Workshop report

Efficient and Effective eGovernment

SMART 2008/0109 SC01

Workshop date: 17 March 2010

Workshops venue: European Commission
Information Society and Media Directorate-General
BU25/S1
Avenue de Beaulieu 25, Brussels, 1160

Workshop report prepared by:

Author: Mr Panagiotis RENTZEPOPOULOS
Ms Vassilia ORFANOU

Revisers: Mr Vassili DANILOF

Company: EUROPEAN DYNAMICS SA
Date: 9 April 2010

Approved by: Project officer: Mr Juan ARREGUI MC GULLION,
ICT for Government and Services Unit,
Information Society and Media Directorate-General

Disclaimer

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

The ePractice workshop “Efficient and Effective eGovernment” was held in European Commission premises in Brussels on 17 March 2010. The workshop session accommodated 11 speakers, 37 attendees and its web page reached 2457 visits from members.

2 Morning session

Ms Mechthild Rohen (Head of ICT for Government and Public Services Unit of the Information Society and Media Directorate-General) opened the workshop stating that the objective of this session is to bring together people to discuss ideas and exchange best practices in the area of efficient and effective eGovernment.

Ms Rohen continued that in the course of the year, more workshops on public services and eParticipation are planned. Ms Rohen argued that the area of efficient and effective eGovernment is one of the main priorities under the eGovernment action plan. Key issues to tackle will be the reduction of administrative burden, the improvement of cost efficiency, the benchmarking of eGovernment services, and the stimulation of best practice exchange through the ePractice platform.

According to the Ministerial Declaration of Malmö (Nov. 2009), Sweden, which will also form the basis of the eGovernment action plan, there are three eGovernment priorities for the years to come: the empowerment of businesses and citizens; the improvement of the internal market; and the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness. Especially for the latter, the Commission will support the Member States by providing a full range of instruments and pilot programs to reduce the administrative burden, design the necessary government solutions that will result in important organisational changes, and use ICT to reduce the carbon footprint of government.

Ms Rohen stated that Ms Anne Troye, Deputy Head of Unit, would discuss in the afternoon session on the most burning topics related to efficiency and effectiveness of eGovernment - currently being considered in the preparation for the eGovernment Action Plan for 2015. Concluding, Ms Rohen anticipated a fruitful workshop and encouraged speakers and attendees to express their views.

2.1 Case Studies 1

Mr Juan Arregui Mc Gullion (ICT for Government and Public Services Unit of the Information Society and Media Directorate-General) commenced the morning session and introduced Ms Silvia-Adriana Ţicău.

2.1.1 More effective and efficient Public Administration through eGovernment services

Ms Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (MEP, Committee of Industry, Research and Energy, European Parliament) discussed the subject of more effective and efficient public administration through eGovernment services.

EGovernment is a very important topic, but political leadership is not equally strong across Member States. A priority is to increase the visibility of eGovernment processes.

Under the eGovernment framework that started a long time ago, there have been good results. However, in terms of eProcurement, the ministerial declaration of 2005 states that by 2010, half of all public eProcurement will be done by electronic means, which this is not the case today. At the same time, the interoperability issue should be on top of the eGovernment agenda, since there is lack of interoperability across Europe.

The most effective eGovernment applications, which ensure a successful interaction between public authorities and businesses, are the eProcurement and eInvoice services. These services support governments to improve transparency, to increase the access of SMEs to public acquisitions, and to reduce public expenditure by increasing the market competition.

Many Member States use one-stop-shops to provide access to electronic public services and ad hoc implementations at local or regional level. Presently some cases from Romania, the 2002 eProcurement system was the first in Europe. In terms of eProcurement, Ms Țicău presented SEAP, an electronic public procurement system that enables Romanian public institutions to procure goods and services through electronic means. This infrastructure aims to develop a virtual market, which allows buyers and sellers to meet, negotiate and perform commercial transactions, all supported by web technologies

In terms of the national electronic systems, electronic identification should be performed once and result in a normalised database thus avoiding redundancies and reducing the cost of eGovernment management.

Ms Țicău referred to the e-Tax application by local government that supports the reduction of administrative burden by helping citizens to fill and submit their fiscal duties through electronic means. A recent study on VAT declaration has shown that there is a cost saving of 10 € per application.

Based upon the legal framework for eSignature, Member States use different models for eGovernment applications of electronic signatures. Member States should review their legal framework regarding eSignature in order to remove the obstacles to cross-border services for citizens.

As far as eIdentification interoperability, there is still a problem in Europe. A German company cannot participate in a bid in France, because it has to be registered in France to obtain an electronic signature to be able to participate. The legal framework still creates barriers. Therefore, the eGovernment framework (legal basis, standards, hardware infrastructure, applications, organizational structure) should be reviewed and modified in order to be open to resident and non-resident users.

Barriers exist at the technical, administrative, and privacy level. Citizens are concerned with issues of fraud and identity theft that discourage them to use electronic means.

The European Commission does not have a dedicated budget for eGovernment. Only 15 per cent of ICT expenditure is used for eGovernment and this budget is insufficient for the development of centralised applications.

More investment is necessary on eGovernment and not as part of ICT. Collaboration between local and central authorities is necessary.

In conclusion, the European Union agenda should focus on eProcurement systems, eIdentity and e-Tax applications that could show the benefits for businesses and citizens.

Ms Rohen stated that actions have already started with major projects, such as PEPPOL, STORK and SPOCS and the eGovernment action plan will build on large scale pilots in order to achieve interoperability of national systems and promote sustainability by supporting Member States and local authorities to cooperate without being imposed to implement a particular infrastructure.

Question by Mr Marit Schweiker (Council of the European Municipalities and Regions, CCRE) to Ms Țicău and Ms Rohen:

> *The Involvement of regional authorities is crucial – how do you involve the local authorities and how would you achieve a better cooperation?*

Ms Țicău responded that the European Parliament has published a report related to eGovernment and has asked local authorities to participate and publish their opinions online. In addition, the EP motivates local authorities to develop services, and support electronic tax declarations and the facilitation of electronic payments in cooperation with the banking sector.

Regarding the local budget, the European Union has no way to interfere, but it can help the industry to develop plug-in solutions that would correspond to specific needs and standards and increase the awareness related to the use of ICT.

Ms Rohen added that the exchange of experience among local authorities and regions is necessary in order to identify the most suitable solutions. The eGovernment plans of Member States should reflect European consensus and most importantly the regional eGovernment activities should be in line with them. Otherwise the result will be fragmented solutions.

2.1.2 The Smart Cities Project

Mr David Fitch (Edinburgh Napier University) presented the Smart Cities Project.

The project brings together 13 municipal and academic partners from around the North Sea Region to develop better eServices and eGovernment. The project aims to develop an understanding of which eServices work best and why, to facilitate the transfer of eGovernment success across national borders, and to identify and support the real transformational impacts of this transfer of good practices on local government service delivery.

This project is unique due to the integration of an academic network – SCRAN (the Smart Cities Regional Academic Network) – within the Smart Cities project. SCRAN brings together six institutions across the North Sea Region to support local municipal partners. The network includes academic partners (Edinburgh Napier University, MEMORI, and UAS Oldenburg), a commercial partner (Porism Ltd.) and several associate partners including Groningen University and Karlstad University.

The principal role of SCRAN is to offer hands-on support to the government partners, to evaluate good practices, and to accurately translate pilots into transferable good practice, white papers and methodologies. The network is working to identify good practice inside the project. To achieve this, it develops project wide monitoring and evaluation tools, and works in collaboration with municipal partners in order to support the development of local pilots and identify relevant good practice outside the project.

To date, the lessons learned from SCRAN in supporting the development of eGovernment in the Smart Cities project are the following:

- Business process re-organisation is a key process to provide eServices and eGovernment.
- Customer profiling is necessary to bring a range of data sources together to develop accurate profiles of target customer groups.
- It is important to identify the appropriate channels (face to face, email, web, etc.) to deliver services and manage them, and direct citizens to use the channels that better serve their needs.
- Most indicators should measure the impact, not just the output. Most existing baselines are generic and cannot be broken down to regional or municipal levels, making it rather hard to measure local progress.
- Given the variety of institutions offering eGovernment services, it is difficult to know whether eGovernment is “efficient” or “effective”. Maybe a change of terminology should be considered.

In conclusion, Mr Fitch stated that efforts to deliver “efficient” services need to be predicated upon well developed and robust models of service delivery, while the identification of “good practice” requires the development of appropriate baselines and benchmarks and a considerably more rigorous comparative examination of impact and effectiveness than is often the case.

Question by Mr Jeremy Millard**:**

> *In consideration of the fact that there are not many best practices, shouldn’t one think that the main point is to exchange experience? And if this is the case, how could this be possible when there are not many industrial processes?*

Mr Fitch replied that the point is to evaluate how information transfer and exchange could actually be effective. Currently the evaluation made in projects is quite superficial and the primary consideration is “what you want these projects to do” before any implementation takes place. A more critical view is necessary in terms of what would be more appropriate than what is currently in place. By copying systems from one country to another is not efficient, either in terms of cost, or time. It is important to establish first more clarity on the actual expectations from eGovernment.

Ms Sylvia Archmann stated that we need to take a step backwards. We are aiming towards transferring and redelivering existing services as eServices, while it would be more efficient and more effective to take a step back and think “what government needs to offer and what services we need”. The point is to eliminate whatever we do not need and offer the things that we do need, which will actually be less cost intensive. At the same time, it is important to clearly define “what is effective and what is efficient”, taking into account lessons learned and specific failures.

Mr Fitch replied that everything depends on the actual needs. Cities are usually implementing something on behalf of the local municipalities, because it is more cost-effective than going from one municipality to the next in order to implement something. For instance, in Edinburgh, there are only two customer contact services and there is no need for any additional. eGovernment is a political way to deliver services, but sharing services is not something that all local authorities would be willing to do or, rather, willing to pay for.

2.1.3 eGovernment initiatives in Norway – the SERES and Altinn projects

Mr Håkon Osterbakk (The Brønnøysund Register Centre) presented the eGovernment projects SERES and Altinn.

The Brønnøysund Register Centre (the national register centre in Norway) has executed several modernization programs, including Altinn (the Norwegian government’s portal for electronic dialogue with business and industry) and SERES (semantic register for electronic collaboration) that was first launched in December 2009.

SERES is a system for capturing, modelling, use, administration and control of metadata used to define and specify services that simplify the public sector. SERES is a suite of tools that builds on modelling and technology standards. Among the system’s objectives are the production of message specifications that feed into the Altinn toolkit for service realization and the support of new types of public coordination and collaboration that would secure efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

To fulfil these objectives, SERES uses standard modelling techniques to capture metadata to describe running services, and to restructure these metadata according to the concepts and methods laid down by Object Management Group (OMG) in their framework for Model Driven Architecture (MDA). Subsets of this framework are used in a customized SERES meta-model. The meta-model is a framework for metadata handling that uses terms and properties to compose various services at the implementation level. This approach is needed to ensure usability, scalability and maintainability of the SERES metadata organization.

SERES contains metadata from various public sector domains owned and maintained by the service owners. To ease data exchange, there is a core model that offers common terms and properties with links to needed behaviours, rules and logic. Each domain model and the core model follow the rules of the SERES meta-model. Combined, the models form a hub-and-spoke architecture.

SERES will soon be introduced in the Norwegian public service sector. Today SERES primarily keeps service metadata for the Tax Revenue Administration and Statistics Norway, while new domains such as the Financial Supervisory Authority are under implementation.

Altinn is the joint solution of the Norwegian authorities for reporting and dialogue with business and industry and a toolbox for the development of electronic services from the public sector. Although the portal targets businesses and industry, the Altinn tool box also helps the provision of services for citizens, like tax returns and notifications of move.

There are different types of services in Altinn. Forms that have been developed and presented in Altinn can be completed, signed and submitted on the web portal, after log-in, or through professional software systems (e.g. accounting software). Public authorities can send information and messages to the mailboxes of registered users in Altinn. The application supports HTML messages and attachments. The user can be notified by e-mail or SMS that information has been made available for review or processing.

Furthermore, Altinn can make available to individual users information from its own registers. In the course of 2010, users will be able to forward accessible information and retrieve signed versions of documents if this is facilitated by the service owner. Users can also access forms and services on other websites with proper authentication and authorization.

In addition, Altinn can be used for the exchange of information between different public agencies or between private enterprises and a public agency when large volumes of data are to be transferred between computers. In the course of 2010, Altinn will be able to link several services together in a comprehensive process involving one or more users and one or more public agencies. The service is intended to be user-centric. A collaboration service will have one responsible service owner for the entire process, and enable the inclusion of formal communication with many public agencies that have independent responsibility for their respective parts of the process.

Overall, Altinn has not only made Norwegian business and industry more efficient, but has also made an important contribution to the modernization of the public sector. Altinn has completely changed the way in which enterprises accomplish their reporting to the public authorities. Four out of five enterprises now submit their forms electronically via Altinn. Ninety per cent of the most common business forms are completed electronically, even upon the availability of well-known paper based alternatives. The next step is to secure better collaboration across agency and enterprise boundaries by exploiting the technological possibilities for efficiency and improvement of work processes and for exchange of information.

2.1.4 FASTeTEN: fully automated secured transactions

Mr Baudouin de Sonis (e-Forum) discussed the subject of fully automated secured transactions through FASTeTEN.

FASTeTEN is a project, supported by the European Commission, to pilot the deployment of the FAST bundle of services for secure electronic document exchange in different European contexts. FAST stands for *Fournisseur d'Accès Sécurisés Transactionnels* (Secure Access Gateway). Its development began in France in 2002, supervised by the government mandated public financial institution *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations* (CDC). FAST has been tested extensively and successfully in the French *départements* of Yvelines and Deux-Sèvres.

FAST offers significant resource and efficiency savings. Using FAST, public administrations can streamline their operations by switching their document management systems onto an electronic platform. Documents can be exchanged securely and efficiently in electronic format, between different agencies and different levels of the administration. FAST enables an origination check (authentication) and time stamping by validating the transmission and subsequent transmission to the authenticated receivers and decryption of the data.

FAST allows fully automated secured transactions and can be used in the legal sector, public accounting, welfare, convocation of elected people, birth and death certificates, urbanism, education, legal archiving, health, and eProcurement.

Furthermore, it cuts down on paper documentation and on the costs of delivering documents by post. It saves time because electronic transmission of documents can be done instantaneously, rather than requiring several days for documents to be delivered by post. At the same time, it guarantees anonymity and could be transferred in other countries as a case of good practice.

2.2 P2P Bench-learning

2.2.1 Ideas for eServices efficiency measurement

Mr Lasse Berntzen (Vestfold University College) presented ideas on eServices efficiency measurement.

According to Mr Berntzen, efficiency of eServices can be seen from two different perspectives: that of the users and that of the public administration. The project looks at automatic assessment of accessibility, transparency, efficiency and impact. They are currently working on assessment of efficiency, as seen from users and administration.

Electronic services are effective as they save cost and time and self-service reduces the work load on administration. Possible indicators were proposed such as the number of services, the importance of some services based on heavier use or higher gains, the maturity of services, and the impact of services.

To show how the above indicators can be collected and used, Mr Berntzen used three practical examples: an application for kindergarten schools, complaint management of municipal services, and the application for municipal grants.

Collection of information from the user perspective can be done through user surveys, self-reporting and probes. User surveys are probably the best method to collect information about efficiency gains for users. Self-reporting is probably the best way of collecting information from administration (management and employees), since back-office efficiency cannot be assessed automatically. An alternative method could also be the implementation of software probes following a discussion with vendors, which would be called upon to consider potential security problems.

2.2.2 Fed-eView – A tool for measuring ICT and eGovernment maturity in back-office

Ms Christine Mahieu (Federal Public Service ICT (FEDICT), Belgium) discussed Fed-eView, a tool for measuring ICT and eGovernment maturity in the back-office.

In 2004, FEDICT developed Fed-eView/A, a dashboard tool used for measurement to provide a picture of the progress in ICT and eGovernment implementation in the Belgian federal administration. This tool helps to align and focus ICT and eGovernment development in all federal departments (about 50 ministries and agencies) according to the global eGovernment strategy.

The analysis of this first measurement (baseline measurement in 2004) has led to a list of specific actions to be undertaken. The progress has been measured by a second measurement in 2009, making it a continuous improvement process. The system collects data directly from ICT managers, a subjective process that is not sufficiently controlled in terms of quality. Other approaches, e.g., using auditors in each department, would be inefficient cost- and time-wise. Another limitation is that the performance of the administrations is not been measured, since they are not comparable in size and they do not have the same management and accountability. The purpose is to get a picture of computerisation and not to measure the ICT performance in term of target scores.

The project results are being published online and on paper. Almost all (49) federal organisations participate to the project providing global data on ICT and eGovernment. The results can be compared in different clusters, i.e., separately for ministries and agencies, clustered per administration size and ICT budget.

Among the key data collected, they are related to the ICT budget, number of ICT staff by age, total number of vacant positions, total number of computerised workstations available for administration staff, percent of access to webmail and VPN.

The focus of the tool is to measure the level of back-office integration not the level of sophistication in the websites – as they consider that before putting sophisticated services online it is necessary to reinforce the exchange of information between administrations first. Based on the back-office reorganisation and exchange of information between administrations, this tool follows eGovernment principles, such as unique key identification, use of authentic sources, etc. With back-office integration, better service delivery in the front-office is ensured e.g., the provision of simplified and filled-in forms, proactive service delivery and automatic granting of rights.

The eGovernment matrix gives the level of readiness of the administrations to develop a sophisticated front-office service, by comparing the eGovernment strategy alignment and the implementation of these eGovernment principles in new applications. The comparison of this matrix in the 2004-2009 period clearly shows the improvement achieved in this period.

What makes this tool really innovative is that it does not produce a pure inventory. By using a balanced scorecard approach, it provides a balanced picture of the five identified perspectives (strategic, financial, organisational, personal, and technological) of ICT and e-government implementation further split in 24 global indicators.

In conclusion, eGovernment readiness seems to be related to the level of ICT budget and human resources and the maturity of ICT processes. However, the causality of these links is not obvious (and not part of the presented project).

In terms of the methodology, there is a balanced picture of the several perspectives of ICT and e-government implementation; however, the comparison is difficult between measured organisations over time and the scope is difficult to define, while there is a possibility of saturation of indicators if the same are used over time, which needs a possible change in the way of ranking.

The main benefit of Fed-eView/A is to allow for an efficient and effective management of the public funds that will result in a better service for the citizens and enterprises. Certainly, this is only one part of the global view and FEDICT can measure the life cycle of eGovernment. Other ways are through FEDICT surveys (Fed-eView/C), partnerships to collect data through the Ministry of Economy, EUROSTAT, regions and municipalities, EU and private partners and the development of new indicators.

2.3 First roundtable discussion

Mr Juan Arregui Mc Gullion initiated the first roundtable discussion by inviting questions, comments and other relevant initiatives to be presented. He argued that a lot of work is being done to measure efficiency and effectiveness and there is vast experience on how to learn and implement it in the EU level.

Nevertheless, in terms of the actual readiness, inputs, and outputs, a common methodology has to be developed to measure the outcomes and impacts of eGovernment, something that has not yet been realised.

Mr Marit Schweiker (CCRE) stated that a Manual for the implementation of eGovernment at local level will soon be provided from the association of the Council of Municipalities that will display a horizontal view of what they want. eGovernment concerns more the citizens and the government rather than technicalities and ICT.

Mr Edward Roosens (Policy Unit of the Government Commissioner for an Efficient Government, Belgium) said that in terms of efficiency, we want better public service for the same or less money. EGovernment is not a goal, but it is a tool and there are a few instruments to measure how good eGovernment services are. Tools are necessary to measure to what degree eGovernment services have improved the efficiency of public services.

For instance, when filing taxes electronically, there are four million people that would use a pre-filled and automatic process. This tool has a score of 64 and the user survey gives a 95 per cent of user satisfaction, however the aspect of efficiency is not really dealt with so many tax declarations coming in.

It is important that there is documented evidence that the promised services have actually materialised on the floor. There have to be certain methodological ways – a permanent efficiency parameter – to measure this.

Mr Jeremy Millard added that in the UK they made a service for students applying to universities that would also take upon specific tasks to support the university. In the beginning, the service employed temporary staff, but then a decision was made to keep them permanently and increase their training. Ultimately, this decision actually transformed activities; the employees' actual qualifications, esteem and salaries were improved. In the end, the actual services provided were improved as well. This decision implicitly downsized back office, since the resources gained were used in a cost-effective way.

In terms of measuring impacts, the only way is through evolving to the design measurement and the professional staff; the civil servants and the users.

Question to Ms Mahieu:

> *Does it improve the learning of the administration – are there any workshops taking place?*

Ms Mahieu replied that each administration can act independently and internally between administrations. The results are made available, and administrations can make their own conclusions.

Mr Michael Thacker commented that there are a lot of individual initiatives but better mechanisms are needed to use the web and ICT, yielding to a revolutionary approach. For instance, in the UK, in the area of smarter government, semantic web techniques are being used to turn data into public data and open them up for the public sector, private sector and third sector. People can use them as they see fit. The objective would be to have a framework that can facilitate sharing of definitions and data and can combine definitions that could be applied elsewhere in Europe.

Question by Mr Juan Arregui Mc Gullion:

> *Where would local authorities go to find out about what other local authorities would do?*

Mr Mike Thacker replied that there are public sites which reference list of services, list of needs, life events and then cross-reference using metadata techniques openly the resources that pertain to these data. By using statistics, even if some information is still private, it can be pushed to the public and draw from public information available online through multiple sites, which points out to the issue of efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr Lasse Berntzen commented that the number of people is reduced, the eServices introduced should dedicate more time on control and quality of service delivery. For example in the tax situation, a better job is done on complicated cases.

Ms Sylvia Archmann said that in Austria income tax declarations are submitted online for citizens and businesses, and this reduces costs also related to archiving.

Mr Aggelos Charlaftis commented that the measurement of effectiveness is an important parameter; Citizens have the right to get a timely answer in their inquiries. Hence, in terms of the quality standards of services, there has to be a timely reply, which would actually judge if the system works properly.

Mr David Fitch replied that there are different issues to tackle; on one side, the way to measure efficiency of services is straightforward, but on the other, the way that services are run is different. There are no clear models of how services work. However, in project initiation, concerns on the metrics, baselines, and skills should be considered, but not all people have the skills to do this, which is difficult to expect efficiency improvement. A priority should be to quantify how efficient things are before turning it to eGovernment services and there are more fundamental questions to be considered, such as: “Do you have process models for your services?” “Do you have service level agreements?” This is how efficiency at a local level could be identified: a background delivery of government services.

3 Afternoon session

3.1 Case Studies 2

3.1.1 A Pointer Network of Data Safes: Optimizing G2B process chains

Mr Thomas Jeswein (Fraunhofer – IESE) discussed the subject of the optimization of G2B process chains through the use of data safes.

In Germany, enterprises need to fulfil some 10 thousand reporting obligations that correspond to the yearly payment of circa 48 billion €. This situation needs improvement and the German federal government initiated a number of feasibility studies to address this issue.

The background of these feasibility studies includes the i2010 eGovernment action plan of the European Commission, the BundOnline 2005 and Deutschland-Online programmes, as well as the e-Government 2.0 initiative that included the concept of “process chains”, i.e., the integration of businesses’ and government agencies’ processes in order to achieve electronic collaboration. The subject of the presentation is focused on the reporting obligations feasibility study.

The objectives of the reporting obligations study include the identification, analysis, and prioritisation of process chains regarding information and reporting obligations for employers, as well as the development of a solution to optimise the top priority reporting obligations. The study included three main phases: the definition of the investigation scope, a series of surveys with employers and government agencies and the prioritisation workshop.

The study focused on the reporting obligations that employers are legally required to fulfil, for which may be submitted via an intermediary and that can be submitted independently from any reaction from government agencies.

The survey among the employers yielded 17 reporting obligations considered to be the “most needed” for optimisation, in the employers’ opinion. These 17 reporting obligations were further discussed with department heads of five receiving government agencies. The main findings derived across these interviews were that:

- The same or similar data are submitted in different reporting obligations.
- Different terminology depending on the legal context.
- In most cases, there is no reuse of the reported data within the company.
- Feedback from the agency usually occurs over a different channel (paper-based, vs. electronic).

The stakeholder workshop included all involved parties (employers and government agencies) as well as additional stakeholders, e.g., expert groups, and intermediaries. Its outcome was the definition of three topmost reporting obligations that led to the definition of the proposed architecture.

The proposal includes two parts: FRESKO, a system that employs “data safes”, i.e., databases where reporting information is maintained at the enterprises, and a Pointer Network of Data Safes that includes information about the location of maintained information so that government agencies can retrieve the information reported either through a “pull” or a “push” mechanism.

The goals of the optimised process chains of the above architecture include an increase in the speed of administrative proceedings, and reduction of cost, as a result of more than 80 per cent of reporting being conducted through electronic media. The process is proposed to be certified according to ISO 27001 and is expected to cover all reporting electronically by the year 2012.

3.1.2 Increasing public engagement as a means to increase effectiveness: How local authorities in the UK use the esd-toolkit

Mr Mike Thacker (esd-toolkit, UK) discussed how the UK uses the esd-toolkit to increase public engagement and effectiveness.

This presentation gives an overview of the electronic service delivery toolkit (esd-toolkit) in the UK. It explains how esd-toolkit achieves sharing and comparing between local authorities in a way that might be appropriate to the broader public sector and across the EU.

The UK groups ca. 450 local authorities in nine English regions, Wales and Scotland. Organisationally, there are ten “super-regions” and four working groups that represent special interests and agree the methodology of information sharing.

The esd-toolkit is supported at local, national and international level. More than 70 per cent of local authorities use it in a modest subscription (1-3 thousand euro) model and have developed confidence in it. At the national level the Local Government Association and the central government support it, often acting as a home for outputs of national government projects.

The “Sharing nationally to improve services locally” motto has been modified to include “trans-“ before the word “nationally”, in order to signify the first steps towards international sharing. The involvement of esd-toolkit in “Smart Cities”, “Add Me” and “CEMSDI” project indicate this direction.

The use of standards in information sharing is of paramount importance, as it allows sharing of both qualitative and quantitative information among local and central authorities. Some “core” information is gathered centrally. Other “local” information is used just within a single local authority but can be shared with others with the user’s permission or on an aggregate anonymous basis.

Standards mean we know we are talking about the same thing, even if we use different terminology (or a different language) locally. They make it possible to aggregate data across local authorities to draw conclusions that might not be possible in just one locality. Tools provided by esd-toolkit in field such as Customer Insight and Service Costing use the standards to cross-reference information within the standards model (ontology) adopted by the esd-toolkit.

The esd-toolkit provides tools for information aggregation, analysis and statistics, deploying techniques well established in the private sector. This makes services more effective, e.g., through the identification of location-related information, communication channel usage, and provides the tools to draw strategic decisions through the support of “what if”-type questions.

Concluding Mr Thacker indicated that the benefit observed until now is small, but it has been obtained through the use of common standards and tools. This means that it is possible to use esd-toolkit to make services more effective and cheaper in a larger scale as well.

3.1.3 Questions for the case studies

Question to Mr Mike Thacker:

> *Do you know if there are other organisations that might be doing something similar to this project?*

Mr Mike Thacker replied that there is work done on standards catalogues in Belgium and on service catalogues in the Netherlands but he hasn’t come across a similar type of framework elsewhere.

Question by Mr Arregui Mc Gullion to Mr Jeswein:

> *According to your presentation, by 2012 all the reporting to the different agencies should be done online – isn’t this somewhat ambitious and challenging?*

Mr Jeswein replied that a set of goals have been produced by the Federal Government by the agency commissioned to the program, hence this is a goal that might be reachable and that is why it has been included.

Question to Mr Thacker:

> *How can you ensure that local authorities can participate? Is there a way to control this, so that it could actually support policy – how do you make sure that it can be recycled and be useful for other people?*

Mr Thacker responded that most is voluntary and started its life in the UK with a target of enabling all local governments by 2005. In the beginning, there were some financial incentives linked to participation and aiming to find which services and channels would be applicable to which people, which helped the formal submissions to the government and supported locating specific barriers, but then people started showing interest and chose to submit information through physical meetings and spreadsheets, which helped compiling both qualitative and quantitative data.

Question by Mr Arregui Mc Gullion to Mr Thacker:

> *How could this solution move from the UK or the local implementation to be used in a cross-border context across Europe?*

Mr Mike Thacker replied that this solution has already shown important evidence and most people understand how to use it, but it would take at least six months to test whether particular conclusions could also be transferred elsewhere in Europe.

3.2 Towards 2015

Mr Arregui Mc Gullion noted that the Commission is currently working on the action plan for 2015 aiming to empower the users and ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

3.2.1 Efficiency and Effectiveness in the 2015 Action Plan

Ms Anne Troye (Deputy Head of the "ICT for Government and Public Services" Unit of the Information Society and Media Directorate-General) presented some insight in the preparation for the 2015 Action Plan. Opening her presentation she noted that the work on the action plan is ongoing and she would be very interested in listening to what the audience expects to be included in the 2015 Action Plan. In fact, this workshop's points may be reflected in the discussion on the Action Plan.

Judging by the Ministerial Declaration and what the Member States have agreed to do for the next five years, in terms of efficiency and effectiveness three areas have been emphasised: reducing the administrative burden for citizens and businesses; improving the organisational processes and reducing the carbon footprint.

The hypothesis is that if we manage to ensure that public services and public administration can work towards improving their processes, then the objective of providing better cross-border services to citizens and businesses and improving efficiency and effectiveness would be reached. This can happen if we:

- Encourage interoperability of services.
- Exchange information and build upon key enablers to better access and use public services.

- Adopt the working processes of the Member States and facilitating the cooperation between them at a large level either locally, regionally, nationally and EU level.

- Manage this improvement and pertinent actions and appropriate exchange of this information.

- Incorporate innovative approaches (e.g., fostering research, piloting in terms of cloud computing and how it can be used by public administrations, object-oriented architectures, etc.).

In terms of the tools, currently there is no legislative instrument to be used that directly addresses the implementation of eGovernment services, but there are a number of other legislative instruments that implicitly improve public services, such as the Service Directive, that can make the exchange possible with Member States; support learning from each other and push in the direction to reduce the administrative burden and reach different, better and faster these targets, notably by exchanging experience.

Member States should be encouraged to reuse and share solutions that they can implement for eGovernment services. In order to improve efficiency and effectiveness of eGovernment services, the Member States will be encouraged to innovate, implement, re-use and share solutions among each other, while it is necessary that civil servants providing these services will also take them on board and provide to their customers.

Consequently, in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness the training, skills, and qualifications of people should also be increasingly improved, thus setting the building blocks to work with each other and reach specific targets. This is difficult to put in a linear type of approach, but still specific ways are needed to improve efficiency, based upon better infrastructure and improve mobility of people and businesses across the single market.

Question by Mr Marit Schweiker:

> *Discussing about linearity, there has to be an open method of cooperation. Local authorities would be keen to implement actions, but their needs and expertise should be met at all levels. Interoperability does not work without cooperation from all levels; hence will the action plan be discussed with local authorities?*

Ms Troye replied that indeed it is true and necessary to integrate the local level, but their involvement is still a very challenging aspect. Any specific proposals could reflect on possibilities on how to potentially implement them. However, at this point, the drafting of the Action plan will only involve a discussion with the Member States. When the Ministerial Declaration was drafted and following the first consultation with the Commission, Member States involved the local authorities to brief them. Nevertheless, more and better interaction would be necessary to identify how local and regional authorities work to better involve them.

Nevertheless, an effort towards that has already been made with the ePractice Awards' initiative that included many projects at local level, displaying how important and useful the interaction and exchange with local organisations is. As far as the action plan is concerned; it will be sent to the Committee of Regions and they will take the necessary actions to involve the local authorities.

Mr Aggelos Charlaftis said that as part of a holistic approach, non-governmental organisations should also be involved in drafting regional and state policies and not only the governmental organisations. In this respect, social platforms should be considered.

Question by Mr Edward Roosens:

> *Is there a form of target towards the reduction of administrative charges of 25 per cent? Are we thinking of more tangible targets for eGovernment results, something like 2 per cent efficiency gains per year in terms of quality or costs?*

Ms Troye replied that this is an interesting question that Member States should answer, since a lot of achievement depends on them. The Commission could propose high level targets, but we need to keep in mind that any proposals should be achieved in the next 5 years.

It has not been thought that specific targets should be achieved faster, but if they would be prepared, the Commission would encourage actions to support and reflect this target of 25% of reduction in the eGovernment plan in order for the public administration to act upon and improve their processes.

Question by Mr Jeremy Millard:

> *Is there going to be any special note taking on the financial and economic crisis which will be a characteristic in the next 2-3 years? What reflection would the current situation have in the Action plan?*

Ms Troye replied that when the Ministerial Declaration was drafted, the overall impression was that Europe would get out of the crisis reasonably quick. Inevitably, now, in the process of putting together the Action Plan we cannot leave out the fact that the investment in eGovernment, both at the national level and at the Commission level, is going to be at best at the prescribed levels if not less. If there are possible cost savings not only monetary but towards efficiency and effectiveness, they will be considered, but no specific crisis actions will be included; rather specific actions will be encouraged for which implementation would bring more efficiency. For example, actions leading to the reduction of administrative burden lift some cost from businesses and citizens, and this is going to be considered for sure.

Question from the audience:

> *The Commission is pursuing efficiency and effectiveness of eGovernment through building blocks followed up by many*

different organisational units of the Commission. How does this effort get coordinated?

Ms Troye replied that the ministerial declaration calls for improved cooperation and that the Commission is conscious of this. The type of actions that are considered in the Action Plan will call not only for collaboration to the level of Member States but some form of collaboration with different types of expert groups working e.g., on the reuse for public information or the reduction of the administrative burden. Dialogue is necessary, and this is not an easy task but the Member States are willing to push in this direction and it may be possible to propose something innovative. It is too early to provide a perspective right now. However, the Commission is looking for something that will work better than now. Studies for efficiency and effectiveness show the need for public administrations to move from this silo approach to a more cross-fertilisation approach.

3.2.2 The be-all and end-all of eGovernment: whither effectiveness and efficiency as driving goals

Mr Jamal Shahin (Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit, Brussels) elaborated on main points that his paper thesis presents; a critique on effectiveness and efficiency as the driving goals of eGovernment.

This paper is intended to present a “contrarian” approach towards understanding eGovernment policy, one that challenges the dominant principles and underlying concepts motivated by reduction of burdens and other economic approaches to public sector ICT implementation.

The eEurope initiative launched a whole set of policies to achieve: information society policies were becoming internationalized but the question remained: “How do international organisations and the EU get involved in topics like efficiency and effectiveness?” The EU does not have a direct policy mandate, so there had to be some scope of European activity. One of the biggest challenges faced by policy makers engaged in eGovernment from the mid-1990s onwards was determining how to put this on the European political agenda. Discourse thus focused upon cost savings and additional (economic) benefits from implementing eGovernment.

Better governance using ICT was the original trend from 1999 to mid 2000’s, focusing on cost reduction to actual setting up competencies; or the basic conditions for information society to be used by the government, citizens and businesses. Now there are other key trends emerging when looking at government policies, such as governance and ICT and government for all- not only for people that are internet savvy but also for the internet illiterate; and web 2.0 and social media, which brought a revolution that could potentially reshape the public sector and enhance the innovation of the public sector; engaging citizens and participation on a much wider scale; recognition that government can open up the public sector.

The questions to be raised – how much of this relates directly to the concept of effectiveness and efficiency? How much of this runs counter to these ideas? Probably, some of the most efficient governments in the world are not necessarily nice places to live. “How do these key trends drive principles and brought more principles in and not make them goals in themselves”.

In the 1990’s, efficiency and effectiveness were meant for the government’s sake, now it is for the sake of the citizens. It was first by quantifying things through schools, universities, and businesses; then quantified in terms of the outputs and now in terms of the impacts – with an emphasis on policy making such as through simulation for policy modelling.

In terms of the recognized instruments; benchmarking and good practice cases are widely used, but the question remains “How productive these tools can be in terms of quantifying towards public management and create public value instead of improving government?” Increasingly there are very useful tools of measurement in eGovernment. On an international level, the same tools can encourage to formulate a series of targets and show what directions are important to take. Nevertheless, lots of people are measuring things and there is a lot of competition via ranking. There is an obsession to reach certain targets and we are not looking about the context.

Inevitably, there is always a bias, which is not necessarily a bad thing. However, new policies need a richer type of analysis embedded within them. The concept of best practices was introduced to enable a large number of initiatives to show how they benefit from implementation of eGovernment initiatives. This concept faces challenges, notably in terms of sharing, transferability and more importantly, learning value. It is difficult to get people to share something useful from what they are willing to share and how you extract the essential information needed.

This presentation proposed that we think about the actual goals of eGovernment, and take the year 2010 to step back and consider ways in which the mantra of efficiency and effectiveness can be reconciled with the fact that the public sector can be more effective and efficient, but that its main objective is actually to manage public value and build and support infrastructures that enable society, individuals and businesses to thrive and grow. A new approach would be for policies to use multidisciplinary methods to actually learn how to get the best out of the existing data and use of different types of tools that look at impacts and outputs as whole with the intention to add public value.

3.2.3 New forms of efficiency, effectiveness and measurement in the age of empowerment

Mr Jeremy Millard (DTI) discussed new forms of efficiency, effectiveness and measurement in the age of empowerment.

As Mr. Shahin stated, a holistic approach is needed, but since the way we measure things will change between now and 5 years from now, we cannot carry on with the same approach, otherwise we might end up measuring the wrong things. It seems that eGovernment is flat-lining in EU27: the use of eGovernment by citizens has dropped in 2008, and this seems more evident if we check EU15 data. There is a consideration whether EU has reached a ceiling in relation to the large-scale, top-down administrative services used sparingly. Evidently, better eGovernment services do not mean that citizens will use them more often. In Denmark, the current focus is in the reduction of “avoidable contact” of citizens to the government. Therefore it is time to consider whether the current government-centric approach needs to be reconsidered.

The technology of the eGovernment world in the next five years can be predicted quite reasonably; even if governments will not adopt every available technology of today, the private sector will. The “Government 2.0” world will be more user-centric and user-driven. The role of government may become increasingly the enabler of more new public services to be created.

Two perspectives need to be considered for the long term development and measurement trends: up the policy value-chain, and down the government hierarchy. In the first case, we need to move from a focus only on demand side, inputs and outputs, into a focus which also includes outcomes and impacts. In the second case, we need to move from only central government macro targets and measures to include local government and front line staff and user targets and measures.

Measurement should link to accountability and this may imply much greater risk, as it decreases central government control. On the other hand, measurement is more immediate and thus responds more quickly and precisely – learning and exchanging experiences in real time.

In the long term, the above trends may have implications including difficulty in comparison between different scopes (geographical, administrative, etc.) and requires more learning practice, and bench-learning. We still need national and international frameworks for coordination, learning, and comparison, in complement to local, small scale and bottom-up approaches.

Interestingly, however, the same trends may also accommodate some short term crisis management, which seems very relevant in today’s time of financial and economic crisis: OECD survey of planned eGovernment response, ranks (December 2009) the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness first, but the reduction of administrative burden is still in the fourth position and becomes increasingly important in times of crisis.

Mr Millard concluded underlining the need to consider the outcomes and impact of eGovernment strategies and commented that despite many quite successful studies indicate that eGovernment creates undeniable benefits for the citizens; he considers that as far as services are concerned the local approach seems more beneficial than the top-down one.

3.3 Second roundtable discussion

Comment by Mr Lasse Berntzen on Mr Jeremy Millard’s discussion:

> *Communication with the local government is lacking and it is very important to measure their needs and expectations to implement something. In measuring public sector eservices*

performance and efficiency, there are no literature books and very few papers.

Mr Millard noted that we need to distinguish between measuring efficiency and measuring as a means to achieving efficiency. Essentially measuring gives you the ability to discover things like the impact on outcomes of a particular service, and perform research. Mr. Shahin was talking against measurement and for social impact assessment, but this is also a kind of measurement. We have to be able to measure things before discussing, in order to work more effectively. There is a lot out there to be discovered, but we need to find ways to measure things that will enable us to make use of the data and which from efficiencies will come out of. Measurement should not only be used for ranking purposes but rather for scientific discovery.

Mr Millard stated that clusters and not comparing public administrations with each other is extremely important. On the contrary, the context is important and the people you can learn from. You cannot compare Singapore to the US or compare fruits with helicopters. In terms of the top five countries, there should not be any such ranking, since the scale and the type of problems is different throughout countries, whereas it is also important to consult local and regional authorities and making sensible comparisons that you can actually learn from.

Mr Arregui Mc Gullion replied that clustering or moving away from ranking is important. Instead of being competitive, it would be better to be more pedagogical. The next benchmarking is moving towards this direction to present a more complete story about what’s going on.

3.4 Conclusions and recommendations

Mr Arregui Mc Gullion thanked the speakers and attendees for their active participation, valuable contributions and insights. This workshop has been very timely, due to the preparation of the Action Plan and each of the case studies presented has been both very relevant and interesting and many lessons have been taken up.

To briefly summarize, efficiency and effectiveness is a very vast and varied area that needs a holistic approach. At a time of a financial crisis, there is no money to spend on new initiatives and in order to help sell existing eGovernment services you have to convince those who control the budget and investments on where they will be spending their money.

In terms of exchanging best practices, the main point is “how we stake it up from a local level to cross-border European”. Measurement is necessary to new projects to account of what is being done, but it would still be difficult to apply a solution across Europe. There is a lot of learning to be done on how we would best structure this and taking concrete steps from learning to actual acting and using resources that we gain for something new.

4 Summary

The European Commission organised a workshop on “Efficient and Effective eGovernment” in the context of its “ePractice.eu” initiative. The goal of the workshop was to take stock of eGovernment good practices related to Measurement – how Member States, regions and public administrations in general measure their performance (back office) and/or the impact and user satisfaction of the eGovernment services.

The workshop focused on three main subjects: case studies, benchmarking and the road towards 2015. A different session was assigned to each subject in the workshop.

The morning session included presentations of case studies and discussions on benchmarking. Ms Silvia-Adriana Ţicău presented the landscape of eGovernment in Europe and highlighted the main barriers in cross-border eServices and the need for further investment specifically on eGovernment and not only as part of ICT. She also noted that collaboration between local and central authorities is necessary.

Mr David Fitch presented the Smart Cities project where municipal and academic partners in the North Sea region aim to develop an understanding of which eServices work best and why. Mr David Fitch stated that efforts to deliver “efficient” services need to be predicated upon well developed and robust models of service delivery, while the identification of “good practice” requires the development of appropriate baselines and benchmarks and a considerably more rigorous comparative examination of impact and effectiveness than is often the case.

Mr Håkon Osterbakk presented the SERES and Altinn eGovernment projects. SERES is a metadata system that concentrates on services that simplify the public sector. Altinn is the Norwegian government’s portal for electronic dialogue with business and industry, and a toolbox for the development of electronic services from the public sector.

Mr Baudouin de Sonis presented the efficiency gains from the utilisation of the FAST infrastructure developed in France and used in other countries as well. FAST allows fully automated secure transactions and cuts down the service provision costs using standards and at the same time demonstrates all security related characteristics that are inherent to eGovernment services, which include secure eIdentification, and anonymity.

Regarding bench learning, Mr Lasse Berntzen presented ideas on eServices efficiency measurement. He argued that the efficiency of eServices should be considered from two viewpoints: the public administration and the user perspective. He also presented tools and methods in order to acquire these two types of feedback.

Ms Christine Mahieu presented the benchmarking initiative of FEDICT called Fed-eView/A that collects information from almost all Belgian federal organisations and constructs a set of 24 indicators that can be used readily for comparison in different clusters. Ms Christine Mahieu underlined the need to support and rationalise the back-office before providing sophisticated eServices.

A round table discussion with the participation of the workshop audience and speakers addressed several subjects related to the presentations made. The need for stronger involvement of local administrations was identified. The fact that eGovernment should not be pursued as a goal but as a tool that will improve the provision of public services was underlined. A discussion was made on the need for quality and that the effectiveness is equally important to efficiency so that eGovernment does not drift away from its fundamental goals: to provide better services for the citizens.

The afternoon session included a second round of presentations of case studies and a discussion on the trends in the next five years.

Mr Thomas Jeswein presented a proposal for G2B process chain optimisation using standards-based data safes where information is stored by the enterprises and retrieved by the public administrations. The proposal followed a thorough examination of the eServices landscape that revealed the set of most prominent reporting obligations of businesses.

Mr Mike Thacker presented how the esd-toolkit has been used in the UK to bring cost reductions to public administrations using it. The toolkit is standards based and its widespread use can bring significant savings.

In the subject of efficiency and effectiveness towards 2015, Ms Anne Troye of the European Commission presented some insight in the main characteristics of the 2015 eGovernment Action Plan currently being prepared. The action plan intends to provide realistic goals that will gradually lead to the implementation of the directions set by the ministerial declaration on eGovernment adopted in Malmö in November 2009. Ms Anne Troye underlined the lack of an eGovernment specific legislative instrument and that active collaboration is needed among Member States in order to achieve the goals set. In relation to the current economic and financial crisis, Ms Anne Troye commented that inevitably it has been taken into account and that this crisis specifically calls for the reduction of the administrative burden.

Mr Jamal Shahin presented the opposite approach and questioned the need for the pursuing of efficient and effective eGovernment as driving goals and explained that eGovernment needs to focus on the provision of services for all.

Mr Jeremy Millard replied in his presentation to the questions put by Mr Jamal Shahin and presented new forms of efficiency, effectiveness, and measurement in the age of citizen empowerment. Both speakers agreed that a holistic approach is necessary and that it is important to consider not only the input and output of eGovernment, but its outcomes and impact at large.

The second round table discussion commenced with a discussion on the necessity and direction of measurement of and for efficiency in eGovernment. Mr Radoslav Repa reported on the results of a citizen satisfaction survey in Slovakia. In addition, the need for clustering as presented in the FEDICT presentation was discussed so that evaluation of benchmarking results can yield meaningful conclusions.

In conclusion, the Commission thanked the speaker and attendees and invited their future participation in the forthcoming workshops organised by ePractice.

Annex I: Agenda

Workshop on Efficient and Effective eGovernment

Brussels, 17 March 2010

9.00-9.30	**Registration**
9.30-9.45	***Welcome and introduction*: Ms Mechthild Rohen**, Head of ICT for Government and Public Services Unit, Information Society and Media DG, European Commission
Morning Session: Case Studies 1	
9.45-10.00	*More effective and efficient Public Administration through eGovernment services* **Ms Silvia-Adriana Țicău**, MEP, Committee of Industry, Research and Energy
10.00-10.20	*The Smart Cities Project* **Mr. David Fitch**, Edinburgh Napier University
10.20-10.40	*eGov initiatives in Norway – The SERES and Altinn projects* **Mr Håkon Olderbakk** [1], The Brønnøysund Register Centre
10.40-11.00	*FAST eTEN fully automated secured transactions* **Mr Baudouin de Sonis**, e-Forum
11.00-11.10	**Coffee break**
P2P Benchlearning	
11.10-11.30	*Ideas for efficiency measurement (e-services)* **Mr Lasse Berntzen**, Vestfold University College
11.30-11.50	*Fed-eview-A tool for measuring ICT and eGovernment maturity in back-office* **Ms Christine Mahieu**, Federal Public Service ICT-Belgium
11.50-12.30	***1st Round table Discussion:*** *"What has been done? Lessons learnt"* Chairperson: **Mr. Juan Arregui Mc Gullion**, European Commission
12.30-13.40	**Lunch Break**
Case Studies 2	
13.40-14.00	*A Pointer Network of Data Safes: Optimizing G2B process chains* **Mr Thomas Jeswein**, Fraunhofer Institut Experimentelles Software Engineering
14.00-14.20	*Increasing public engagement as a means to increase effectiveness: How local authorities in the UK use the esd-toolkit* **Mr Mike Thacker**, esd-toolkit
14:20-14:30	**Questions on case studies** [2]
14.30-14.40	**Coffee Break**
Towards 2015	
14.40-14.50	*Efficiency and Effectiveness in the 2015 Action Plan* **Ms Anne Troye**, European Commission
14.50-15.10	*The be-all and end-all of eGovernment: whither effectiveness & efficiency as driving goals* **Mr Jamal Shahin**, Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
15.10-15.30	*New forms of efficiency, effectiveness & measurement in the age of empowerment* **Mr Jeremy Millard**, DTI
15.30-15.50	***2nd Roundtable discussion:*** *"What can be done?"* Chairperson **Mr. Juan Arregui Mc Gullion**, European Commission
15.50-16.30	*Conclusions & recommendations* **Mr Juan Arregui Mc Gullion**, European Commission

[1] In place of Ms Dörthe Koerner

[2] Unscheduled

Prepared by:

Contractor:

EUROPEAN DYNAMICS

http://www.eurodyn.com

Authors:

Mr Panagiotis Rentzepopoulos, Ms Vassilia Orfanou

Reviser:

Mr Vassili Danilof

Workshop on efficient and effective eGovernment: 17 March 2010