

WITOLD SZUMOWSKI
 SZYMON CYFERT

A Model for evaluating strategic maturity of the local government¹

1. Introduction

The growing level of changes forces organizations to adapt quickly to new requirements. The need for fast implementation of change can be posed in contrast to inertia which within any organization may result in delaying the effects of the process of change. A correctly formulated strategy should allow the management of an organization to settle the above-mentioned issue, related to the necessity of fast response to the arising opportunities, at the same time taking into account the far-reaching effects of such reactions.

It can be noted that public organizations, due to their different sets of variables and their diversified needs, demonstrate a varied level of maturity in respect of formulating their strategy.

The aim of this article is to present the authors' proposal of the model for evaluating strategic maturity in the structures of local

Witold Szumowski, Ph.D.
 Wrocław University of Economics
 Poland

Prof. Szymon Cyfert
 Poznań University of Economics
 Poland

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government, related to the principles of the concept of good governance. Based on the analysis of the literature dealing with this subject, the authors considered the essence of the concept of good governance, pointed out the role of maturity models in the process of improving an organization and also discussed the significance of strategy for the local government structures. The need, clearly demonstrated in this study, for carrying out an evaluation of the levels of maturity of strategy in the local administration, together with the indicated purposefulness of referring in that process of evaluation to the assumptions of the concept of good governance, provided the basis for the proposed model of strategic maturity in the local government structures.

2. The essence of good governance

The term of good governance was first used in the study prepared by the World Bank in 1989 (the World Bank, 1989) whose experts, aiming at increasing the levels of effectiveness of support offered to the developing countries, worked on the assumption that the non-effectiveness of those programs is related to the lack of administrative solutions allowing for making appropriate use of the granted financial support. This, in turn, provided the basis for defining the principles aimed at indicating the desirable direction of changes in the processes of decision-making and governance, at the same time highlighting the areas requiring reform and the instruments whose implementation would be required for the success of the conducted activities/operations.

On defining the principles of good governance, the World Bank initiated a discussion contributing to the development of the concept of public governance, subsequently joined by international banks, international organizations and the governments of individual countries. Whereas in the initial stages of development of the concept of good governance, the main emphasis was placed on the issues connected with the efficient and effective functioning of administration (especially in regard of absorbing financial support), improving the quality of management and developing administrative potential, in the later stages the weight has shifted towards the matters related to political and economic conditions.

The concept of good governance developed within the practical experience of management has influenced significantly the discourse in the field of research aimed at providing a more precise view of the essence and nature of good governance (Munshi 2004, p. 51; Hirst 2000, p. 14; Rothstein, Teorell 2008, p. 170; Jessep 2007 pp. 14, 23). The analysis of the Scopus data base indicates

a dynamic and unflagging growth of interest in the concept of good governance since 1989.

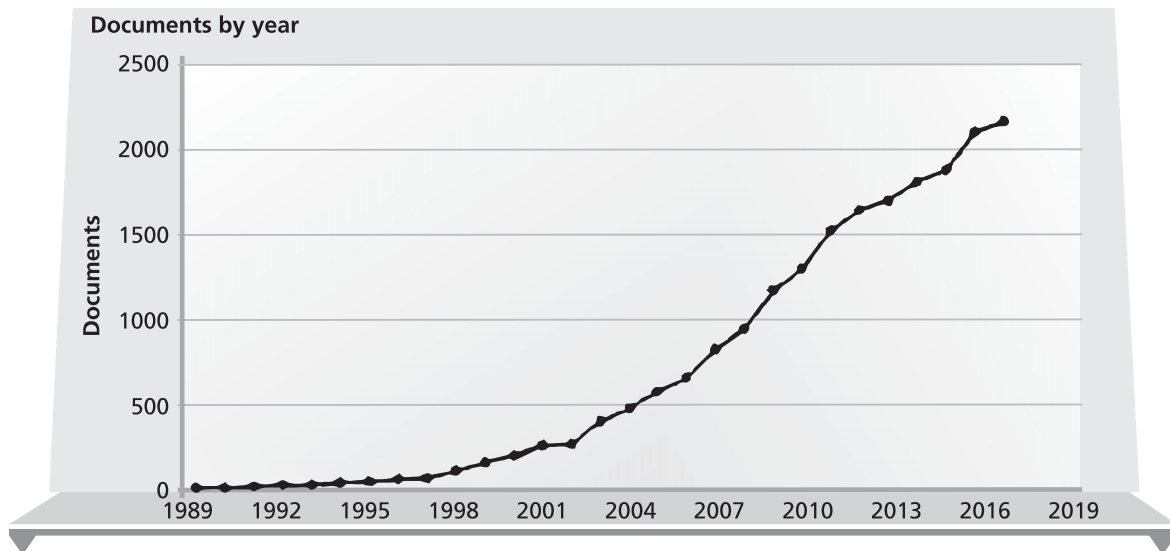


Figure 1. Number of publications in the Scopus data base referring to the concept of good governance

Source: scopus data base

However, it should be noted that despite the in-depth discussion on the definition of good governance (an extensive review of the specialist literature regarding the idea of good governance can be found in the works by R. M. Gisselquist (2012) and T. B. Jørgensen and D.L. Sørensen (2013, pp.71-95), the definitions of the essence and nature of good governance lack precision. Moreover, one can observe a growing level of chaos in terminology, related to a pronounced diversity of individual approaches to defining good governance, where the problem seems to arise not from the multiplicity of the attitudes but from vital differences in determining the sets of principles of good governance. To illustrate the above statement one could point out the World Bank's proposal which currently consists of five elements to appraise the progress of individual countries striving to implement the principles of good governance: (1) accountability, (2) political stability, (3) effectiveness and management quality, (4) rule of law, (5) transparency and controlling corruption. The European Commission model lists five principles: (1) openness, (2) participation, (3) accountability, (4) effectiveness, (5) coherence. Equally, the analysed definitions of the term good governance formulated

by other supranational organizations and financial institutions (the African Development Bank, 1999; the Asian Development Bank, 1999; OECD, 2010; Qudrat-I Elahi K., 2009; IFAD, 1999) draw attention to the high level of diversification of this concept. In this case diversification is not related to the proposed sets of principles of good governance, but to a different perception of the nature of good governance from the viewpoint of the aim to which their application should lead. These differences arise both from the goals of the institutions defining such principles, and from the problems existing within the area of interest of these entities. Thus, when defining the term good governance, banks stress the aspect of effectiveness and economic development, while international institutions such as the United Nations and The European Union are mostly concerned with the issues of democracy, equality, respect for the principles of law and order, as well as the protection of human rights (Szumowski 2017, p.116).

The outlined above chaos of ideas enforces the necessity of proposing a definition of good governance, allowing for a greater precision in outlining the scope of research of this study. According to this definition, good governance as a concept rooted in the trend of public governance, describes a positive vision of state rule in a democratic system, in which the authorities or the public administration institutions directed by public interest in the process of governing, and aiming at the deliverance of the results expected by citizens, refer to the set of the determined principles of governance (Szumowski, 2017, p. 116). The thus defined concept of good governance may be, in a certain sense, identified with the quality of governance. In order to make the above definition more precise one should indicate the principles evaluating and improving the process of governance (while taking into consideration both cultural conditioning and democratic traditions, the authors assumed the principles accepted within the European Union):

1. Transparency, interpreted as conducting an active information policy on the subject of both planned and already undertaken actions, and providing the interested parties/stakeholders with access to any relevant sources of information also within the scope of the implemented processes and procedures.
2. Participation, interpreted as carrying out activities conditioned by transparency which enable participation of interested parties/stakeholders in the process of decision-making by the authorities. Such a participation requires both the existence of mechanisms facilitating their contribution as well as actions aimed at engaging the interested parties/stakeholders.

3. Effectiveness and efficiency, interpreted as setting and achieving, through the activity of public administration, aims which serve to satisfy the needs of citizens, while at the same time striving to minimize the costs of such actions and making the best use of available resources.
4. Accountability, interpreted as communicating with the interested parties/stakeholders, and in particular explaining and justifying actions undertaken by authorities and their effects, where the stakeholders can ask questions and give their opinions, and the relevant entity may have to bear the consequences of these actions.
5. Cohesion, interpreted as the scope of mutual adaptation of individual elements within an organization, and the adaptation of these elements to their environment (in particular strategy, which in the case of public institutions is also connected with planning and coordination of the implemented policies) (Szumowski 2018).

3. Maturity models in the process of an organization's improvement

The first model of maturity in the area of management science was presented in 1973 by L. Nolan (1973), who created a phasic model of implementing and developing IT systems in management. In 1979 a dynamic development of the ICT systems directed L. Nolan to extending that model. The modified model (Nolan 1979), while describing individual stages of development (maturity) of processing data within an organization, determined the variables influencing development in this scope (such as the IT budget), at the same time pointing out the importance of technological changes (Hollyhead, Robson 2012, p. 47). In 1979 P.B. Crosby (1979) proposed a 5-degree matrix of maturity (QMMG), assuming the assessment of quality management in six dimensions (von Scheel et al., 2015, p. 396). However, despite the fact that the first studies emerged in the 1970s, only from the early 1990s onwards could one observe the dynamics of an increased interest in the concept of the maturity models (see figure 2).

The construction of the maturity models assumes the distinction of four optional components in their description (see table 1):

1. Dimensions and subcategories of these dimensions. The number of dimensions depends on the sectoral model for which the degrees of organizational development are determined. For example, in the P3M3 model targeted at evaluating the maturity of an organization in relation to projects, the appraisal is conducted in three dimensions: projects, programmes and project portfolio (Office of Government Commerce, 2006). The process and

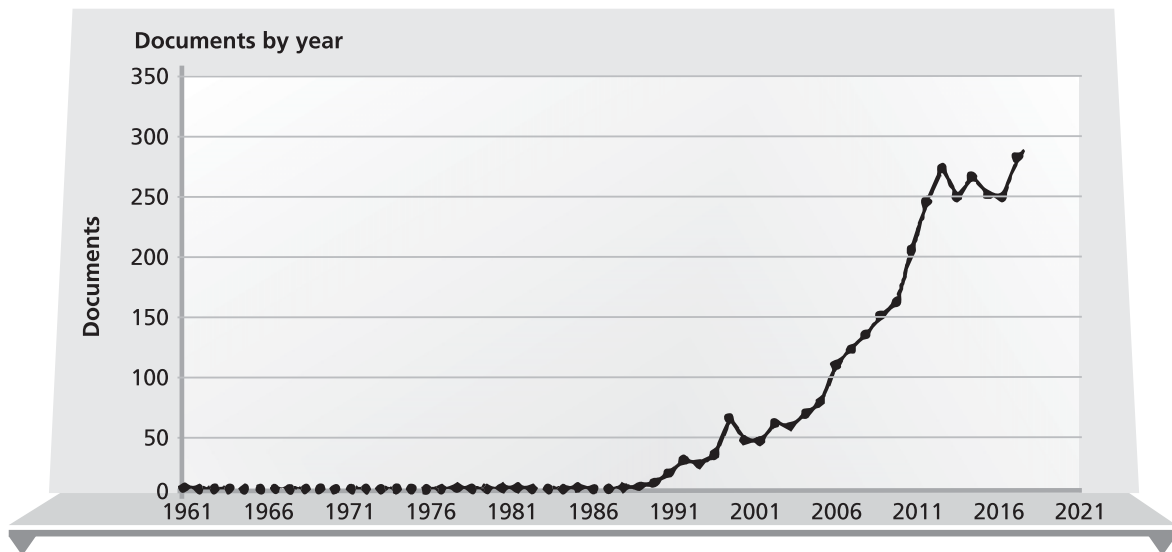


Figure 2. Number of publications in the Scopus data base referring to the models of maturity

Source: scopus data base

maturity model of M. Hammer involves the following dimensions: the way of planning, the owner, infrastructure, measures and effectiveness. Each dimension is further defined with the use of subcategories – for example the dimension ‘effectiveness’ in the M. Hammer model consists of the following subcategories: knowledge, skills, behaviour (Hammer 2007, p.4);

2. Paths reaching to maturity (levels of fulfilment). In each model for each criterion there is a determined path to achieve perfection (see figure 3), composed of the levels defined for each dimension, which an organization should gradually achieve on the way to the highest level of maturity.
3. Indicators of the level of maturity. By synthesizing the proposed levels of maturity presented in individual models, they can be formulated as the following proposal (cf. von Scheel et al. (2015, p. 399):
 - Level 1 – uncertainty, this phase of organizational development is usually characterised by informal activities which are chaotic and carried out ad hoc. The majority of actions are not defined, achieving success depends entirely on the staff effort and not the proper organization,
 - Level 2 – repeatable, basic actions taken within the implemented processes in order to reach a certain level of repetitiveness of the previously achieved results are defined, determines basic ways of controlling the costs, timetables and effects. Operations are planned and controlled but are not described in detail,

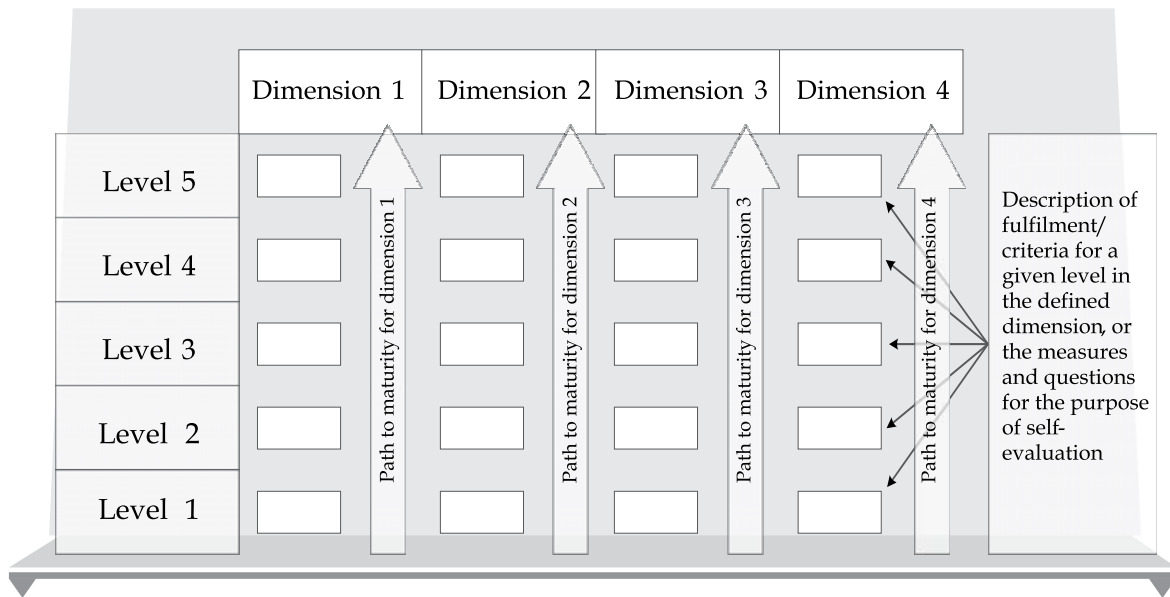


Figure 3. Simplified diagram of the structure of maturity models

Source: Martusewicz, Szumowski 2018

- Level 3 – awakening, activities both at strategic and operational level are described in detail, documented, standardized and integrated into a set of standard organizational competences. Sets of standard methods and organizational techniques are used in the programmes, projects and processes implemented in organizational activities,
 - Level 4 – knowledge, the worked out operations are continuously perfected, analysed and described as best practices in management, while activities within processes and projects are described in detail and assessed using quantitative measures. This means statistical thinking and evidence-based management,
 - Level 5 – certainty, constant improvement ingrained in the organizational culture of a company, the feedback information gathered both in the area of the realized and the implemented processes. The process of improvement is a central element of a management system.
4. Situational factors which are the explanatory variables in a given model.

The logic of maturity models is based on the assumption that there is a possibility of defining predictable patterns of evolution and directions of organizational change. These patterns are reflected in the construction of models demonstrating a path of development, starting from the initial stage

up to the state indicating full maturity. From the viewpoint of the purpose of implementation, models of maturity perform three basic functions (Becker et al. 2009; De Bruin et al. 2005; Maier et al. 2009, Poppelbub, Roglinger 2011, Głuszek, Kacała 2015, p.28):

- descriptive – as descriptive models which are a diagnostic tool used to establish the current state for the purposes of internal and external reporting,
- prescriptive – normative models, directional, serving the improvement of an organization or its aspects by indicating the path to reach the defined organizational state,
- comparative – as models enabling benchmarking, internal and/or external.

Such differentiation of the functions of maturity models, as well as the possibility of applying them in various areas within an organization, considering diverse situational variables (see table 1), causes that maturity models may be treated as:

- models of reference or sets of mature practices serving to assess the competences of an organization (Office of Government Commerce 2010, p. 127),
- tools that enable carrying out internal and external benchmarking of an organization and constitute a set of guidelines for the evolutionary process of organizational development (Lasrado, Vatrappu, Andersen 2015),
- structuralized sets of elements describing required competences of an organization on individual levels (von Scheel et al., 2015, p. 395).

Table 1. Juxtaposition of maturity models

Model	Area of application in an organization	Levels of maturity	Situational variables	Author
Stages of growth model	IT	Initiation, contagion, control, integration, data administration, maturity	Development of technology, budget	L. Nolan
QMMG	Quality management	Uncertainty, awakening, enlightenment, wisdom, certainty	-	P.B. Crosby
Levels of organizational maturity	Quality management	Lack of formal approach; reactive, stable approach; systemic formal approach; constant improvement; best achievements in its own class	-	norma ISO 9004:2000

Human resource strategic matrix	Human resources management	Initiation; functional growth ; controlled growth, functional integration; strategic integration	Size of an organization, business aims, stages of growth, organizational complexity	L. Baird and I. Meshoulam
RIMS Risk Maturity Model	Risk management	Ad hoc, initial; repeatable; managed, leadership	-	RIMS
PRI	Public management	Five defined (unnamed) maturity levels	-	J. Bober et al.
A Maturity Model from Data Analytics to Continuous Assurance	Finance management	Traditional auditing, ad hoc integrated analytics, continuous risk assessment & continuous auditing, integrated continuous auditing & continuous monitoring, continuous assurance of enterprise risk management	-	KPMG
Tax Management Maturity Model (T3M)	Finance management	Initial, informal, standardised managed, optimised	-	PWC
BPO maturity model	Process management	Ad hoc, defined, linked, integrated, extended.	-	Software Engineering Institute
Capability Maturity Model for Software	Software development process	Initial, repeatable, defined, managed , optimizing	-	Software Engineering Institute
Business Process Maturity Model (BPMM)	Process management	Siloed; tactical integration; process orientation, intelligent operating network	-	David M. Fisher
P3M3	Project management	Awareness, repeatable, defined, managed, optimized	-	Office of Government Commerce

Project management maturity model (Kerzner - PMMM)	Project management	Common language; common processes; singular methodology; benchmarking; continuous improvement	-	H. Kerzner
PCMM 2.0	Human resources management	Initial, managed, defined, predictable, optimizing	Regional and organizational culture, business aims	B.Curtis B.Hefley S. Miller
Processes audit	Process management	Four defined (unnamed) levels in the area of process and company management	-	M Hammer

Source: own elaboration based on: (Hollyhead, Robson, 2012, p. 47); (von Scheel et al., 2015, p. 396); (PN-EN ISO 9004:2000); (Baird, Meshoulam, 1988); (RIMS, 2006); (Bober, 2015); (KPMG, 2015), (PWC, 2015); (Lockamy, McCormack, 2004); (Fisher, 2004); (OGC, 2006, p. 7); (Mateen, 2015, p. 16); (Curtis, Hefley, Miller, 2009); (Hammer, 2007)

The basic advantage of maturity models is not just defining the level of maturity reached by an organization, but pointing out actions which should be taken in order that the organization can reach a higher level of perfection. What is important is that the multidimensionality of the models prompts the improvement of not only individual areas (which could result in producing the phenomenon of sub-optimization), but the organization treated holistically

4. Role of strategy of local government

In the literature dedicated to this subject there is no single generally accepted definition of strategy. However, the majority of authors highlight certain critical features of strategy, such as intensive development of an organization, long-term perspective of activity, comprehensive nature of strategic decisions (Ansoff 1985; Stabryła 2002; Obłój 2010; Krupski, Niemczyk, Stańczyk-Hugiet 2009; Romanowska 2009; Pierścionek 2011; Kaleta 2013; Niemczyk 2013), whose inclusion provides the basis for the long-term formation of competitive advantage.

Whereas in the case of companies there is an undisputable need for implementing a process of strategic management, in the case of local government administration, due to the absence of the need to create a competitive advantage, the issue of building a strategy may not seem so obvious. However, a long-term horizon of the realised actions, the need to manage complex investment projects

or the necessity to make decisions in favour of local communities, swing the balance towards the legitimacy of elaborating a strategy. It can be noted here that the local authorities are undergoing the process of transformation from the traditional management to the so-called codetermination, based on market mechanisms and methods of management which have been effective for companies.

The research conducted on the strategy of the local government (Kłodziński 2009) indicating a diversity of levels in the advancement of implementing strategic actions, constitute the basis for posing questions referring to the level of strategic maturity of the authorities and reasons for the existing state of affairs. Because the knowledge about the current state of strategic maturity and the knowledge about the optimal level from the viewpoint of the existing conditions, constitute the basis for the proposed changes, the answers to the above-mentioned questions is considered crucial for the development of local authorities in the long run.

5. A model for evaluating strategic maturity of local government

This discussion provides the basis for making two comments which constitute the point of departure for elaborating the model of evaluating strategic maturity of local government: (1) there is a legitimate need to evaluate the level of strategic maturity of the local government, (2) it is necessary to include in such an evaluation the assumptions of the concept of good governance.

In constructing the model of evaluating strategic maturity of local government it was assumed that four generic stages can be distinguished in the strategy-formulating process (Krupski, Niemczyk and Stańczyk - Hugiet 2009; Romanowska 2009): (1) strategic analysis, (2) formulating a strategy, (3) implementing and communicating a strategy, (4) strategic control. The highly generalized level of the above model and the non-inclusion in it of the specific conditions of the functioning of local government has led to elaboration of more detailed stages and distinguishing nine actions:

- identification and appraisal of plans formulated by the higher-level units,
- identification of stakeholders/interested parties and informing them about the commencement of the process of shaping communal strategy,
- obtaining information about the opinions and needs of the stakeholders/interested parties in the context of shaping strategy for a commune,
- preparing a strategy with the participation of stakeholders,
- providing stakeholders/interested parties with access to communal strategy,

- preparing and implementing a system measuring effectiveness and efficiency in the realization of strategic aims,
- obtaining feedback from the stakeholders/interested parties on their appraisal of the implementation of the communal strategy,
- translating strategy into action,
- publicising information on implementation of strategy.

Imposing the principles of good governance on the defined set of strategic actions described in the earlier considerations provided the basis for the construction of a model of evaluating strategic maturity of local government (see figure 4).

Such a model allows for the evaluation of strategy of the local government from the following perspective:

- transparency of the preparation of plans from the outset,
- participation in planning,
- cohesion at the outset,
- cohesion on conclusion,
- efficiency and effectiveness of the realization of the plans,
- accountability (mechanisms of public scrutiny),
- transparency of the prepared plans,
- transparency of the achieved results.

For each measure (defining the level of observance of the principles of good governance) in the model a scale from 0 to 4 is proposed, where 0 means the lack of action in a given dimension, and 4 the full realization of actions in a given dimension. The above assumption can be illustrated using the example of transparency:

- level 0 – nonexistent practice of informing the stakeholders/interested parties about the undertaken planning of actions,
- level 1 – actions undertaken in the scope of informing the stakeholders are incidental and occur when necessary (based on the subjective opinion of the officials or due to legal requirements of conducting public consultations), there are no defined ways of passing the information to stakeholders and no formal procedures in this area,
- level 2 – actions undertaken in the scope of informing the stakeholders about the planned activities are of a repetitive nature, it is possible to indicate certain practices in this area, the actions are partly included in the procedures,
- level 3 – actions related to informing the stakeholders before the commencement of a planning process are defined in detail, documented, standardized and integrated. A standard repetitive information scheme is applied,

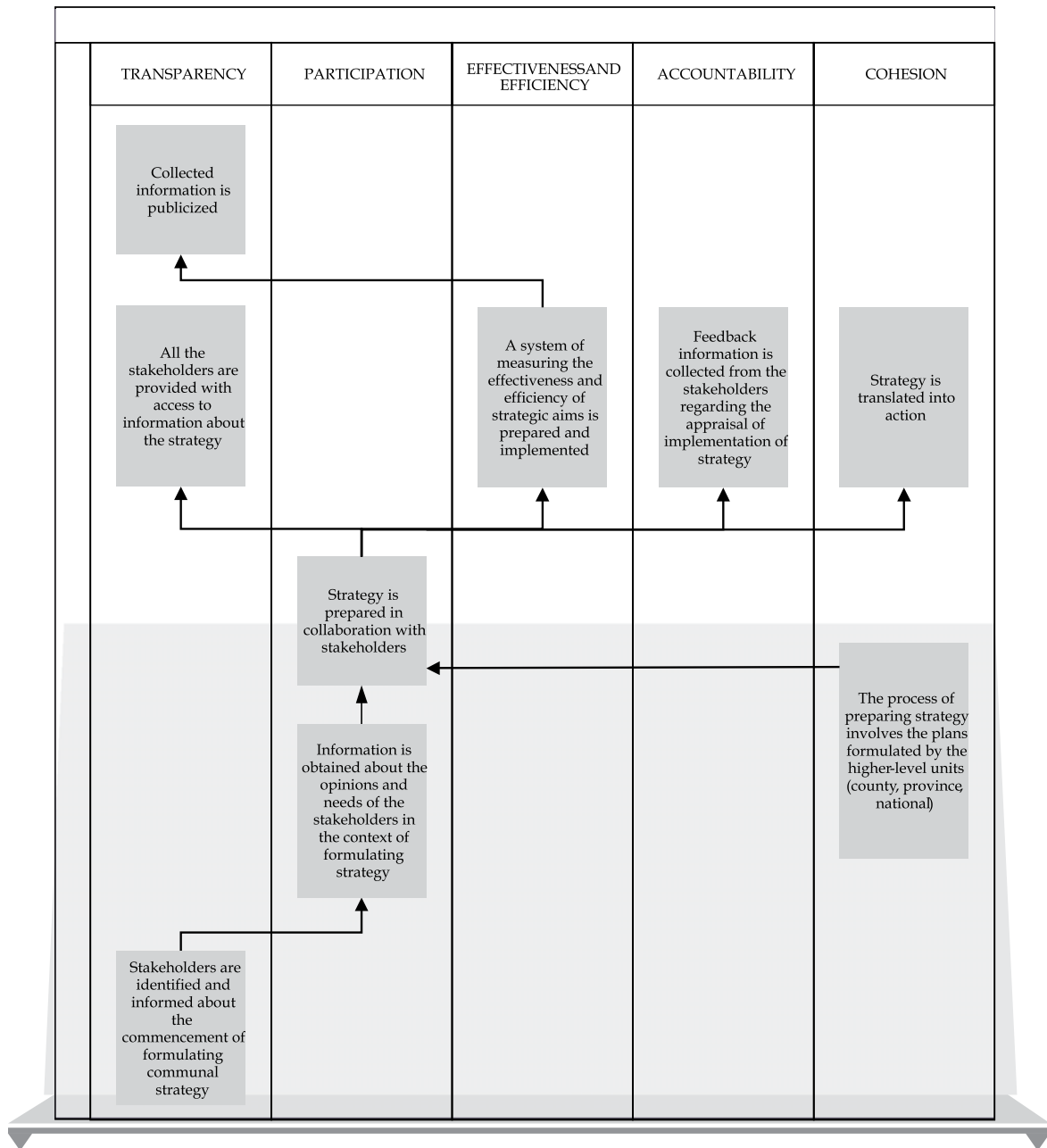


Figure 4. Model of evaluating strategic maturity of local government

Source: own elaboration

- level 4 – the elaborated ways of passing information before the commencement of a planning process are continuously analysed and improved, the relevant

best practices are described. There is a continuous appraisal of the carried out activities, and the appropriate indicators have been created.

6. Conclusion

The model of evaluating the strategic maturity of the structures of local government presented in this article, constitutes the authors' own proposal which requires both verifying and exemplifying to enable evaluating the correctness of its formulation. On the other hand, from the perspective of the ongoing process of change within the units of local administration, it will become the point of departure for a discussion about the ways of evaluating strategy, and as a result also a discussion about the instruments and methods of improving the strategy of local government.

Summary

A Model for evaluating strategic maturity of the local government

A significant level of uniqueness and variability of the carried out tasks compel the management of contemporary organizations to continuously search for methods and concepts allowing to increase flexibility in adapting their organizations to ongoing changes. One of such concepts oriented at increasing the levels of flexibility of an organization is strategy, which up to the end of the last century was used mainly in organizations driven by financial results. Yet the analysis of the phenomena taking place in both the closer and more removed environment of the local administration allows us to observe that these entities, operating under public scrutiny and political pressure, have to face up to increasingly complex requirements regarding the reduction of time spent on the realization of tasks in hand having limited financial resources at their disposal and ensuring the high quality of the services rendered which is possible, among others, due to locating their activities in strategic space. However it should be noted that in order to obtain results expected from the strategy, it is necessary to adjust the level of its advancement to both external and internal conditions, which in turn demands evaluating its strategic maturity. The aim of this article is to present the authors' proposal of a model for evaluation of strategic maturity of the local government, based on the assumptions of the good governance

concept. On the basis of the analysed subject literature, the authors addressed the essence of the concept of good governance, pointed out the role of maturity models in the process of improving an organization and discussed the importance of strategy in the local administration. The demonstrated need for conducting evaluation of the levels of maturity in the strategy of local government, as well as the advisability of including in the process of evaluation the main assumptions of the good governance concept raised in this study, provided the basis for the proposed model of evaluating strategic maturity of the local government.

Keywords: *Strategy, strategic maturity, local government administration.*

Streszczenie

Model oceny dojrzałości strategicznej urzędów administracji samorządowej

Wysoki stopień niepowtarzalności i zmienność realizowanych zadań zmuszają zarządzających współczesnymi organizacjami do nieustannego poszukiwania metod i koncepcji pozwalających na zwiększenie poziomu elastyczności dostosowania organizacji do zachodzących zmian.

Analiza zjawisk zachodzących w otoczeniu bliższym i dalszym urzędów administracji samorządowej pozwala zauważyć, iż podmioty te znajdując pod presją publiczną i polityczną, muszą sprostać coraz bardziej złożonym wymaganiom dotyczącym redukcji czasu realizowanych zadań, przy jednoczesnym wykorzystaniu ograniczonych środków finansowych i zapewnieniu wysokiej jakości świadczonych usług, co możliwe jest do osiągnięcia między innymi poprzez osadzenie ich działań w przestrzeni strategicznej. Należy jednak zauważyć, że aby strategia przyniosła oczekiwane korzyści konieczne jest dopasowanie poziomu jej zaawansowania do wewnętrznych i zewnętrznych uwarunkowań, co wymusza konieczność dokonania pomiaru oceny dojrzałości strategicznej. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie autorskiej propozycji modelu oceny dojrzałości strategicznej urzędów administracji samorządowej, odwołującego się do założeń koncepcji good governance. W oparciu o analizę literatury przedmiotu omówiono istotę koncepcji good

governance, wskazano na rolę modeli dojrzałości w procesie doskonalenia organizacji oraz przeprowadzono dyskusję nad znaczeniem strategii w urzędach administracji samorządowej. Wykazana zasadność przeprowadzania oceny poziomu dojrzałości strategii urzędów administracji samorządowej, a także podniesiona w opracowaniu celowość uwzględniania w procesie oceny założeń koncepcji good governance, stanowiły podstawę do zaproponowania modelu oceny dojrzałości strategicznej urzędów administracji samorządowej.

Słowa

kluczowe: *strategia, dojrzałość strategiczna, urzędy administracji samorządowej.*

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Classification: M10, D73

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