

# Information Technology Governance for Tunisian Universities (ITG4TU)

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## Report on Best Practices – Palma

**University of Manouba**

*ITG4TU CONSORTIUM*



### ***AMENDMENT HISTORY***

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## 1. General explanation about the visit to Palma

From 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> of October, the ITG4TU consortium, mostly with the internal team formation, visited the Universitat de les Illes Balears (UIB), on the score of study Best Practices on IT Governance. The aim of the visit is to know a real case study about a governance framework implantation based on ISO 38500 standard.

Participants from University of La Manouba, and other universities, were welcomed by Carlos Juiz, as a representative of UIB. He had the opportunity to explain in detail how he implemented the IT Governance from 2007 to 2013.

The visit of Palma was also very interesting because it was an opportunity for the invited team to finalize the draft of the Tunisian framework that was based on the Spanish ITG framework. Furthermore, the attendants from university of La Manouba took advantage of the visit to work on the remaining deliverables as the Dissemination Plan and the Sustainability Plan. EU partners review their documents already sent and gave some improvement recommendations.

The team involved in the IT governance best practice visit in Palma was composed of the coordinator and two members:

	Youssef BEN HALIMA: Dr. Ing. in computer science and Coordinator of the university of Manouba for the ITG4TU Project, Vice director of the ISAMM institution, director of Scholarship and internship, Member of the scientific board.
	IMED RIADH FARAH: Professor in Computer science and former director of the ISAMM institution, member of the scientific board of the university.



Imtiaz Fliss: Engineer, Phd and Assistant professor in Computer Science and member of the scientific board, responsible of the Information System and co-responsible of Intelligent artificial and decision specialty at the National School of Computer Science, University of Manouba.

## 2. Lessons Learnt during the visit and after the arrival

According to Carlos, a lot of lessons can be learnt from the Spanish example:

- We need to spend some time understanding how the system is working and analyzing the starting level of the university.
- The governance framework needs to be adapted to the needs of the country.
- A lot of work is needed to change the minds of the board and the operators to put the IT Governance principals in practice.
- The CIO is very important in the IT governance process deployment.
- No requests are directly transferred from the decision makers to the IT operation level, everything needs to be communicated in advance to the CEO.

## 3. IT Governance in Palma

First of all, we will explain the framework dFogIT. Then the reasons for building the framework will be presented. Finally, some of the results get between 2007 and mid-2013 will be exposed.

### 3.1. Framework

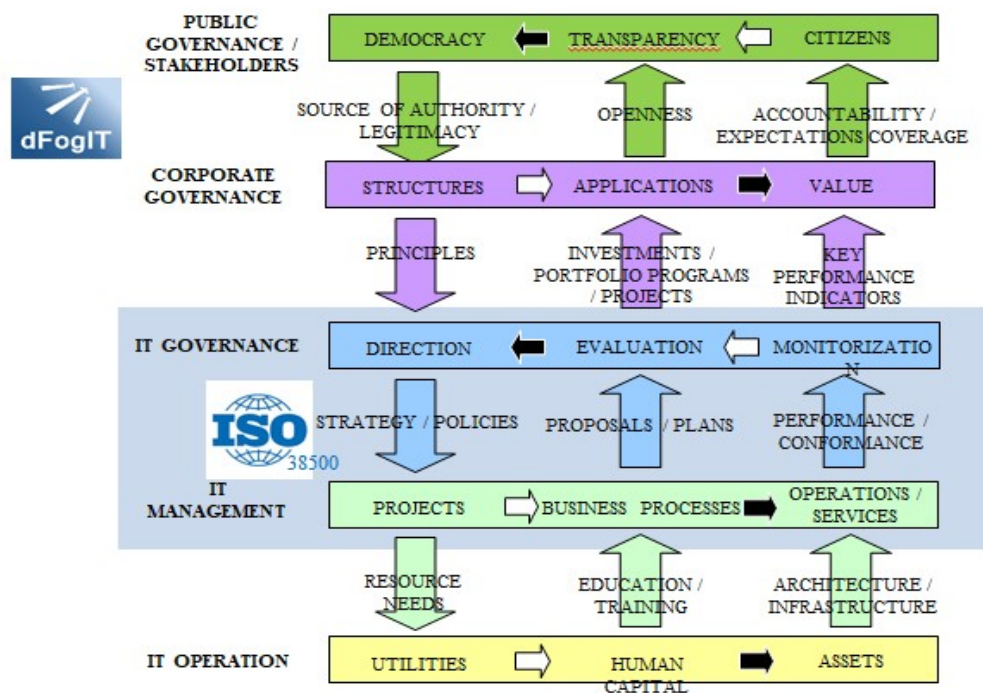


Figure 1 : dFogIT framework for Palma IT Governance Process

The framework built in Palma is one of the unique frameworks that take into consideration the public governance stakeholders' layer. The dFogIT also includes the IT Governance layer as between the IT management Layer and the corporate governance Layer to elaborate strategy and transform IT into tactics.

### 3.2. Reasons for building the dFogIT framework

There are a lot of reasons for building the IT Governance framework in Palma:

- *Absence of IT governance process, structure and communication.* There is no IT governance. The board or the IT staff is not aware of its importance and its compulsion. So, there is no process for controlling the IT staff from the board is ever implemented in a clear and formal way. The result of this absence of control process means having no regular schedule for directing the IT management. There is not any structure or committee to communicate the board strategy, either.
- *Great power of IT management in IT decision-making.* The result of absence of control over the IT staff is the outsized power of IT department in the institution. For instance, the IT department discusses the project portfolio directly with the stakeholders.



- *CIO and CTO responsibilities are confusing.* Since IT manager may be acting as CIO and CTO during years, the creation of a separate CIO office regularly leads to problems between the CIO and the IT managers.
- *Lack of reporting, control and accountability.* As there is no official communication for the IT-business alignment from the board during years, the IT department is still ungoverned and there is discouragement for IT staff for building accountability processes, either.
- *Lack of confidence in IT assets and IT staff on the part of the board.* The absence of formal and proper communication between the board and the IT staff always causes low confidence from board members in any situation in which IT assets are involved. Every activity of the IT department is ever under the suspicion of bad performance from the board viewpoint.
- *Absence of trust in IT benefits and IT staff on the part of the board.* The lack of an official and suitable communication between board and the IT staff constantly leads to low confidence from board members in any situation in which IT advantages are involved. Every activity of the IT department is ever under the suspicion of bad performance from the board opinion.
- *Lack of strategy for IT, just provisional tactics.* Due to the absence of communication and confidence from board to the IT department, the latter implements its own vision of IT benefits, resulting in biased decisions about the IT deployment at the institution.
- *IT investment based on cash-flow availability for infrastructure.* IT management spends most of the time fighting for money with CFO or other stakeholders with their own IT budget.
- *Architecture decisions based on IT staff knowledge, not user interests or institutional strategy is considered.* Architecture decisions are usually belonging to IT profile managers, but these decisions must be supervised and controlled for superior layers of the organization.
- *Absence of compliance consideration, which is different from technical issues.* For example, IT department may be usually concerned with conformance issues, but only as a defensive argument in new projects or services demanded by the institution stakeholders.
- *No participation by users, IT personnel, business units, board members or any stakeholder in IT decisions unlike during the survey phase of project management.* The project management methodology is ad hoc without using any kind of standardization for the stakeholders' participation on project decisions. Thus, sponsors of the projects together with IT staff decide the direction of the IT innovation instead of implementing a general strategy.



- *Communication with stakeholders by demand or by claim.* The communication of IT staff with the stakeholders is reactive and defensive. Firefighting in IT department remains as a busy activity leaving no time for tactics and less for strategy issues.
- *Non-IT departments examination of the IT staff as an obstacle of their mission.* The reactive communication and the absence of control of the IT staff collaborate on seeing them as sidelined employees from the institution concerns.

### 3.3. State of the IT governance after 6 years

The IT Governance process was established, and all the indicators show a growth or stability in the Maturity level indicators.

As you can see in the picture an example of the growth registered in some principals of the ISO 38500 standard:

Table 1. Key principles of good governance for public sector and their implementation in dFogIT framework at UIB until mid-2013

Principle	International Framework Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC draft)	dFogIT Framework (ISO/IEC 38500 extended) Instruments for IT governance	IT Governance Maturity (2007-2010)	IT Governance Maturity (2010-2013)
<b>Preconditions for acting in the public interest are: (International Framework principles A and B)</b>				
<b>A</b>	<b>Strong commitment to integrity, ethical values, and the rule of law</b>			
A.1	Demonstrating integrity	Principles for Corporate Governance	1	3
A.2	Strong commitment to ethical values	Principles for Corporate Governance Complaints Management	1 2	3 2
A.3	Strong commitment to the rule of law	Compliance with Environmental Information regulations	0	0
<b>B</b>	<b>Openness and stakeholder engagement</b>			
B.1	Openness	Principles for Corporate Governance Users Involvement Plan Users Complaints Management Partnership and Functional Focus Plan IT Services Catalog	1 1 1 1 2	4 1 2 1 3
B.2	Engaging individual citizens and service users effectively	Service Catalog Management Business-IT Relationship Model IT Working Groups IT QoS Report Users Experience Report Stakeholder Engagement Committee Stakeholder Perception Surveys	1 1 1 1 1 1 1	2 2 1 1 1 1 2





## 4. Conclusion

The changes that they noticed in the IT Governance process are very interesting. Before 2007 there was no real Governance of the IT in the Universitat de les Illes Balears. After 3 years of analysis, the situation still the same but the board of the university is convinced that the situation needs to be changed. The CIO proceed to the changes and established new processes for the IT Governance in the university. In 2013, the team that worked in the IT Governance process leaves the board to another team and now the situation of IT Governance is coming back to the first stage.