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## Efficiency of electronic records management systems: Turkey and example of Ministry of Development

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### Abstract

It is necessary to produce, file, index, use and archive records of an institution by evaluating, disposing or transferring them in order to enable the institution to fulfil its obligations regarding its administrative and operational processes. Records Management and Archiving applications are tools employed in recording and written communication processes. The public institutions, need information systems, which enable them to manage the records systematically, produce within their business processes and conduct such processes in electronic media. Legislation and standards are being set forth for regulating intra- and inter-institutional electronic communications such as official correspondence regulations of Turkey, institutional e-mail web services, e-correspondence package, etc. Besides, activities, which must be performed for the purpose of realizing business-yield enhancing properties of ERM systems, shall be evaluated in this paper. An electronic records management (ERM) application of an institution shall provide optimal benefit to the extent that it serves to enhance business efficiency, rather than monitoring inbound and outbound records traffic of that institution. For this purpose, a preliminary evaluation has been undertaken, regarding measurable benefits of an ERM application in the example of a public institution. We administered a questionnaire to the executive officials who use the system as well as those who are in charge of records for the purpose of revealing administrative level benefits of the ERM application, used by Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Development.

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## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, institutions intend to carry e-records practices into action and to set up e-records management and archiving system. On being evaluated the works towards institutional informatics policies since 2001 in Turkey, it is expressed among the commonly dealt problems that information exchange is not conducted on electronic media. (Information Society Strategy...,2006; Information Society Strategy Action Plan...,2006; e-Dönüşüm Türkiye ..., 2005; e-Dönüşüm Türkiye..., 2003; e-Dönüşüm Türkiye..., 2006). Within the frame of Information Society Strategy (2006-2010) prepared for implementing at National level, the works were planned towards creating “Common Services Establishment” which involves all the public institutions and organizations. In this respect, Ministry of Development initialized the works to conduct the official correspondences among the public institutions and organizations to be done on e-media. The main purpose is to realize the official document communication among the public institutions and organizations on a completely paperless platform. For this purpose, the activities conducted with the coordination of Ministry of Development are being maintained under the name of e-Correspondence Project. Within the concept of e-Correspondence Project, both the requirements of the public organizations were analyzed, and the private sector companies, which develop applications in this field are asked for the opinions. The e-correspondence package including the system of encryption and high data identification was created for the purpose that the incoming and outgoing correspondences are interchanged in a confident platform. The tests fitting for the correspondence purpose were done by the 6 major public organizations aiming at the application of the created e-correspondence package system. In these tests, Electronic Records Management Systems (ERMS), through web services, transmitted the e-correspondence packages to IEM (Institutional e-Mail) service provider, and still with the web services, by interrogating the pending packages, if any, which were delivered to be appeared on the screen of the ERMS records-keepers. The institutions participating in the pilot scheme of the Ministry of Development actively put into practice the e-correspondence process, all communications among the organizations were ready to be conducted on electronic media. ERM system applied in the Ministry is thought to contribute to the productivity of the management in addition to sharing, producing, receiving, filing, evaluating and ensuring both the organizational and the inter-organizational effective use and sharing of the records created in business processes. On starting from this idea, a work was decided to be done towards researching the effectiveness of the ERM application yields at institutional level.

In the first part of the study shall include the comparative analysis aiming at measuring the productivity of the Ministry of Development ERM application. In the second part of the study shall include the survey results in which the research of the effectiveness of ERM applications. On assessing both findings of the studies separately, an institutional level result relating to the productivity value will be tried to reach.

## **2. The Reason of the Resarch and the Problem**

“The most important success factors for DM systems almost irrespective of business sector, included faster task completion, improving quality and reducing cost, the least significant being meeting statutory requirements, improving document security and improving cash flow”, McLeod used this expression for the basic acquisition supplied by ERM or EDM (McLeod. 1996). In the studies involving the digital data which constitute evidence for the effectiveness towards individuals, society and studies supplied by ERM application; (BRE/CICA, 1999; Nucleus Research, 2001; Winston, 2003; Nucleus Research, 2004; Records Management Society Bulletin, 2005; Johnston & Bowen, 2005; Marketscope for enterprise records management 2008; 2009; 2010), these effectiveness as well as undergirded by the partial digital data, the measurable data comparable to the previous state of ERM application can't be reported in detail. Especially, for the present system and the digital data relating to operation process before starting the ERM applications are not kept electronically, the access to the retrospective quantitative data is either impossible or too limited. The acquisitions relating to the process after running of the ERM application can merely be measured through the dependent variables as to the system. However, in the present study, some backward data could be reached for the fact that the data of Records Tracking System (RTS) used before ERM were transferred to ERM system. These data are considered to be comparable with the present performance on ERM System. As well as the thought constituting the basis of the study, at the same time, the

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