

Framework to Reinforce the Exchange of

Good Practices in eGovernment

A contribution to eEurope 2005

1. Introduction

eGovernment is the use of Information and Communication Technologies in public administrations combined with organisational change and development of new skills in order to improve public services and democratic processes and strengthen support to public policies.

A continuous and effective exchange of good practices in eGovernment at European level, among the different public authorities in the Member States, the European institutions, private sector, and more generally among international actors is needed. Exchange of good practice means: learning from good practice experiences and/or transfer of good practice solutions or parts of these.

Expected benefits include:

- Accelerated transfer of experiences and re-use of proven eGovernment solutions across Europe including in the new and candidate countries
- A shared learning environment for knowledge contributing to coherence of approaches and interoperability of services and platforms
- Inputs for:
 - performance measurements and eventual future benchmarking;
 - future research, pilot and deployment actions and legal / regulatory issues;
 - policy development and decision making at various governmental levels.

Ultimately all these benefits should help to save cost and improve quality in implementing eGovernment for a more open, inclusive and productive public administration. The good practice framework should significantly contribute to widespread take-up of eGovernment for realising world-class public administrations across Europe.

2. Rationale

The eGovernment Communication¹ identified the need for continuity and a comprehensive approach in exchanging good practices. The Council Conclusions² on this Communication called for a framework for the exchange of good practices, in

¹ COM(2003)567, 26 Sept 2003, see <http://europa.eu.int/egovernment>.

² See <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/NewMain.asp?LANG=1>

order to increase possible synergies and to promote and facilitate the re-use of implemented e-Government solutions.

The eEurope Awards for eGovernment³ initiative at the July 2003 Ministerial eGovernment conference in Como has been a stimulating exercise with great potential. However, **continuity and a comprehensive approach** are key factors in the process of exchanging good practices. This makes the establishment of a framework for good practice exchange indispensable.

Good practice exchange comprises anything from straightforward replication, to copying with local adaptations, to learning from good practices elsewhere followed by developing a specific solution suitable for the own socio-cultural context or exchanging experiences and discussing future evolution between several good practices implemented in different administrations.

3. Objectives

The objective of the action is to establish a framework to facilitate the exchange of good practices, their transfer when appropriate and learning from experiences at local, regional, national, European and international level in order to foster strong commitment and continuity in the practical implementation of eGovernment. It aims to make transfer and learning easier, get greater benefits from exchange of good practice, and provide more continuity in good practice exchange, in particular at European level. Different target audiences should be identified and their specific needs be addressed e.g. national, regional, local types of administration, process re-organisation or supplier perspective.

The framework should also address critical issues that might hamper the transfer of good experiences such as the legal aspects of the process of re-using successful developments among the different administrations, the ownership of the systems and their relationship with the public tendering procedures which the public administrations have to follow, the various aspects of the public-private partnership undertaking. These are all aspects, which currently can hamper full dissemination and transfer of good practices.

Exchange of good practice is also needed with regard to change management and organisation of work (back office/government process re-organisation) within the administrations because it is important that all future users and stakeholders are prepared and qualified to manage the technology and eGovernment solutions. This aspect touches in particular on the transfer of learning.

Another area which is intended to be addressed is the interoperability of eGovernment services at regional and local level. This will cover on the one hand the models of interoperability being developed in initiatives at regional and local level and on the other hand the interoperability of existing applications or pilots. It will complement

³ See <http://www.e-europeawards.org>

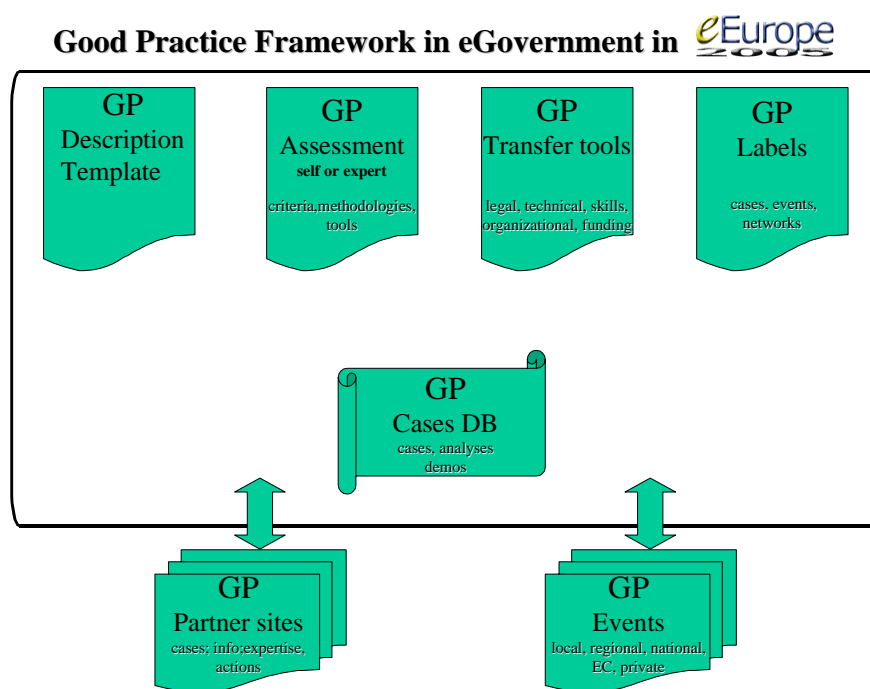
the work undergoing on interoperability of pan-European services in the framework of IDA⁴.

The action will be pursued in liaison with key eGovernment decision-makers from public administrations and from the private sector.

4. Framework for Exchange of Good Practice

What follows is a description of the proposed Framework itself. It has to be emphasised that this Framework is not intended for the financing of the transfer or implementation of good practices. Likewise, this Framework does not seek to replace existing Good Practice collections but rather facilitate uptake of these.

The diagram below shows key elements of the Framework.



The Framework comprises of:

- A common description template that can help to describe a good practice eGovernment case in a comparable way. Cases shall not only comprise individual eGovernment applications but also situations where administrations provide a complete set of services to citizens and business. Other type of cases could address key topics such as interoperability,

⁴ Such as the European Interoperability Framework, see <http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/ida/jsps/index.jsp?fuseAction=home>

back-office reorganisation and electronic identity (this may need some degree of customization of the template).

- A set of assessment criteria for evaluating a good practice example. These criteria should be reasonably flexible and should be usable both through self-assessment and through further in-depth analyses by independent experts. Assessment criteria include quality, benefits and transferability. Self-assessment should follow a clear methodology including a clear set of assessment criteria. Cases that are proposed for inclusion in the Framework should pass a 'Quality Control' check to see if they comply with the description template and the assessment criteria as well as ensure comparability and clarity.
- Transfer support for good practices. Creating, refining and promoting transfer support tools is a key element of the Framework. Transfer support could include:
 - Analysis of factors that hamper the transfer of experiences e.g. legal, organisational or learning aspects. In particular, an analysis is foreseen for interoperability of eGovernment services at regional and local level.
 - References to existing transfer support, e.g. the OSS observatory launched by IDA. The Framework will provide a direct link to those existing initiatives.⁵
 - Reports from good practice events, allowing for replicating a good model of an exchange event (see below).
 - Access to expertise/experts, contact and collaboration facility to set up partnerships, such as 'twinning' between cities or regions, enriched by partnership examples. This shall be reinforced through the multiplier approach indicated below thanks to the support of other existing initiatives.
- Good practice labels ('Contribution to eGovernment Good Practice in eEurope') that provide recognition of a contribution to good practice exchange within this Framework. The label provides an incentive for public administrations, networks and event organisers to actively contribute to the development and enrichment of the Framework. Labelling is expected to evolve over time as eGovernment progresses. A label can be given to:
 - Good practice *cases*, identified following the selection for the eEurope Awards to be presented in the eGovernment Ministerial Conferences (as was done for the 2001 and 2003 Conference)
 - Good practice *partnerships* as good examples for networks or twinning relations.
 - Good practice *events* that contribute to the promotion of good practise exchange initiatives. Organisers of events that wish to receive the label should make use of the content of the Framework e.g. invite good practice cases and make use of experiences. Conference organisers should include in their Conference programme special workshops and/or good practice exhibits on topics that contribute to enriching the Framework, resulting in a report with conclusions that can be included again into the Framework. Event organisers can receive such a label only on an annual basis. Annual events must apply for the label each year the event is organised.
 - Good practice *partnerships*, that provide a learning experience for others.

⁵ the IDA OSS Observatory can be found on :

<http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/ida/jsps/index.jsp?fuseAction=showChapter&chapterID=452&preChapterID=0>

- An ‘intelligent database’ of cases, analyses and other documentation, freely accessible on the Framework web site, with an intelligent navigation to the practices allowing easy analysis and extraction. The Good Practice cases of the 2003 and 2001 Ministerial eGovernment Conferences and the ones analysed in the “back office benchmark” can serve as a ‘starting point’ for the database. Other contributions to this database will be results of various EU projects and studies carried out on good practice. In addition, cases put forward after self-assessment can, when making use of the good practice description template and the self-assessment criteria and following a Quality Control check (as described above), be taken up in the Framework and also be selected for further ‘expert analyses’. Inclusion in the case-base does not mean recognition as a good practice, but these cases would still form an important part of the Framework and would contribute as “reference cases” to the facilitation of learning. Expert analyses can only be added in a limited number of cases. Access to expert support like advice on legal aspects or funding may be made available through the Framework, but the actual expert support is not funded through the Framework. More elaborate networking activities or learning mechanisms can be added at a later stage.

The Good Practice Framework is not meant to be static but will evolve and adapt. It will build upon the many activities and initiatives in eGovernment that are currently undertaken and as much as possible it will re-use good material and experiences that have been made publicly available.

Correspondingly, the Framework will contain cross-references and provide an access point to such activities, which themselves may also request to be mentioned in the Framework, thus providing an intelligent federated approach.

This comprises ongoing good practice related initiatives, including the ones supported in the various EU programmes, e.g. the open source website of the IDA programme⁶, IST⁷ and eTEN projects⁸. These Commission programmes play an active role in the development of the Framework.

The Framework would also build on where possible upon existing networks of expertise⁹ and promote –when appropriate - the creation of new networks and refer to good practice exchange initiatives originated by organizations such as those promoting regional development, eDemocracy, as well as company initiatives. A synergy with new and existing initiatives should create a multiplier effect for the benefit of all parties.

Other means of stimulation can be considered as well, like the creation of eGovernment-Commune Partnerships like the many European communes that have ‘friendship’ relationships with other European communes.

⁶ See <http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/ida/jsps/index.jsp?fuseAction=home>

⁷ See http://europa.eu.int/egovernment_research.

⁸ See http://europa.eu.int/information_society/programmes/eten/index_en.htm

⁹ Without attempting to be exhaustive: there are several such networks including TeleCities, Infocities, Global Cities Dialog, ERISA, ELANET as well as networks in regions across Europe.

In addition, the intention is to organise a limited number of thematic workshops (e.g. from custom and fiscal affairs, internal market, social and employment policy), with participation of good practices from the 2001 and 2003 eGovernment Ministerial Conferences and of specific Commission stakeholders, public administrations and companies. These workshops will deepen the learning from good practices and from the presence of the policy makers in the specific themes and promote a methodology of exchange of experiences as a further development of the Framework. Workshops could also be organised to exchange visions about future strategies.

It is expected that, with the development of the Good Practice Framework various 'Partner Sites' on different levels will emerge, making use of the above mentioned elements like the template, assessment of Good Practice cases; transfer tools etc.

The strategy of the framework is to generate a multiplier effect, where the contributions from existing and emerging initiatives could act as multipliers and even give longer term continuity to the framework. Similarly the Commission's good practice framework intends to give leverage to good practice initiatives going on elsewhere.

5. Promotion of usage and monitoring of the Framework

The above described approach for the development of a Good Practice Exchange Framework can be characterised as the 'supply-side': it is the gathering and structuring of good examples of eGovernment services with the aim of re-use of (part of) these services and, mostly, of favouring the **transfer of learning**.

Attention should also be given to the 'demand-side': a well developed Framework as described above can be of great importance to public administrations at all levels; so, once developed, the existence of this Framework as a tool for all administrations that seek improvement of their services and reorganisation of their structure should be widely promoted. Where possible, factors important for the practical take-up and achieving impact should be analysed (looking at the whole lifecycle rather than just at the initial launch of the service).

Its actual use and added-value as perceived by the users should be monitored. Mechanisms to collect inputs from users should be put in place, addressing user needs, user feedback and the analysis of pilot implementations.