dept, business sector etc) is to determine what these are.
3. transformational work can take place at either intra- or inter-unit levels.
4. where transformation is intra-unit, all the items in the policy framework etc. must exist (or similar equivalents in another holistic framework) and be applied. One of the tests of the naturalness of a proposed 'natural unit' is precisely that 'be applied' is real, i.e. there is a power centre that can command action and see its commands followed through.
5. where the aspiration of transformation is inter-unit AND there is an effective power over the units being joined, then a good outcome can be achieved by the application of that power and the policy framework etc.
6. where the aspiration of transformation is inter-unit and there is NO effective power over the units being joined, then, while, yes, a good outcome can be achieved in principle, a good outcome is NOT likely in practice because of inevitable entropic effects making the independent units increasingly diverge from each other in response to the demands of whatever power centre(s) really control their destiny.

Observational aside: This inter- .v. intra- distinction can be questioned. Can they not be abstracted to a level where they are aspects of the same thing?

Consider this... In an inter-unit scenario, say  $A \leftrightarrow B$ , we think of A and B as two unique identities to be connected and made interoperable. In an intra- scenario, say inside A, we'd think of two parts (a) and (b) interoperating, say  $A(a) \leftrightarrow A(b)$  etc. Abstractly, exactly the same is happening in each case: some 'natural unit' A or B or A(a) or A(b) is interoperating with some other 'natural unit'. This leads me to consider the CST processes and artifacts to be, I suggest, scale invariant, i.e. there is no longer any utility in thinking inter- or intra- as far as the process and artifact definitions go. Similarly there's no utility in getting hung up on 'AoG' or 'sectors' or 'business areas' UNLESS these are well justified terms (= are good 'natural units' to be thinking about).

So.... To make the CST model truly scale invariant, and thus applicable to any size and form of government/ public sector/ business area/ sector etc., we only need to refine the language in which it is expressed to take it out of such context-specific terms and generalise it in terms of some definition of natural units.

Of course, when pitching/ applying it to a specific government/ public sector/ business area/ sector, one would instantiate the model in their natural unit terminology: but here we are trying to work towards defining a standard, hence, I suggest, our using a more abstract, context neutral language to describe the standard will make it a better, more widely usable standard precisely because of its context neutrality.

The key insights will be in the general model the new standard presents, not in thinking about examples of its instantiation in UK central gov/ local gov, health, justice, Scotland, Isle of Man, the Russian Federation, Moldova, Japan or New Zealand governments/ departments/ sectors or whatever.

Andy