The Kingdom of Bahrain’s eGovernment Authority is focused on ensuring the effective delivery of government services to citizens, residents, businesses and visitors (collectively, the customers). The aim is to improve the lives of a nation’s citizens by doing much more than simply implementing technology.

This involves a broad range of responsibilities and activities owned and performed by multifunctional and multidisciplinary teams across the country, along with the strong leadership needed to implement them. In addition, it involves addressing many challenges—both internal and external. These include dealing with legislative, regulatory and budgetary barriers; evolving common technical frameworks and infrastructure; ensuring a common vision; providing leadership at many levels; strengthening coordination; improving collaboration; clarifying public-private partnerships; and monitoring and evaluating progress and results on an ongoing basis.

This vision can be achieved and the challenges addressed only through strong leadership, which can speed up the process of e-government implementation, promote coordination within and among agencies, and help reinforce good governance objectives. All e-government success stories around the world share common features: leadership, political will, commitment to clear goals and accountability. Any country that combines these characteristics has the potential to achieve effective e-government leadership. These goals can be attained only through an authority that has the span of control and depth of capabilities to guide the country. Therefore, just such an authority is imperative for the successful implementation of e-government in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

**Why COBIT 5?**

The eGovernment Authority in the Kingdom of Bahrain recognized one of the key frameworks to be adopted across government entities in the Kingdom through the Information Communication Technology Governance Council (ICTGC), which is chaired by the chief executive officer (CEO) and vice CEO of the eGovernment Authority. The ICTGC wished to implement a basic framework by which key decisions are governed and IT is managed across government entities through an appropriate balanced scorecard (BSC) model.
Hence, COBIT® 5 was chosen as the overarching framework, because it emphasizes the importance of governance and IT management together. This decision supports the ICTGC key objectives to:

- Reinforce security
- Mitigate entity risk for IT and business as a whole
- Optimize cost while improving the consistency of IT delivery
- Ease the auditing and compliance burden

Committee/Board and Leadership Acceptance

The ICTGC had been looking forward to cascading business goals to IT goals for defining priorities and responsibilities for improvement with linkage of BSC. The team analysed COBIT 5 and discovered elaborate and comprehensive guidance to undertake such a cascade. COBIT 5 provided a mechanism to structure the business goals in the BSC format and then subsequently translate them into manageable, specific IT-related goals, also in the BSC format. Both the scorecards would have 4 quadrants—financial, customer, internal, and learning and growth. These goals could then be further mapped to specific processes and practices within the IT functions. This approach aligned with the vision of ICTGC leadership, which made it easier to secure their support for its adoption.

Mapping COBIT 5 Processes to the E-government ICT Transformation Landscape

The conceptualized National Transformation Program arrived at a simple framework to map the COBIT 5 processes, along with goals, to the e-government landscape elements for ease of measurement, alignment and prioritization, as depicted in the figure 1.

Figure 1—High-level Landscape Map With COBIT 5 Processes
The 37 COBIT processes are grouped into 8 elements of the eGovernment landscape:

1. Strategy and processes: 6 IT processes
2. Financial management: 4 IT processes
3. People and resources: 2 IT processes
4. Infrastructure and operations: 8 IT processes
5. Service planning and architecture: 3 IT processes
6. Security and risk: 7 IT processes
7. Applications: 3 IT processes
8. Project portfolio management and projects: 4 IT processes

Bahrain ICT Transformation Program Approach

This program primarily surveys and assesses the IT process effectiveness, importance and ownership with a set of activities in which the main aim is to improve the information and communications technology (ICT) function of the organization and its contribution to the overall performance of the entity. The activities include:

1. **Survey IT leaders to assess IT function strengths and weaknesses**—The IT leadership team will complete a short survey to identify the current state of IT governance and management processes focusing on:
   - Effectiveness
   - Importance
   - Ownership

**Figure 2** depicts the sample methodology followed to assess strengths and weaknesses of the process to prioritize, where the IT processes ranked based on their perceived importance and effectiveness—from most important to least important and from least effective to most effective.
This data analysis was done to understand which processes the team believes are currently performing well, which processes require improvement, and which processes the team believes are crucial to them and to the organization.

Figure 2—Prioritization Process

Use this grid to prioritize team’s process improvement initiatives. The top processes in each quadrant have been listed in this grid. Focus your time and energy on the processes in the top left quadrant first, which received high importance scores but low effectiveness scores.

2. **Review report and establish clear ownership for critical IT functions:**
   - Review the results of the report to understand the team’s perception of the importance and effectiveness of each process.
   - Identify where the gaps exist between the team’s process scores to see where there is a difference in opinion.
   - Discuss which processes, if improved, would have the greatest impact on departments and the organization.
   - Build a plan to ensure clear accountability and engage a broader team with process accountability.
   - Ensure that key IT leaders are not overwhelmed with accountability.

3. **Conduct a team alignment exercise:**
   - Gather the team and discuss process discrepancies and those with the greatest gaps in scores.
   - Bring the entire team onto the same page to determine which processes are most important and least effective.
   - Establish process owners for the IT processes. Each relevant process must have at least one person accountable for monitoring and improvement initiatives.
4. **Create a road map of key processes to improve:**
   - Once the team has reached a consensus on which processes to focus, create a process improvement road map outlining which processes will be focused on over the next 12 months.
   - Determine responsibilities and time lines, as well as regular checkpoints, to monitor progress with the team.

**Conclusion**

The governance of enterprise IT (GEIT) implementation life cycle is ongoing for all government organizations in the Kingdom of Bahrain through the National ICT Transformation Program, as stated previously. As it moves forward, collaboration between business units and process owners is required as the defined processes cross entity lines and bridge gaps between service support, business and operational management, and overall governance of the government entity.

The envisioned results of an integrated, operational environment will allow the entity to measure the return on investment (ROI) and evaluate the contribution of COBIT 5 toward the overall goal of a holistic and managed enterprise, boosting collaboration and creating an efficient process for excellence among all teams.

Evolution through the GEIT implementation life cycle to a point of determining capability is the next step in the evolution as an implementation group.

**Harikrishnan Sugumaran, ITIL, ToGAF**

Is an IT governance architect with the eGovernment Authority in the Kingdom of Bahrain. He is a practicing architect and business technology leader with more than 18 years of professional experience, spanning management consulting, strategic planning, business and enterprise architecture, governance architecture, and technology advisory, across diverse industry segment and geographic locations.

**Khalid Al-Mutawah, Ph.D.**

Is the director of Enterprise Architecture and IT at the eGovernment Authority in the Kingdom of Bahrain. His focus is on covering IT architectures and infrastructures and using the benefits of IT to solve business problems throughout the process of cost and risk management.

**Zakareya Ahmed Al-Khaja, Ph.D.**

Is the vice CEO of the eGovernment Authority in the Kingdom of Bahrain. He is a member of a number of national specialized committees, including Bahrain's first National eGovernment Strategy Committee (2007-2010) and the second (2011-2016), the National ICT Governance Committee, and the Technical Committee of the GCC Ministerial Committee for eGovernment.