

# **Some considerations on approaches in SP information systems implementation**

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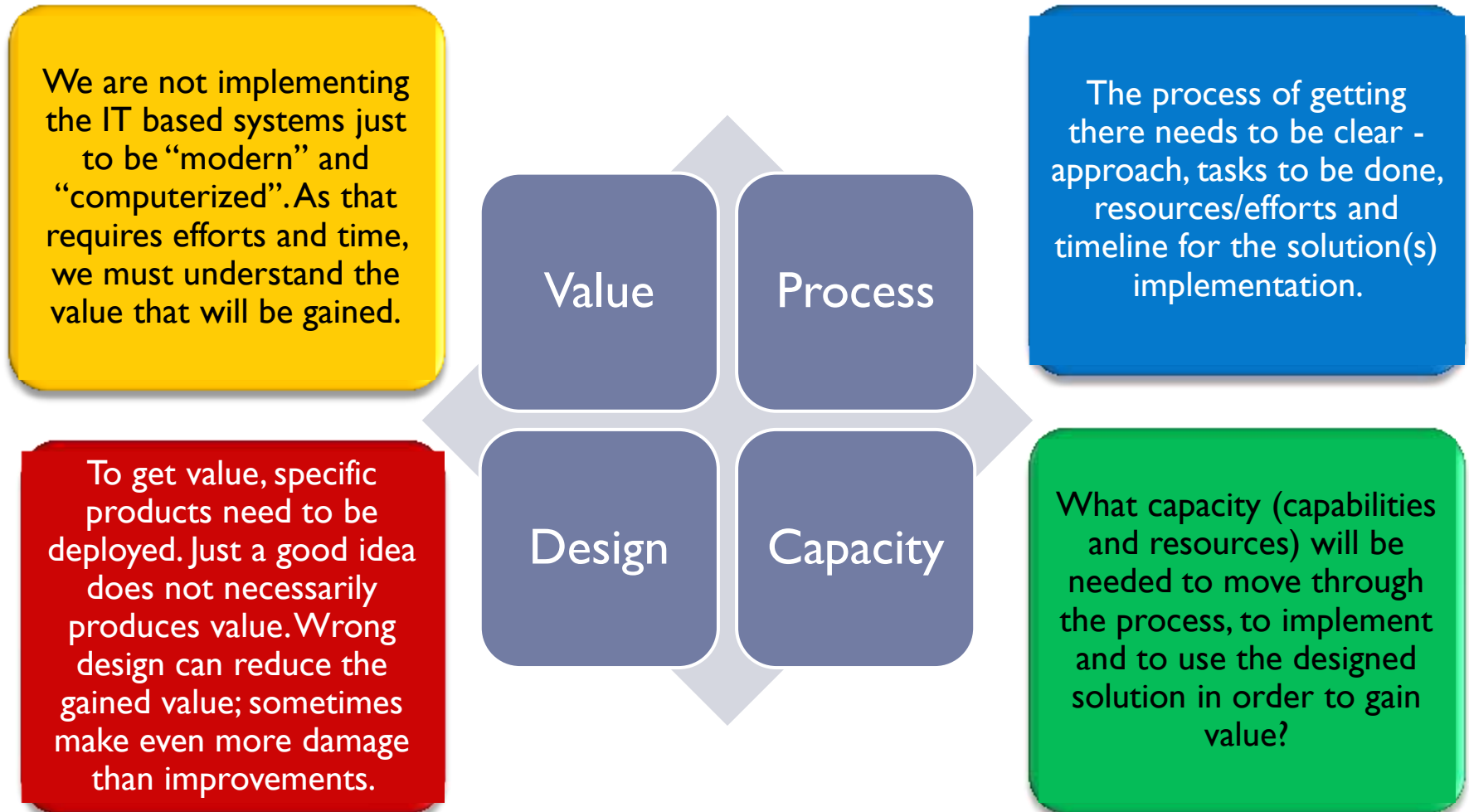
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# Information technology (IT) for social protection

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- ▶ Targeting, eligibility, cross-checks, ...it's all about **information processing**
- ▶ Source of data generated for **evidence based policy making**
- ▶ It is the backbone of social protection/safety net systems reforms

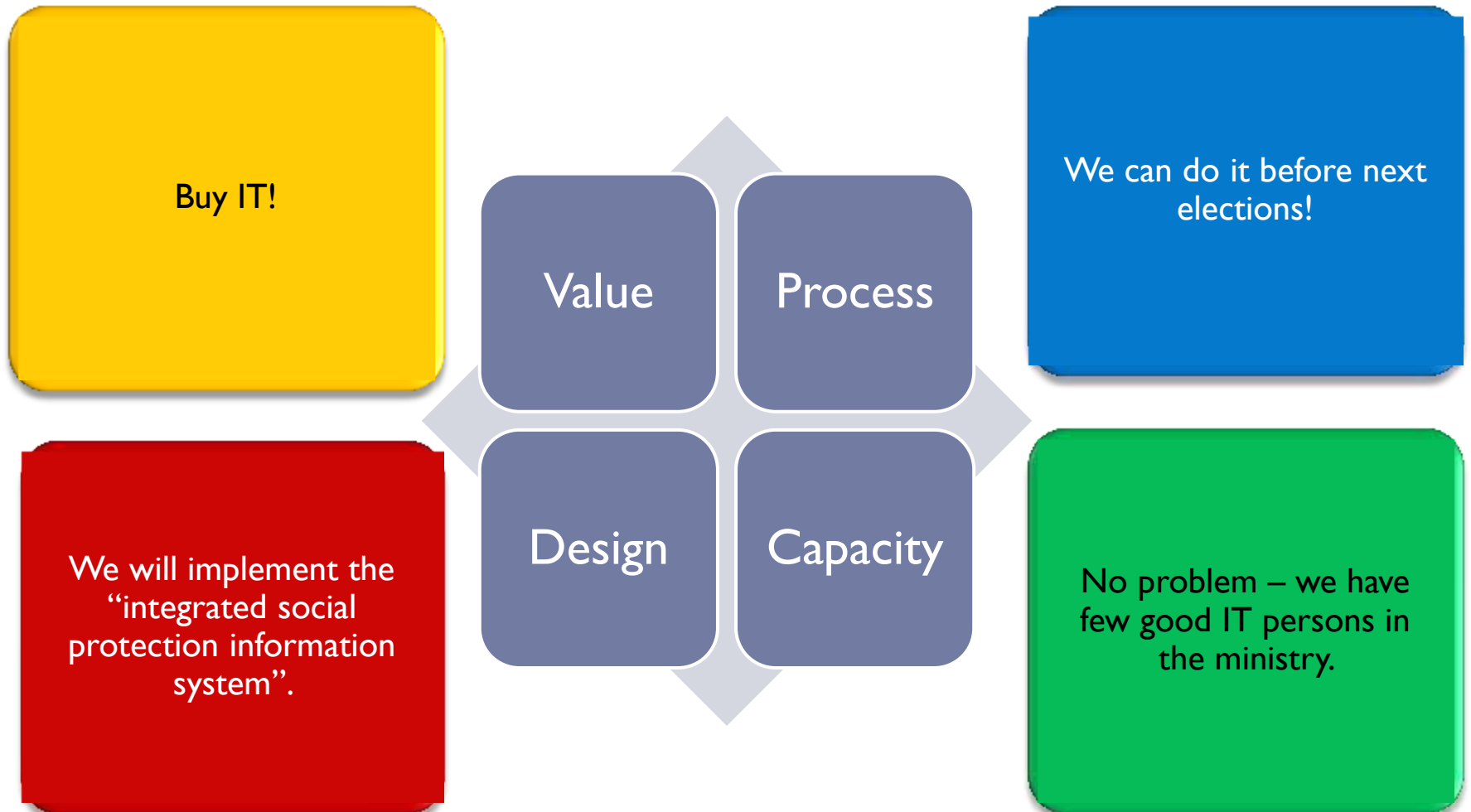
# Key Strategic Considerations\*



\* The VDPC framework was developed with support of the Fulbright Program and The World Bank, see: Sabic, and Zaimovic, “Doing IT Right! - A Guideline for Better Utilization of the IT in Human Development Projects”, The World Bank, 2012.

# ...but, sometimes over-simplified

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Out of many important aspects of the VDPC framework, we would like to emphasize only two:

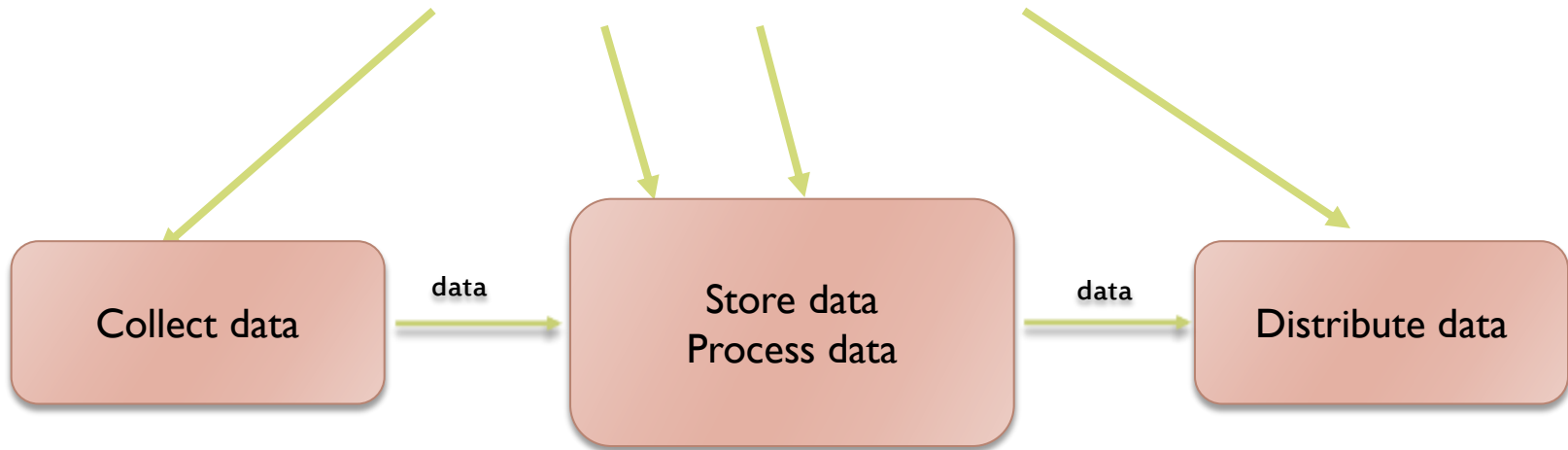
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1. **Design choice:** Comprehensive, business processes oriented system vs. data collection system
2. **Process choice:** Comprehensive system development vs. quick wins

# A classic definition of information system

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Information system is set of interconnected components that work together to collect, store, process and distribute data...



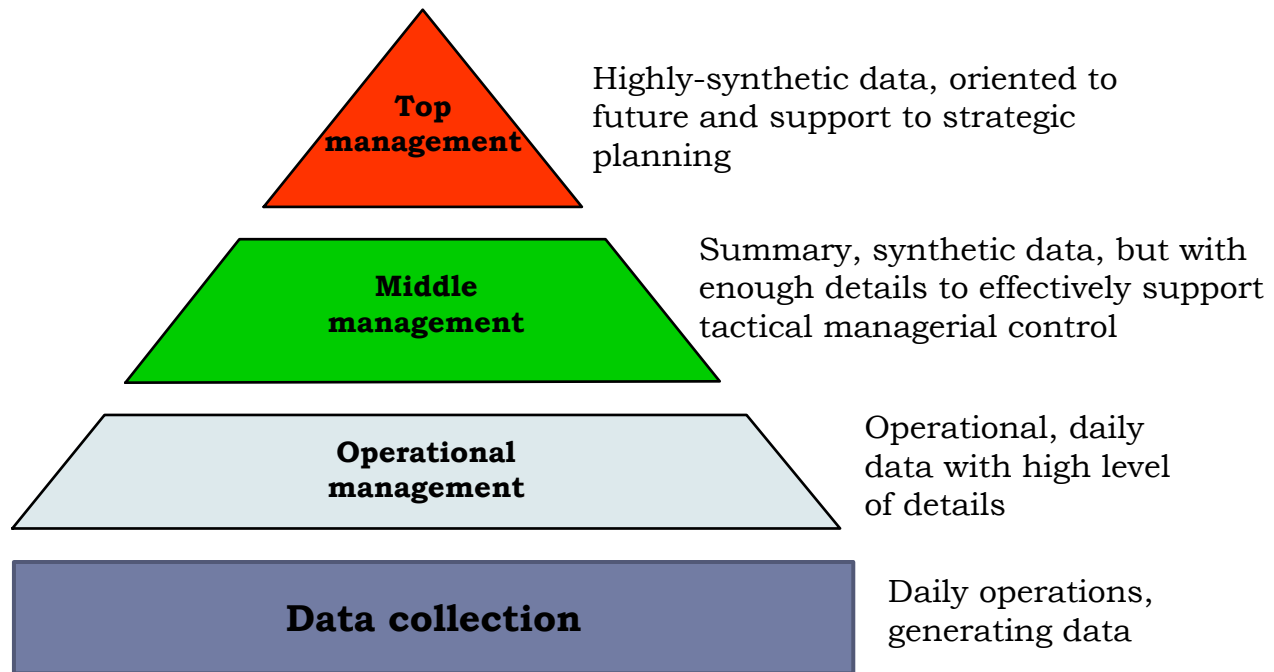
...to support analysis, decision making, coordination and control in an organization.



# Simple, but to some point **misleading**

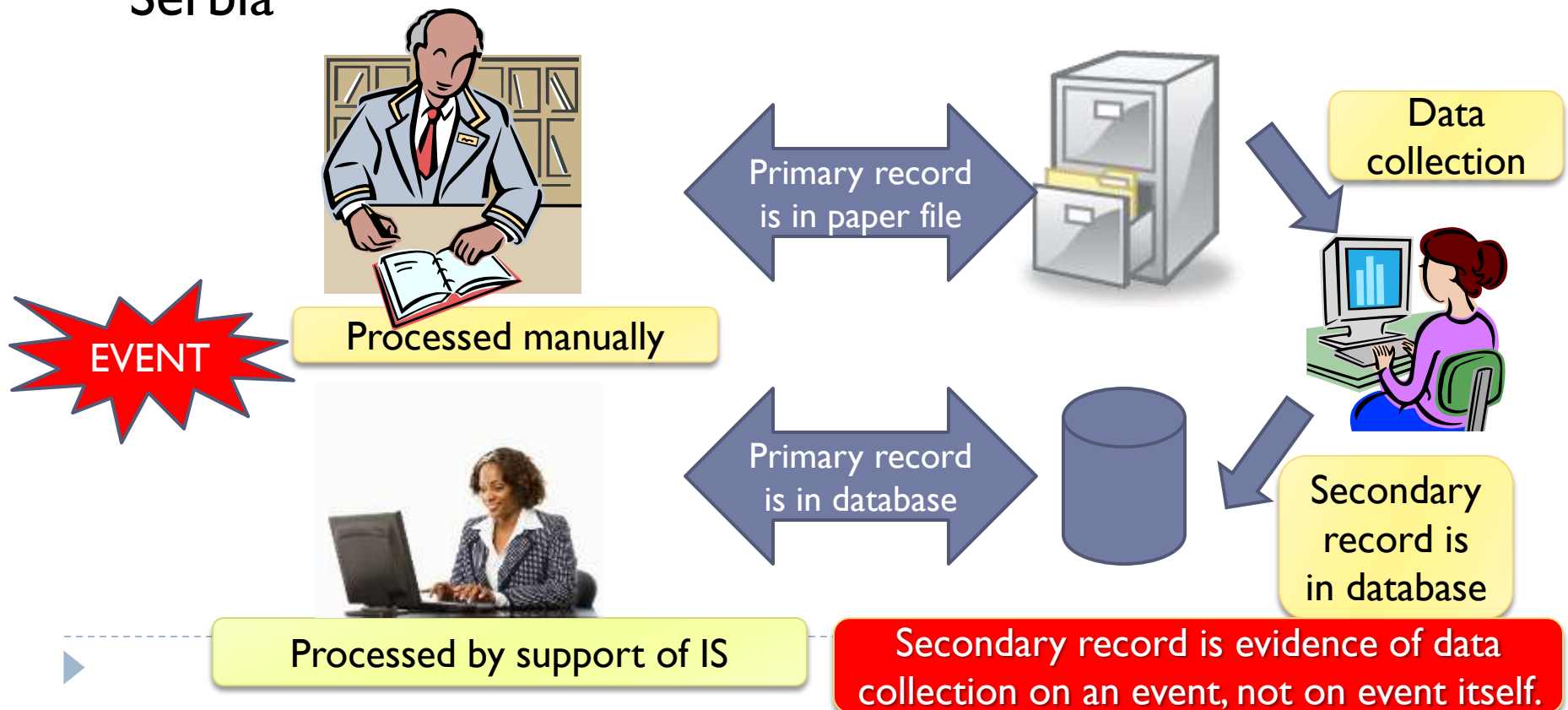
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- ▶ It is emphasizing the *data collection*, and not *business processes* to be supported by the information system



# Data collection

- ▶ Case: Kyrgyzstan social protection system
- ▶ Case: MoLSW Disability Beneficiary Registry in Greece
- ▶ Case: Data collection in Education Information System in Serbia





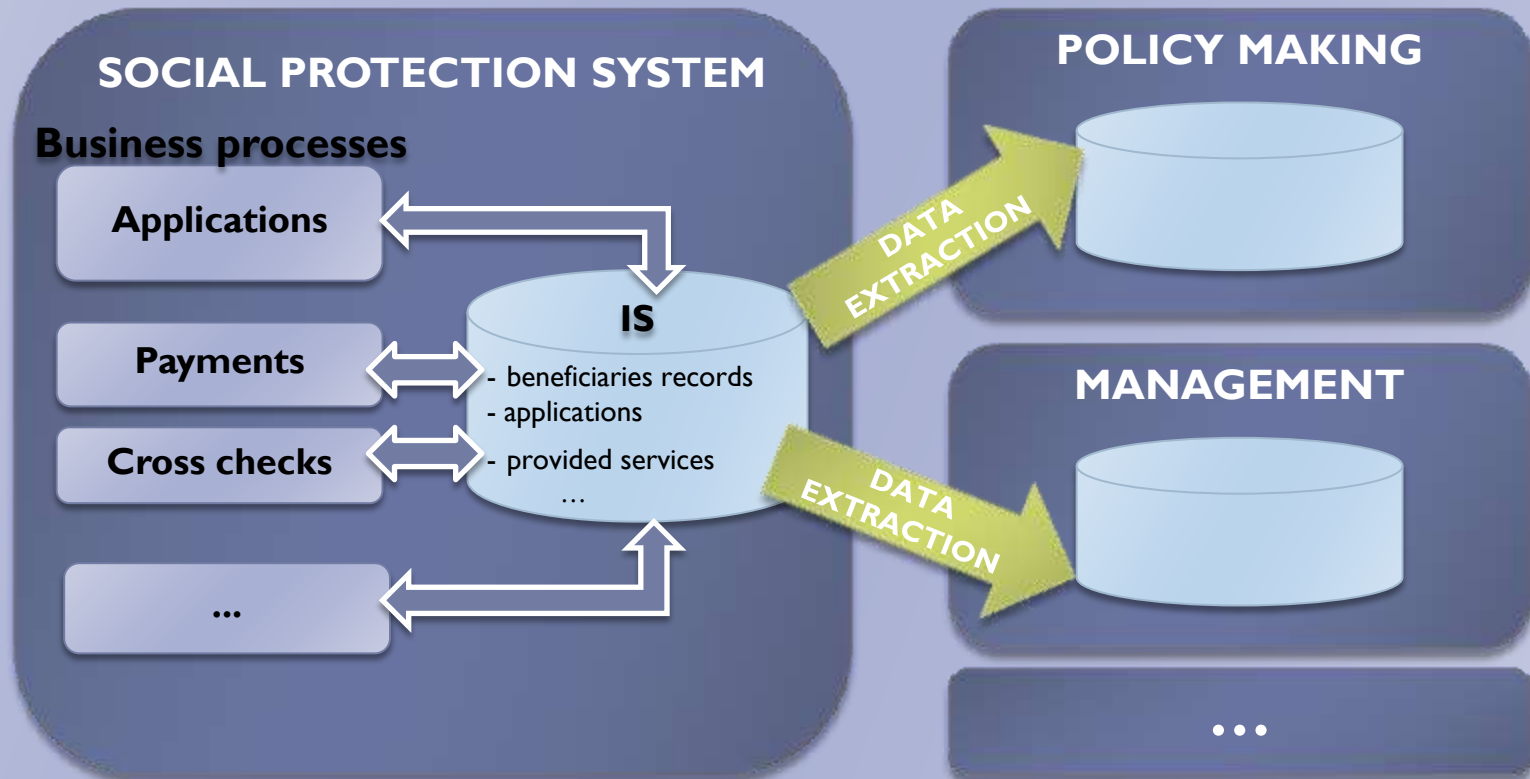
# The system needs to be oriented to **business processes** – **data collection is automatic then**

## More effective and efficient operational functions

- ▶ processing of applications,
- ▶ Database reporting and cross checks,
- ▶ determination of eligibility
- ▶ processing and issuance of payments
- ▶ case management
- ▶ recertification

## Improved management and oversight functions

- ▶ financial control of payments
- ▶ planning and budgeting,
- ▶ implementation management
- ▶ performance monitoring
- ▶ oversight and controls



## If oriented to processes...

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- ▶ ...generated data are “by-product” of real business processes - this information can be trusted as it has been aggregated from operational data generated by real people in real business processes. Such information is:
  - ▶ accurate,
  - ▶ timely reported,
  - ▶ useful for support of daily business processes, and
  - ▶ does not generate additional workload



Only in some exceptional cases, data collection design is acceptable, or more precisely, something that can be accepted temporarily

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In such case, some principles should be respected:

- ▶ Such system should be clearly treated as temporary solution, with the plan to replace it with an information system that has primary purpose of supporting processes,
- ▶ Data collected on such way cannot be fully trusted.
- ▶ More resources should be planned for the process of data collection than on technical solutions for the information system itself – the system should be simple, in most cases based on of-the-shelf solutions, and no huge investments should be made because the system should be planned to be replaced.



So, apart from such exceptional cases, if data oriented design leads to problems, or at least low improvement of performances, ...

- ▶ why countries implement data collection systems, instead of process oriented systems?
- ▶ The answer is very often quite simple – **because it's easier** (faster, cheaper), which leads us to the next issue.



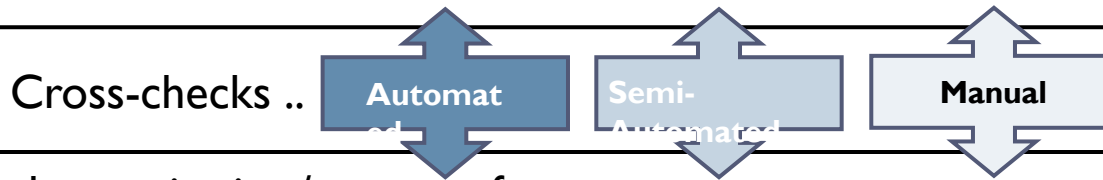
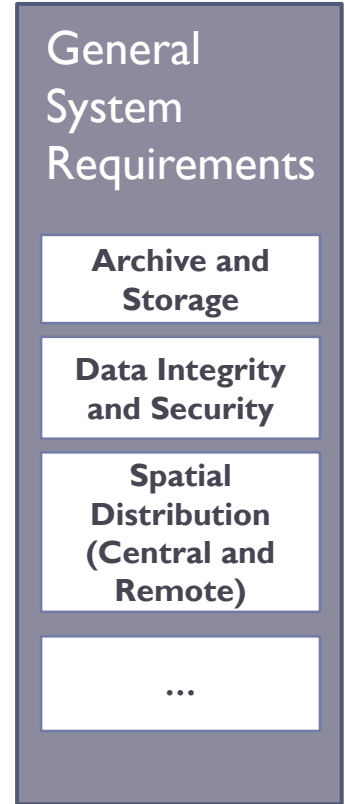
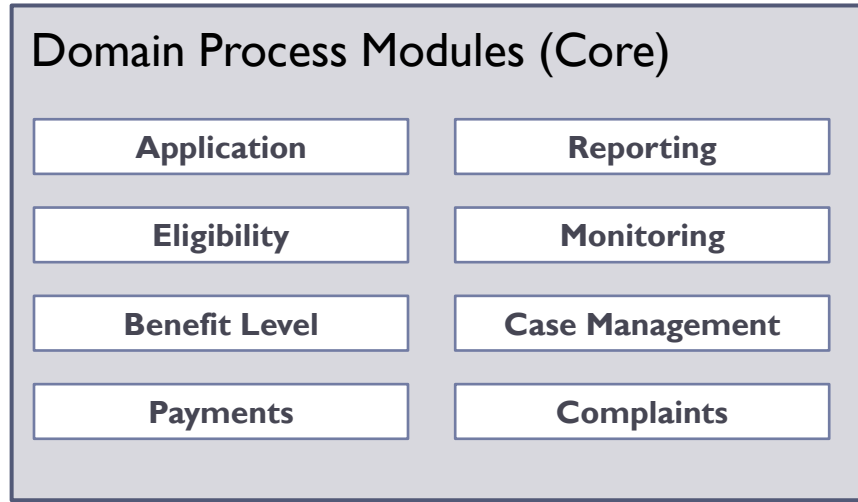
# Process choice: Comprehensive system development vs. quick wins

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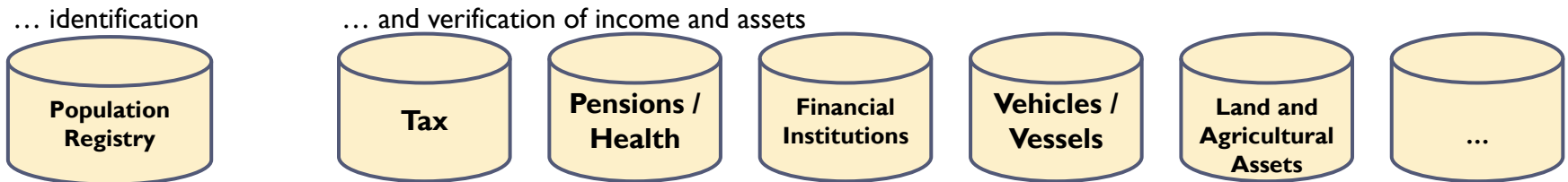
- ▶ To design and implement fully business processes oriented information system takes a lot of time and efforts.
- ▶ Sometimes both managers and engineers “do not have time for slow and systematic development” and are looking for solutions that can produce value in short term and with small investment – so called “quick wins”.



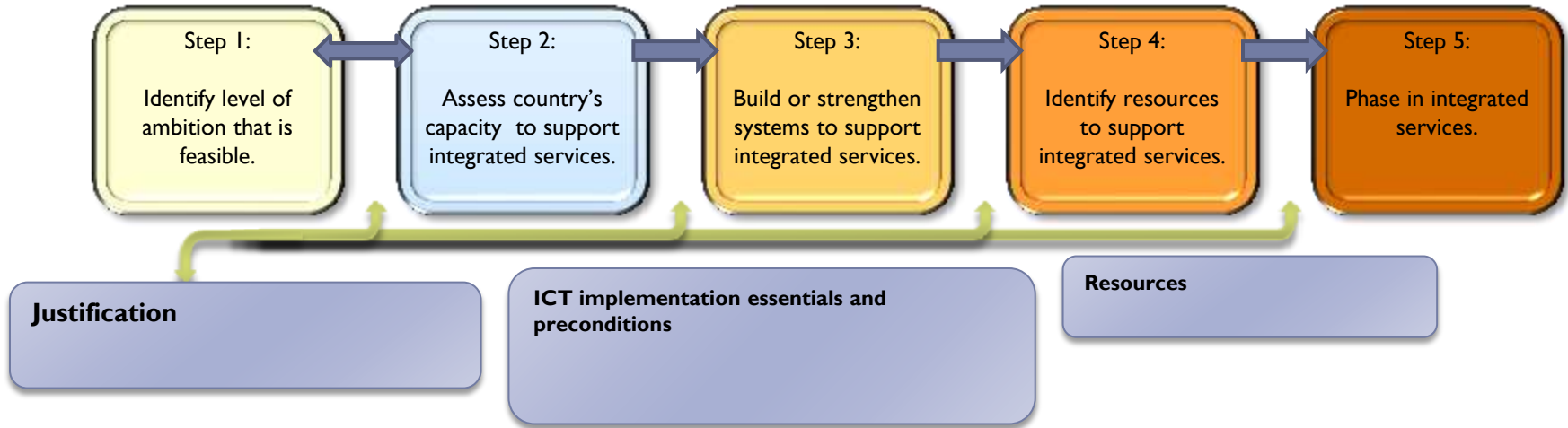
# Design-wise: Compare this with data collection architecture



... with other registries / systems for ...



## Process-wise: Compare this:



## To this:



# Advantages of quick wins

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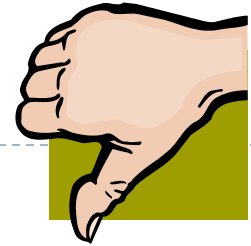
- ▶ Provide evidence that sacrifices are worth it
- ▶ Reward change agents with a pat on the back
- ▶ Help fine-tune vision and strategies
- ▶ Undermine cynics and self-serving resisters
- ▶ Keep bosses on board
- ▶ Build momentum
- ▶ The sponsors get critical feedback on the rate of progress
- ▶ Breaking deadlock of indecision
- ▶ Gradual capacity building
- ▶ **Smartly positioned quick wins can produce regeneration scheme reinforcing the support, investment and incentives for the information system implementation**





# Disadvantages of quick wins

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- ▶ Sometimes hard to start
- ▶ Targeting short-term wins during a transformation effort increase the pressures on people
- ▶ Using quick wins as short-term gimmicks (“smoke and mirrors”)
- ▶ Too much leadership, not so much management
- ▶ Sometimes quick wins are really not so “quick”, asking for considerable resources and efforts without strategic impact.
- ▶ Tend to be technologically oriented
- ▶ **Quick wins give illusion of all-embracing progress and strategic change, thus significantly slowing down the progress**



# Does it make sense to pursue quick wins

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- ▶ **Quick wins could be valuable tools in pushing the strategic change forward, but cannot be the strategic change themselves.**
  - ▶ If used smartly, oriented to modest, specific goals, they can add much of a value to the process of strategic change
  - ▶ If used to create the illusion of a strategic change, quick wins can actually become the obstacle to the process.



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