

Preface

The *ICT for Development Initiative* was launched in February 2001 jointly by the United Nations Development Program (www.undp.bg) and the Center for the Study of Democracy (www.csd.bg) in Sofia. The main goal of this cross-sectoral initiative has been to promote the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Bulgarian society as an engine of economic growth and a vehicle for creating an environment for sustainable human development.

Over the past couple of years, the initiative has produced an *Issues Paper on ICT for Development Policy for Bulgaria*, which was officially presented to the Government, donors, private sector companies and NGOs at a meeting in Sofia on September 20th 2001. This was followed by a *government retreat on ICT for Development* which took place on December 1st 2001 at the Boyana conference center. The retreat was attended by the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and cabinet members who declared that developing the ICT sector for the benefit of the whole Bulgarian nation was a government priority. An important outcome of this meeting was the launch on April 1st 2002 of the *Coordination Center for Information, Communication and Management Technologies* under the auspices of the Council of Ministers and with the support of UNDP. This Center (www.ccit.government.bg) is charged with co-ordinating the policies and strategies in ICT development between the government, donors and the private sector. It also aims at improving the effectiveness of public administration through a systematic and coordinated implementation of ICTs and introduction of e-government services. The Center has coordinated the development of the e-government Strategy of Bulgaria which was approved by the Council of Ministers on December 28th 2002 and was well accepted by Bulgarian society.

The ICT for Development Initiative has also facilitated the launch of a *Bulgaria Development Gateway* (www.bulgaria-gateway.org), a project supported by the World Bank and Development Gateway Foundation which aims at assisting the process of e-development in this country. The Gateway is a platform for knowledge, experience and information sharing among development practitioners in government, NGOs, private sector and academic institutions around the world.

The Coordination Center for ICMT and Bulgaria Development Gateway work together to promote the concept of e-government, and raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities it creates for all members of Bulgarian society.



United Nations
Development Programme



Republic of Bulgaria
Council of Ministers



The World Bank



Bulgaria Development
Gateway

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BULGARIA

E-government Strategy

1. Introduction

This document outlines the strategy for the implementation of information technologies in the public administration and for the attainment of the priorities underlying the contemporary e-government concept.

The main objective of the strategy is to organise and support at the highest government level a long-term process of e-government implementation.

The strategy outlines the nature of e-government and its significance for the whole society; identifies the strategic goals of e-government, as well as the organisation and management of the related processes.

This document has been drawn up as a major element of the overall reform of the Bulgarian public administration including the regional and municipal administrations. For the purposes of continuity, while taking into consideration the comprehensive nature of the reform process, the existing major strategic documents of the Government have been reviewed and used in the research process. Furthermore, a number of other sources of information related to the international experience and best practices in the development and implementation of e-government strategies have been used (Annex I).

Taking into account and considering the country-specific legal, technological, organizational, logistic, resource related and other prerequisites for the development of e-government, a broad circle of experts in the field of government and information technologies has been consulted in the course of preparation of this document.

The document is of long-term significance for the highest governmental and political levels and will provide guidelines for the development of various specific current and future e-government projects, in line with its goals, principles and priorities.

The strategy is to be updated so as to reflect the strategic vision for the establishment of e-government in accordance with the current assessment of realities in the country.

The document contains the following sections:

- Realities;
- Vision and strategic objectives;
- Goals;
- General principles;
- Organization and management of the process.

2. Realities

A prerequisite for the e-government development and formulation of specific strategy goals are the realities in the country. The implementation of information technologies is a priority at the government and policy level, which has brought about a series of decisions and actions for the improvement of the technological environment and public attitude.

Based on existing research and surveys for Bulgaria's readiness to meet the challenges and opportunities of new information technologies, some of the findings and issues have been summarized in the following three main areas:

Political Will and Legal Framework

A number of strategic documents have been developed and adopted to guide the public administration's activities in relation to e-government. The legal framework in the country has been largely harmonized with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union and can rather quickly be developed further for the purposes of e-government.

The access to information and the protection of citizens' rights has been provided for by a law. There are legal provisions for the protection of rights to software products and databases and criminal liability has been stipulated for computer offences. However, the existing strategic and statutory documents do not reflect all institutional, national and international requirements. The overall legal framework and standards for the use of IT for public services have not been fully developed yet. The responsibility for providing true and complete information, stored and processed electronically, has not been clarified.

Information, Communication and Management Environment

The substantial investments made by the budget and foreign donors to upgrade the information technologies in the public administration have brought about considerable improvements in the national and institutional information and communication infrastructure.

A National Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) Network is in a process of development. An integrated optical communication network linking ministries and other state agencies in Sofia is already in operation. The extension of this network to the regional centers of Bulgaria is currently underway.

A number of institutions have made proper arrangements and involved qualified experts in the development of their information system structures and effective implementation of modern information technologies.

The acquisition of computer equipment is a priority for the public administration but the level of its utilisation is still lagging behind.

There is no integrated information environment in the public administration yet. The technological level of the information environment differs from one institution to another. Institutions do not coordinate their decisions in the IT field which leads to incompatibility of the systems. There is lack of coordination in regard to the terminology, registers and classifiers used.

Over 70 national registers and information systems have been developed and implemented. Some of them are electronically accessible but the major drawback of the national information resources is the lack of integration among them.

The existing information environment does not provide sufficient resources to counteract corruption practices in the public administration.

The functions of administrative structures have been defined but they do not conform with the specific requirements of e-government. The existing vertical structure of the government model creates difficulties in the relationship between the administration and citizens or businesses.

There is a need to develop uniform standards and implement statutory regulations in all administrative structures which will regulate the administrative services.

Human Resources

The implementation of new technologies requires constant knowledge acquisition. The education level of the public administration employees is comparatively high, but their training for the use of IT does not comply with the requirements of e-government.

It is difficult to attract and keep highly qualified IT and management specialists in the state administration because of the more attractive remuneration terms and clearer career perspectives in the private sector.

Critical Factors

Based on the realities mentioned, **the following critical factors** for a successful e-government have been defined:

- Presence of political will;
- Provision of necessary financial resources;
- Awareness in the society of the need for e-government development;
- Education and training, practical skills of the human resource pool for participation in the e-government;
- Provision of employment for highly qualified IT professionals;
- Effective feedback.

3. Vision and Strategic Objectives

The e-government in Bulgaria is an element of the transition from industrial to information society and serves to accelerate the European integration process. It is a process of change that helps expand the means of citizens and business to participate in a new knowledge-based economy. In order to have the full potential of e-government enforced, it is necessary to reform the administration, the management of business processes and information. It is also necessary to change the mindset and line of action of the people in the public administration, as well as their work attitude and their way of communication with citizens and business.

The main role of e-government is to meet the general public needs for high-quality and accessible public services. The development of e-government is also needed in order to increase the transparency and minimize the corruption practices in the state administration. Services will be provided in a way, at places and times that are most convenient for citizens and business through integrated and continuous electronic services. Apart from the traditional communication channels, new types of communication platforms and devices will be used, where the service

will be provided on a “one-stop-shop” principle. Customers of e-government services are the citizens and business, as well as the public administration itself. Services will be grouped into general topics or life events and will be provided using the everyday language of citizens.

The vision for the e-government in Bulgaria is:

The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria will provide modern and efficient governance, while using the means of contemporary information technologies in order to meet the real needs of citizens and businesses at any time and any place.

The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria will develop the necessary organizational, communication and information environment for the efficient operation of the public administration in accordance with the principles, standards and best practices in the world.

The development of e-government is determined by the need to:

- Cut expenditures and enhance government efficiency;
- Meet expectations of citizens and improve interaction environment;
- Improve business climate.

The e-government covers four major aspects of communication and services:

- **Administration – Citizens.** Modern Internet and Intranet web-based solutions coupled with conventional means for ensuring broad access, which will lead to qualitative changes in the terms for communication and provision of services to citizens;
- **Administration – Business.** Modern solutions for optimisation of processes and business relationships between the public administration and various business entities;
- **Administration – Administration.** IT development at the national and interstate levels with a view of ensuring effective interaction of various administrative structures;
- **Internal Institutional Efficiency and Effectiveness.** Organization and optimization of business processes, administration-employee relations and communication processes within the administrative structures.

The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria has formulated the following **strategic objectives** with regard to e-government:

To provide, through electronic means, high-quality, efficient and accessible public services to citizens and business;

To expand the technological capabilities of citizens and businesses for participation in the government decision-making process;

To form organizational, communication and information environment for effective and transparent functioning of the public administration in accordance with the principles, standards and best practices of the European Union.

The implementation of these strategic objectives will lead to cost of maintenance reduction for the public administration, to improved service quality, and decreased corruption. These are important prerequisites for sustainable economic and social development.

The basic guidelines for the attainment of e-government strategic objectives are:

- Provision of e-services through available information technologies and resources in the institutions;
- Development of a meta-information system, ensuring an information environment for integrated administrative services;
- Implementation of Internet-based technologies for informing, communicating and providing services to citizens and organisations;
- Development of the technical infrastructure.

4. Goals

Contemplating the deployment of stated vision and the implementation of strategic goals, related to the development of e-government, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria has outlined the following main targets:

Orientation towards citizens and businesses:

- Enable wide public electronic access to information and participation in the democratic process;
- Ensure transparency in the activities of the public administration and opportunities for feedback as prerequisites for public control of the executive power;
- Upgrade the quality of the communication between citizens, businesses and government employees through continuous exchange of knowledge and enhancement of the level of competence and the technological and administrative culture;
- Reduce the time, effort and costs needed for the search and access to personal and public data through inquiries in the registers and automated information systems of the public administration;
- Reduce the time, effort and costs for the provision of public services through electronic exchange of documents and other information between citizens, businesses and the public administration;
- Reduce the time, effort and costs to citizens and businesses by providing integrated public administrative services in an electronic way.

Organizational and technological upgrading of the public administration:

- Ensure better interaction among institutions in the public administration;
- Provide reliable communication environment for e-government;
- Create and introduce a reliable identification and information security system;
- Establish integrated information and management environment providing opportunities for rapid, efficient and effective electronic access to services, thus limiting the development of corruption practices;

- Ensure centralized coordination in the establishment, development and use of the national information resources of the public administration, providing means for modelling, forecasting and utilisation of modern decision making methodologies;
- Provide integrated electronic services meeting the needs of citizens and businesses;
- Create an integrated system of national identifiers;
- Introduce necessary IT standards;
- Introduce quality control systems in the public administration;
- Analyze and improve the legal framework in order to regulate the business processes of e-government.

Training and retraining of personnel in the public administration:

- Provide for necessary human resources for the establishment and operation of e-government;
- Develop new organizational culture in the public administration, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of the work done through electronic means;
- Upgrade the personal professional, organizational and managerial skills of public officials with regard to the operation of electronic equipment;
- Establish motivation environment for public administration employees for effective participation in e-government development;
- Effectively allocate competencies for the technological development, coordination and management among administrative structures, technological centers and e-government developers;
- Ensure teamwork at the institutional and national levels in order to upgrade the quality of management of e-government business processes.

5. General Principles

The fundamental principle underlying the success of e-government is the appropriate organization of stakeholders, i.e. administration, non-government organizations, citizens and businesses, at all stages of the implementation process – from the definition of the vision and priorities to the selection and management of specific projects. The general good governance principles set out in the Strategy for Modernization of the Public Administration, as well as these, confirmed in the Declaration of the Ministers of the EU Member States and the Applicant Countries (Brussels, November 29,2001) will also be applied, depending on the specific national conditions and the nature of projects. The implementation of e-government will be matched with the work done for the National Anti-Corruption Strategy.

Focusing on citizens and businesses

- **Equal access opportunities** – services will be easily accessible to all. Particular attention will be paid to people with special needs (senior or disabled people) and socially vulnerable people. Opportunities will be offered for selection among a number of channels for access to information and services.

- **Support of a system for encouragement of citizens and business** to use the opportunities offered by e-government.
- **Provision of public access to and transparency of the public administration acts.**

Market orientation

- **Knowledge of consumers** – investigation and comprehension of consumer behavior, identification of the demand for services and their supply.
- **Partnership with businesses** – use of the experience of businesses in the implementation of new IT to provide services and communicate with citizens. In the case of some specialised technological functions of e-government, it would be more appropriate to outsource the design, development and support, and even the financing in some cases, to companies that have the necessary potential to fulfill the task.
- **Effectiveness** – comparison of objectives with performance and expected impact through regular control and evaluation, as well as taking adjustment measures.
- **Efficiency** – encouragement of fair competition among companies, technologies and ideas in order to maintain proper balance between input resources and output results.
- **Technological independence** – achievement of maximum level of independence of e-government of specific platforms, technologies, software and companies.
- **Performance criteria** – use of measurable key indicators for the success of the implementation of individual projects.
- **Specification and stage-by-stage development** of the model outlined in the vision and strategic objectives of e-government, identifying predictable and feasible projects with clear effect for society in the course of time.

Identification and security

- **Data identification** – establishment of proprietary data, the responsibility for data authenticity and the data exchange rules.
- **Data security and protection** – provision of maximum protection of the data processed and stored.
- **Integrated approach** – each project should conform to the overall idea of the Strategy and be part of an integrated system to ensure continuity and rule out duplication of projects.
- **Single entry and multiple use of data** – single entry of data by the authorized body and multiple use of such data in accordance with the legal regulations and access authorization.

6. Organisation and Management

E-government provides for new ways to perform in the public sector in general and in the public administration in particular. It will ensure efficient management of change in all aspects of the public administration, i.e. statutory, organizational, managerial, technological, cultural and other aspects aimed at attaining the objectives and goals set out in the Strategy.

The E-government Strategy is essentially a strategy to manage the transition from the conventional administrative model to the provision of integrated administrative services to citizens and businesses and to rational management through IT.

The strategy for the implementation of e-government, after its adoption by the Council of Ministers will be developed further. Each draft amendment will be widely discussed in public and the new version must be placed at the disposal of interested institutions and organizational structures of the public administration, businesses and NGOs.

E-government is of national significance because its implementation management implies interaction among the legislative, judicial and executive powers in close cooperation with citizens and business.

A decisive factor for the successful implementation of the E-government Strategy in Bulgaria is the will of decision makers and public officials to employ a new approach to the administrative processes.

The key factors for efficient management of the implementation of E-government Strategy are as follows:

- **Active participation of citizens and business.** The participation of citizens and business in the management of the implementation process is a reliable tool for feedback and prevention of potential conflicts;
- **Political and governmental support at the highest level.** Commitment and responsibility of senior officials in the executive power at all stages of the process from the definition of the vision to the implementation of specific projects. Senior officials in the executive power take part in the management of e-government implementation process through all of its phases and assume responsibility for decisions made;
- **Teamwork and project-based principle of operational management.** The day-to-day operations management is performed on the basis of project management principles by interdisciplinary teams. The e-government implementation calls for the involvement of formidable expertise potential in the field of information, communication and management technologies, as well as excellent knowledge of processes in the public administration;
- **Continuous coordination and feedback at all stages of implementation.** The effects of e-government can be seen on a long-term basis, while its implementation requires enormous human and financial resources. The use of effective tools for current evaluation and proper impact will reduce the risk of waste of time and resources;
- **Strong methodological support.** The methodological support will ensure the compatibility of various information and communication systems, as well as transparency and efficiency of government, and save financial resources. This support is provided at the strategic level by methodological working groups, while at the operational level is it provided by methodological teams at the individual institutions;
- **Risk analysis and impact on risk factors.**
- **Implementation of change planning and management.**
- **Providing for transparency in the public administration operations.**

Structures and Functions

The Council of Ministers

- Adopts the E-government Strategy and a National Program for Implementation of E-government in the Republic of Bulgaria and provides the necessary financial resources.
- Provides public access to the decisions made in relation to E-government.

Interdepartmental Committee

An **Interdepartmental Committee** is established under the Council of Ministers. The Committee will be comprised of representatives of all ministries, the Council of Ministers administration, etc. Representatives of interested NGOs will be invited to participate in the meetings of the Interdepartmental Committee. The Interdepartmental Committee submits for approval to the Council of Ministers the National Program and the organizational structure for the implementation of e-government as well as its funding, periodically (every 6 months) reviews proposals for updating of the Strategy and the National Program and controls their implementation. The Interdepartmental Committee is headed by the **Minister of State Administration** and the **Minister of Finance**.

The Minister of State Administration

The Minister of State Administration will manage the process of implementation of e-government.

The Minister of State Administration will fulfill the following tasks in cooperation with the public administration, businesses, NGOs and donors:

- Coordinate donor funding for the implementation tasks;
- Assist in the preparation of private sector companies for implementation of e-government projects;
- In the context of the implementation of the Strategy and the National Program for Implementation of E-government in Bulgaria to organize, monitor and review the feedback from citizens, businesses and donors, providing for transparency and accountability;
- Supervise the absorption of investments by the public sector for e-government projects and their rate of return;
- Develop and adapt methodological materials. Provide methodological and technical support to the administrative structures in the implementation of projects and tasks set out in the plan.

In the course of these activities, the Minister will be supported by relevant structures of the public administration, the Coordination Center for Information, Communication and Management Technologies and various other donor programs.

Project Organization

For the organization and management of the process of e-government implementation a **National Program for Implementation of E-government in the Republic of Bulgaria** will be adopted. The Minister of State Administration appoints the Head of the National Program, nominated by the Interdepartmental Committee.

Assessing proposals, approved by the Interdepartmental Committee, the Council of Ministers will identify the projects of national importance. **National project teams** will be formed for the operational management of these projects involving experts from various branches of the public administration, outside experts and representatives of the funding organizations. These projects will enjoy special institutional support from the administrative structures. The Council of Ministers will monitor project results.

Institutional project teams will be established for the operational management of institutional projects.

The individual branches of the public administration will set up **methodological teams** to support the implementation of e-government services. They will carry out the following e-government-related activities:

- Draft concepts, strategies and action plans for the development of institutional information systems and human resources in accordance with the E-government Strategy, the Action Plan and other related documents;
- Perform current review and maintain information related to the status of institutional information systems and the organization of business processes in order to attaining the e-government objectives;
- Assist e-government projects.

Methodologies and documents to be developed re. Strategy implementation are listed in Annex II

Basic criteria for selection of priority projects

Significance for the economic and social development of the country. Priority will be given to the introduction of services, which will save time and resources to citizens and businesses, thus eliminating administrative barriers and accelerating economic and social development.

Economic efficiency. Priority will be given to projects with high return on investment, achieved as a result of decreased costs of services and/or increased level of collection. All projects will be assessed in terms of cost-efficiency with regard to investments made and the operational costs needed for the maintenance of the systems during their useful life.

Substantial demand for integrated public services. When developing projects, the target group of potential customers for the respective services will be assessed, considering the rate of readiness to use these services. Priority will be given to projects meeting the needs of as many potential users as possible. Initially, priority will be given to projects that do not require any special conditions for the use of data and provision of services.

Compliance with EU priorities. In light of the harmonization of Bulgaria's administrative practices with those of EU, priority will be given to the automation of services, which have been

selected as indicators for the evaluation of e-government in the e-Europe Action plan - Annex III

Anti-corruption effect. Priority will be given to projects, leading to increased transparency in the state administration and decreased corruption risk.

In reference to the need to develop an action plan for the implementation of the strategy, some urgent measures are defined in two areas:

A. Projects with immediate results:

- Re-engineering of the government portal “Official page of Bulgarian State Institutions”.
- Analysis of the technological equipment and technological training of the employees for the public administration activities.
- Development of personnel training program.
- Identification and prioritization of the administrative services, which will be provided electronically through the government portal.
- Submission of forms to the National Insurance Institute electronically.
- Submission of internal revenue forms electronically.
- Submission of customs forms electronically.
- Issue of certificate for current company status.
- Issue of asset burden certificate.
- Issue of certificates for company litigation and registration.
- Issue of certificates from the real estate register.
- Issue of personal legal certificates.
- PKI infrastructure of the state administration.

B. Urgent projects of key importance for the future development:

- Design and development of an integrated electronic services system using institutional, inter-institutional and national information systems.
- Support and development of communication and information infrastructure of the public administration and the National ATM Network of the state administration.
- Development of a network of general access locations for complex citizens services with or without an operator.
- Development of systems for local e-management.
- Development of a Unified Crime Prevention Informational System.
- Re-engineering of business processes of public services.
- Development of a system for electronic procurement.
- Development of an Information System for Financial Management of the Budgetary Organizations.
- Development of an information system for border control units.

The urgent tasks and projects do not represent the full list of measures, which would lead to the goals, incorporated in this strategy. They only provide continuity of the e-government development in Bulgaria until the adoption of the Action Plan for strategy implementation.

Methodology and Standards

The process of e-government implementation is managed and organized on the basis of the methodological requirements and standards adopted in accordance with the international best practices. For this purpose, a methodological base will be developed and maintained at the national level, including guidelines, manuals, standard document forms and other documentation.

All executive and implementation teams involved in e-government projects synchronize their activities and apply an integrated approach to:

- project definition;
- project management;
- the implementation process;
- the selection and application of technological standards and solutions.

Financing of the Implementation of the Strategy

The implementation of the Strategy is supported through three-year budget plans approved at the government level. Financing will be provided from the following sources:

- The state budget;
- The private sector on the basis of the public-private partnership (PPP);
- Donor programs.

Financial resources needed for the implementation of the Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and the budget will be adjusted accordingly.

Methodological guidelines and legal provisions will be developed for the planning, review, optimization and supervision of spending in accordance with international practices. A special Management Information System will be developed and used for this purpose.

Annex I

STRATEGIES, METHODOLOGIES AND OTHER MATERIALS USED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

1. Concept for Integrated Administrative Services Based on the One-Stop-Shop Principle, 2002
2. Strategy for the Modernization of the Public Administration, 2002
3. Training Strategy for the Public Administration, 2002
4. 2001 Government Program
5. National Integrated Administrative Services Program, 2001
6. National Anti-Corruption Strategy, 2001
7. National Program for the Development of the Information Society in the Republic of Bulgaria – 1999; updated in 2001
8. Development Strategy for High-Tech Activities and High-Tech Parks, 2000
9. Development Strategy for the Information Society in the Republic of Bulgaria, 1999
10. Program for the Implementation of Modern IT in the Public Administration, 1999
11. “Bulgaria: ICT Infrastructure and E-readiness Assessment”, ARC Fund, 2002
12. “Information Society Statistics. Data for Candidate Countries”. Richard Deiss, Statistics in focus, 07.2001.
13. Analysis of Bulgaria’s Technological Development, 2001, Ministry of Economy, CED, GTZ (in Bulgarian)
14. New Zealand’s e-government strategy, 2001
15. USA e-government strategy, 2002
16. e-Europe 2005: Information society for all, Action Plan to be presented in view of the Sevilla European Council, 2002

Annex II

DOCUMENTS TO BE DEVELOPED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

- National Program for Implementation of E-government in the Republic of Bulgaria.
- Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy
- Terms of reference for the development of a Management Information System for the management of the process of development of E-government
- Project Management Methodology (national, interdepartmental and institutional);
- Methodology for the Management of Procurement and Services Contracts;
- Information Security Policy;
- Rules and Procedures for Interdepartmental Information Exchange;
- Architectures and Requirements for Information Systems in the Public Administration

Annex III

INDICATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

As Indicators for Evaluation of the development of E-government the European Commission has adopted the following list of on-line performed basic public administrative services - 12 for citizens and 8 for business:

Public Administrative Services Provided to Citizens:

1. Personal income tax: tax returns, notices
2. Job search services at employment offices
3. Social security, Unemployment benefits, Child allowances, Health costs, Scholarships
4. Personal documents (identity cards, passports, driving licenses)
5. Vehicle registration (new, second-hand and imported vehicles)
6. Applications for construction permits
7. Reports to the police (e.g. in case of theft)
8. Public libraries (catalogues, search machines)
9. Certificates (birth, marriage, etc.)
10. Secondary and higher education diplomas
11. Address changes
12. Health-related services (interactive advice on the availability of specific types of services at various hospitals, appointments)

Public Administrative Services Provided to Businesses:

1. Social security for the employees
2. Corporate income taxes: tax returns, notices
3. VAT: tax returns, notices
4. Registration of start-ups
5. Sending of data to the statistical office
6. Customs declarations
7. Environment-related permits (including reporting)
8. Public procurement

The progress of development of those services will be evaluated on the basis of the following four stages:

1. Providing on-line public service information.
2. One-way interaction – downloading forms from the Internet.
3. Two-way interaction – Completing and submitting forms, incl. identification of the person.
4. Transactions – executing events, decisions, deliveries and payments.

Net Readiness Results of Bulgaria E-government Strategy

Executive Summary

- Net Ready is assessment the Readiness of Government Organizations and a benchmark of them with the best-in-class organizations using digitized processes. The survey has 57 questions grouped under the four critical success factors for e-government. These are Leadership, Governance, Competency and Technology combines three elements – improving organisation performance, improving service delivery and improving participation and citizen engagement.
- E-government Strategy coordination team of Council of Ministers and Cisco Internet Business Solutions Team jointly started this Net Ready for the Bulgarian Government. The survey has been answered by 46 executives from various ministries like Finance, Economy, Education, Transport and Communications and Public Administration.
- The Net Ready scores have been analysed per Ministry to understand the Net Readiness levels of each government organization. The analysis has been extended to benchmark the gaps in areas of Leadership, Governance, Competency and Technology with the Best-in-Class organizations and Thought starters have been identified to close the gap in these areas.
- Net Ready workshops were conducted with the key people from each ministry to evaluate the scores, see the strong and weak points and brainstorm/prioritize the actions originating from thought starters. So far, the Net Ready workshops have been started with the Ministry of Transport and Communication, Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Education.
- Once the Thought starters are prioritized and consensus is built around the top 5, responsibilities are assigned to come up with the detailed actions steps and timeline in terms of how to realize the benefits of the suggested action item. Some of the early actions taken are:
 - Executive Education Program for Changing Culture and increasing the E-government awareness across Ministries.
 - Governmental Employee Portal to leverage communications and knowledge sharing and use as a best practices change agent within the Government itself.
 - Executive Live e-business demonstrations by best in class companies like Cisco and also periodical sessions within Bulgarian ministries as the so called Best Practice sharing sessions.
- We plan to mobilize the e-government steering committee to review the Net Ready actions in their regular meetings as part of their e-agenda. Mobilization of the E-government board to prepare the E-government services Champions from each Ministry and standard reporting metrics to measure progress.

- Development of the Detailed Business Cases and Project Plans for the second/third wave of e-government services to be launched within the next 12-15 months (planned to be completed in 3 months). Prioritization and management of the services roadmap based on a systematic approach (as seen in the example Prioritization Matrix below).
- Design of Secure/High Performance/Scalable Web Foundation architecture to run the e-government services effectively reducing the total cost of ownership.

1. What is Net Readiness of Government

The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria will provide modern and efficient government, while using the means of contemporary information technologies in order to meet the real needs of citizens and businesses at any time and any place (as stated in the official e-government strategy and vision of Bulgaria).

The e-government strategy of Bulgaria covers four major aspects of communication and services:

- Administration – Citizens. Modern Internet and Intranet web-based solutions coupled with conventional means for ensuring broad access, which will lead to qualitative changes in the terms for communication and provision of services to citizens;
- Administration – Businesses. Modern solutions for optimisation of processes and business relationships between the public administration and various business entities;
- Administration – Administration. IT development at the national and international levels with a view to ensuring an effective interaction of various administrative structures;
- Internal Institutional Efficiency and Effectiveness. Organisation and optimization of business processes and communication within the various administrative structures.

E-government is about more than simply doing things quicker and cheaper or doing things simply. It is about a fundamentally new way to define and arrange the tasks, functions and resources of government to improve the quality and value of the relationship between government and citizen.

The first element of e-government is all about improving the organisational effectiveness of the individual departments and agencies within government. It focuses on the success with which governments can embrace the benefits, already well established in the corporate sector and in smaller enterprises as well, of Internet business solutions.

Around the world, Cisco has a strong track record of working with government agencies of virtually every size and description to share the experience we have gained and to help agencies discover the value of Internet business solutions.

Largely through the Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), we focus our contributions in a framework defined by what we have described as the four pillars of “net readiness”

Leadership

Leadership in a very practical sense is the central pillar of the “net ready” strategy. Our own experience, and the evidence of the customers we’ve worked with around the world, reinforces that leadership and a strong sense of shared direction have to be the starting point.

Governance

Many government agencies (and private sector companies too) have governance methods that are poorly adapted to the demands of shaping and executing an Internet business solutions strategy. Often, the way decisions are made, resources allocated and performance measured are too slow or too cumbersome.

Technology

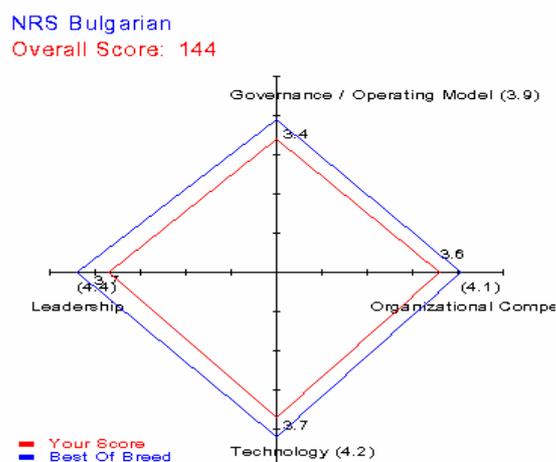
Technology, including the inescapable requirement for robust, scaleable networks, is one of the four pillars. It is important, but not dominant.

Competencies

The fourth pillar looks at the range and mix of organisational and project skills within the organisation. If 90% of the success an organisation can expect to get from adopting Internet business solutions is vested in the capacity for “ruthless execution”, then the absence of execution skills will be fatal.

Within those four dimensions, we use a range of business planning and diagnostic tools to create a vision for Internet business solutions, to identify the “friction points” in the business processes that currently drive agency operations and to identify ways we can strip that friction out of the system. We go further and set down some priorities, so that the vision and strategy can quickly turn to successful implementation in 30, 60 and 90-chunks of “ruthless execution”.

2. The Net Ready Score Analysis of Bulgaria



The Net Ready Score of overall Bulgarian government is 144 where the best-in-class is about 166 out of 200. However, it is more important to measure the gaps per dimension than the overall score.

Our analysis can be summarized as the following:

- **Leadership and Governance** has a larger gap than Technology and Competency. This is both good news and bad news. Bad news is that, Leadership and Governance are the Must Haves for Effective e-government strategy execution. Good news is we have a chance to learn from others experience such as; we focus on closing the gap in these two areas first, it will enable us to close the gap faster as most organizations have focused on the Technology and Competencies historically and did not get the expected results without the first two pillars (Leadership, Governance) accomplished.

- Without **Leadership** in place, it is hard to integrate the action plan with the political and economical strategy of Bulgaria. If the Top Leaders are not sponsoring and leading the use of Digital processes and emphasize the importance of closing the Digital Divide with the Western World using technology, there will be less likely any followers or total commitment from the organization/country as a whole. As people like to take these Top People as their Role Models for themselves, Leadership is very effective to deploy a top-down approach to communicate and empower people to execute e-government.

- **Governance** is the enabler for Execution of the Action Plan. Without the right Governance in place, the action plan is just another piece of paper. As Bulgaria closes the gap here by taking appropriate actions in defining the Roles and Responsibilities among ministries, establish a funding model that is agreed by all and has the delivery capabilities for e-government services, the e-government will go at a faster pace with more success stories.

- Transport and Communication, Defence and Economics are leading the Readiness where Health/Public and Social and Agricultural are lagging. But is that True or just a Perception. We see in general that there are large variations among the ministries and it is important to tailor the e-government action plan accordingly for each ministry. That is, for High Score ministries, we can execute on the Quick-win e-government services fast and use that as Success Case for others. And for ministries with lower scores, we focus on the infrastructural, Educational and change management aspects of e-government first before doing any serious implementation. It is critical to start with Quick-wins, as these will motive people to raise the bar to execute more critical government services and it will also increase the adaptation of people using digital processes gradually.

- Bulgaria is good in specific areas of Net Ready. Building cross-functional teams, managing flexible governance model per ministry, build IT competencies and presence of technology availability. Here, Top level two way communication with the Ministers on the progress of the Cross-functional teams (IT and Business teams of Agencies, Ministries) and the getting the big picture by leveraging the technology availability and IT competency of leading ministries will help the overall e-government to go faster. So we need to focus on Best Practices sharing among agencies and later on share the Service Portfolios and build a common e-government roadmap that the resource planning (technology, manpower) is managed centrally. This will reduce the cost of ownership as well as improve the efficiency of the cross-functional team. There is also a need to build more business side perspective into these cross-function teams as much as IT people.

- There is a built consensus and knowledge in some specific areas of the e-government that is related questions known by more then 25%-40% of people. These are the security issues, e-government set as top priority for Senior Management and IT organization is not respected enough by other departments. The teams have identified various actions to overcome these known issues. We believe the e-government strategy and the efforts are well known by most people which is a very good sign. The consensus over Security is also another enabler that will help to build the relevant infrastructure properly.

- IT is not seen as a Consulting Partner by business in e-government as stated by most people. The Web Foundation education will help IT to transform themselves into e-government consultants. This is an action taken by most governments to increase the level of awareness of IT by the Business and help to build the Standards and Guidelines for an end-to-end e-government architecture.

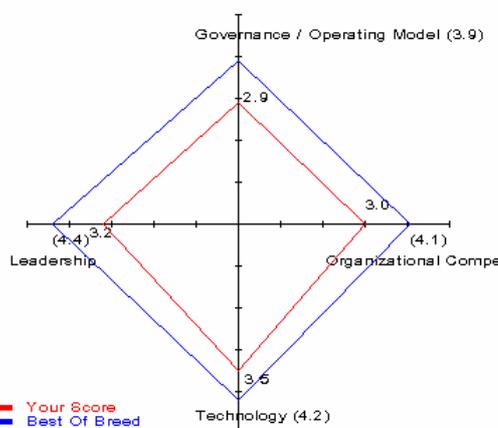
- Culture and driving people to use e-solutions is lacking as with most other organizations in the Emerging Market countries. This is the same challenge as with the Digital Divide and therefore serious and fast action is required to change the Culture and motivate people to use the digital processes. Several thought starters were identified and planned to help this in Bulgaria like:

- Executive Education Program for Changing Culture and increasing the E-government awareness across Ministries.
- Governmental Employee Portal to leverage communications and knowledge sharing and use as a best practices change agent within the Government itself.Executive Live e-business demonstrations by best in class companies like Cisco and also periodical sessions within Bulgarian ministries as the so called Best Practice sharing sessions.

3. Net Ready Scores by Ministry

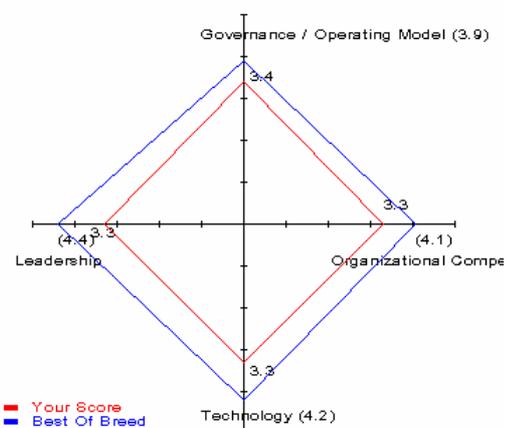
It is helpful to present the Scores by ministry as it will help us to tailor the e-government strategy and action plans accordingly.

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 126



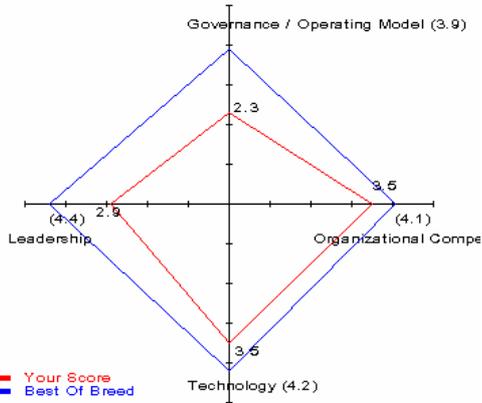
Agriculture and Culture

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 132



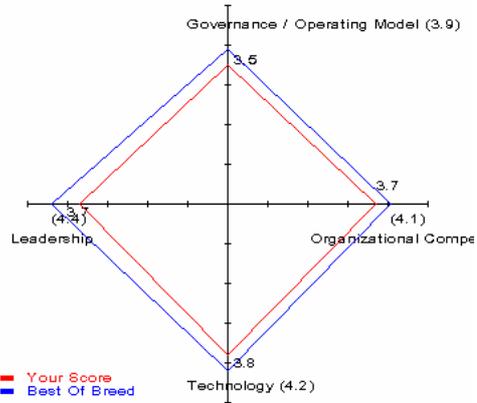
Regional Dev and Employment Social Affairs

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 121



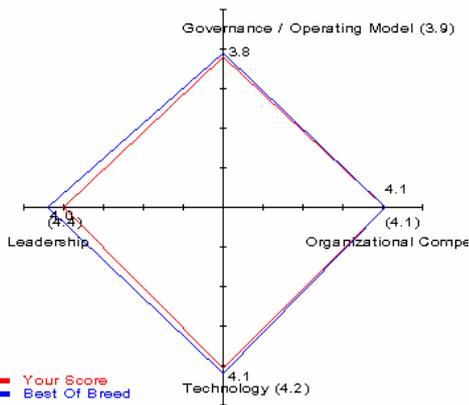
Health

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 147



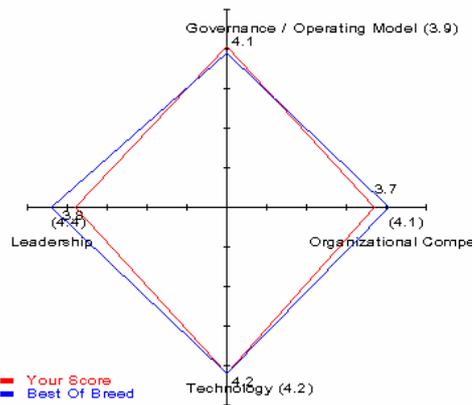
Energy

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 160



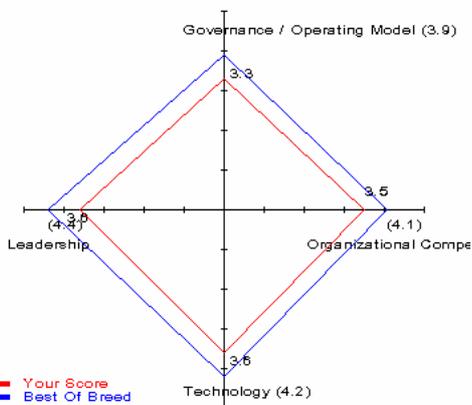
Economy

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 158



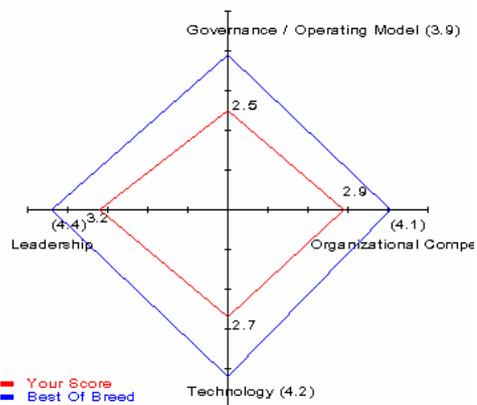
Defence

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 140



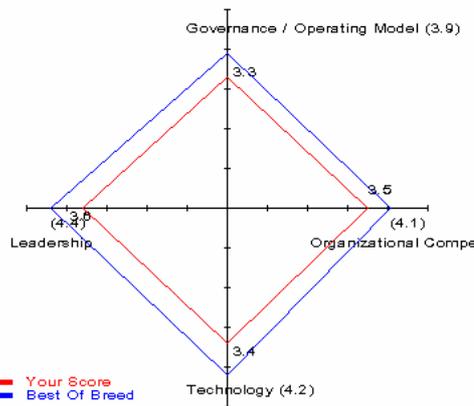
Finance

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 113



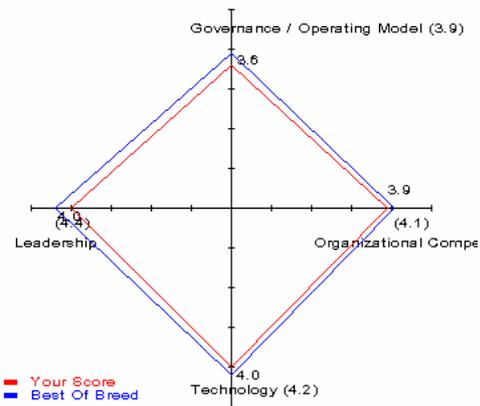
Council of Ministers

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 138



Education

NRS Bulgarian
Overall Score: 155



Transport and Communication

- Transport and Communications, Economy, Finance, Energy and Defence have scores very high.
- Council of Ministers, Education, Agriculture and Regional Development and Social affairs are relatively lower score.
- Based on the results, the thought starters are different for each ministry, however we can still mention the overall net readiness thought starters to give us an average view.

4. Net Ready Gaps by Dimension

Leadership

1. Delivering better citizen service via E-Gov technologies is a top priority for senior management.
2. Decision-making authority has been clearly assigned for all E-Gov initiatives.
3. Our E-Gov efforts help our organization to recruit and retain top talent.
4. Our vision for E-Gov activities is widely communicated and understood throughout our organization.
5. Senior management is heavily involved in the development of the organization's E-Gov direction. We encourage our employees to drive E-Gov solutions. We have developed a culture within our organization which encourages E-Gov. We have created a 12/18-month roadmap for implementing our E-Gov strategy.

Governance

1. IT group is viewed as an E-Gov partner providing Internet consulting services to the business units.
2. My division/agency has the proper funding to be successful in our E-Gov initiatives.

3. Organizational units have the flexibility to set their own E-Gov application development budget levels.
4. Roles, responsibilities and accountability are clearly defined for each team member involved in E-Gov initiatives.
5. We have clearly defined metrics for assessing the impact of our Internet initiatives.
6. We understand and plan for the impact E-Gov initiatives will have on our employees (change management issues).
7. Total spending on E-Gov is high relative to other IT spending (PCs, infrastructure, etc.).
8. The current organizational structure provides an environment that is well suited for E-Gov.

Competency

1. Organization management has Internet knowledge and IT has business knowledge.
2. Our organization has effective processes in place to share E-Gov experiences, learning and successes.
3. We have the agility to execute and move quickly.
4. We have or are building internal expertise in E-Gov.
5. We continually enhance our E-Gov product/service offerings through iterative projects.

Technology

1. Our Internet solutions are flexible to accommodate rapid change and scalability.
2. Our Main, external E-Gov web site enables us to appropriately interact with our customers, partners, and investor.
3. Our organizations learn from E-Gov successes and failures.
4. The IT organization is well respected by operations management.
5. The technical experience and expertise of our E-Gov teams (internal or partner) is adequate for success.
6. We have the technological infrastructure and competencies to effectively engage in E-Gov initiatives.
7. We strictly adhere to infrastructure, technology, and applications standards set for our enterprise.

5. Net Ready Thought Starters & Actions

1. Establish and executive eBoard. Your management team should constantly look to share insights with other best-in-class E-Business management teams.
2. Continue to redefine the industry by redefining your strategy and enhancing your value to customers.

3. Discuss key opportunity areas to make doing business with your company more efficient with your extended enterprise (e.g., customer, distribution channels, suppliers).
4. Build a community of interest in your industry area.
5. Gain momentum through quick Internet projects with 3-6 month delivery cycles.
6. Establish standard prioritisation process, to identify and select projects which help achieve business goals.
7. Establish clear, corporate communications so people know what is being done and successes achieved.
8. Develop and communicate clear project management and decision guidelines for each E-Business initiative.
9. Look actively at internal, GtoE opportunities to make life easier for senior execs, thus help them see the possibilities of e-Business.
10. Create a "sense of urgency" throughout the organization by creating an Internet SWAT team which has 1-3 months to report back to the CEO & board on e-opportunities.
11. Create a training program to ensure the management team is knowledgeable on your E-Business planning process.
12. Create a knowledge center/collaboration tool to share leading E-Business case examples across the organization.
13. Partner with leading E-Business service providers - ISVs, consultants to help accelerate your IS resource learning curve.
14. Develop safety/reliability checks within the architecture (e.g., redundancy, backups, application guarantors).
15. Create an Internet Architecture lab to research new IT products.
16. Conduct an "ecompliant Network analysis" to determine actual infrastructure needs to be egovernment objectives and gaps from current plans.

The above thought starters are generated by the Benchmark Database as means of recommendations to what other organizations have done to close the gap in Net Readiness.

The thought starters have been then prioritized by the team and selected 5 top items to plan for detailed action steps. The following actual example is the result of the Transport and Communications Ministry as voted by a team of 10-15 people:

- Establish standard prioritisation process, to identify and select projects which help achieve business goals.
- Create a training program to ensure the management team is knowledgeable on your E-Business planning process.
- Establish clear, corporate communications so people know what is being done and successes achieved.
- Build a community of interest in your industry area.

- Conduct an "ecompliant Network analysis" to determine actual infrastructure needs to be e-government objectives and gaps from current plans.

6. Next Steps – Executing the actions

Once the Thought starters are prioritized and consensus is built around the top 5, responsibilities are assigned to come up with the detailed actions steps and timeline in terms of how to realize the benefits of the suggested action item. Some of the early actions taken are:

- Executive Education Program for Changing Culture and increasing the E-government awareness across Ministries.
- Governmental Employee Portal to leverage communications and knowledge sharing and use as a best practices change agent within the Government itself.
- Executive Live e-business demonstrations by best in class companies like Cisco and also periodical sessions within Bulgarian ministries as the so called Best Practice sharing sessions.

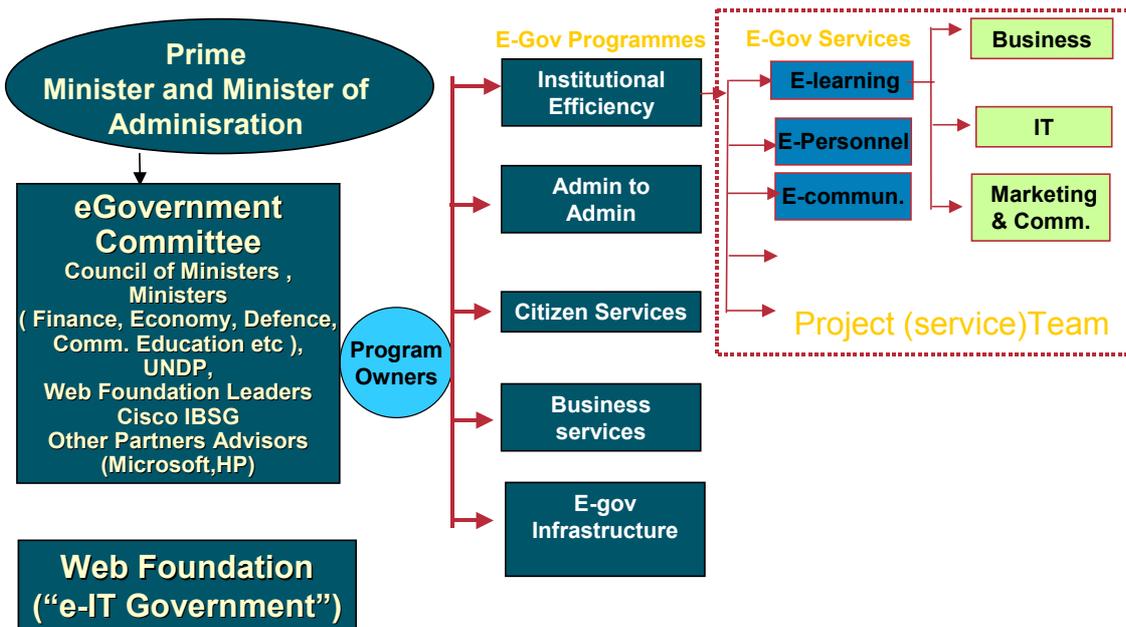
We plan to mobilize the e-government steering committee to review the Net Ready actions in their regular meetings as part of their e-agenda.

Other planned actions are:

Development of the Detailed Business Cases and Project Plans for the second/third wave of e-government services to be launched within the next 12-15 months (planned to be completed in 3 months). Prioritization and management of the services roadmap based on a systematic approach (as seen in the example Prioritization Matrix below).

Design of Secure/High Performance/Scalable Web Foundation architecture to run the

E-government Steering Committee



Example Strategic Prioritization Criteria and Roadmap



e-government services effectively reducing the total cost of ownership.

Mobilization of the E-government board (as seen below) to prepare the E-government services Champions from each Ministry and standard reporting metrics to measure progress.

Every e-business initiative is rated based on Business Impact and the Ease of execution of the initiative. At first the initiatives per Program (G2G, G2C etc) is scored based on the following criteria on a scale of 5 (1 being Low, 5 being High).

It is important to use a systematic approach to build the action plan of Bulgarian e-government services. The Program owners will be using the business cases to get support and funding for their projects where the projects will be prioritized based on a set of predefined metrics (see the example below).

Further customization and additions to the criteria will be done by the e-government strategy coordination team.

e-Government Initiative Prioritization Methodology

Brief Definition of Assessment Criteria for Business Impact/Advancement

Mission Critical & Strategic Fit: Initiative requiring special consideration to ensure public safety, public welfare, and continued organizational viability. Supports Governor’s e-Government Executive Order and or Strategic government plans.

Efficiency/Value: Degree to which the initiative is useful in solving a business need throughout its life-cycle. It brings productivity and cost saving benefits.

Risk: Degree to which the initiative places the Government in a position of jeopardy, such that the loss to the Administration organization may be measured in terms of significant financial, functional, or resources loss.

Impact: Degree to which the initiative affects the internal and external environment, such as the number of organizations, processes and people affected by the initiative's implementation, and financial and non-financial resources consumed.

Market Conditions: Are businesses, employees and/or citizens ready to consume/use the service and there is demand.

Brief Definition of Assessment Criteria for Ease of Execution and Feasibility

Operational Readiness: The organization will be able to develop the execution and operational readiness to support the new web processes.

Resources: Lack of Funding, skills, training, IT standards, infrastructure.

Culture: Cultural unwillingness and difficulty to change to the new business processes.

Leveragability: The infrastructure, operational and others costs can be leveraged by combining with other initiatives with similar needs.

Development Cost: Cost of development of the solution and control of ongoing costs are controllable.

External: Legal, regulatory issues and/or stakeholder capabilities are preventing the initiative to work smoothly.

January 2003

Coordination Center for Information, Communication and Management Technologies at the Council of Ministers and UNDP

History

The initiation of the Center was necessitated by the need to create a capacity to coordinate a wide variety of activities in the implementation of Information, Communication and Management Technologies in the State Administration.

Experience has indicated that there is a need for a structural unit, free from the customary operational responsibilities, to handle the ICT coordination tasks, prepare analyses, strategies and related action plans.

The Coordination Center for Information, Communication and Management Technologies (ICMT) was established as a special ICT coordination unit under the auspices of the Council of Ministers and with the support of the United Nations Development Program. Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the Center was signed between the Bulgarian Government and the United Nations Development Program office in Sofia on February 6th, 2002.

The presence of the Coordination Center will greatly facilitate the synchronization of activities in the implementation of e-government program and help avoid duplication of effort and funding.

Mission

The mission of the Coordination Center is to further implement Information, Communications and Management Technologies through support and coordination of state administration, the donor community and the private sector, leading to an overall improvement in the quality of the public-administrative services and the decision-making processes.

Goals

The goals of the Coordination Center for Information, Communication and Management Technologies are as follows:

- To improve the effectiveness of the state administration through a systematic and coordinated implementation of information, communication and management technologies and introduction of e-government services.
- To increase the efficiency of budget and donor funds invested in information, communication and management technologies in the public sector and to attract new investment.
- To establish effective partnerships with the private sector for the implementation of e-government projects and to encourage the overall progress of technology and enable improved business and social environment.

The above mentioned goals are to be attained through:

- Coordination of ICMT sector issues of Ministries and other government agencies- strategies, programs, projects, administration, management, environment, etc.
- Coordination with the donor community of ICT initiatives- projects, current and planned activities in the sector.
- Coordination and operation as a focal point for the private sector ICT companies and NGOs.
- Policy and strategy recommendations on ICMT issues to the government and synergy with institutionalized policy makers in the ICT sector.

Bulgaria Development Gateway

www.bulgaria-gateway.org

The Bulgaria Development Gateway is a civil society led initiative aimed at facilitating the country's transition into an information, or knowledge-based society by consolidating the national dialogue on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for development and promoting a common vision among the relevant stakeholders in government, business, civil society, academic and research communities, and international donor organizations. It is part of a global Development Gateway initiative launched in 2000 to facilitate the effective use of ICT for sustainable development and poverty reduction across the globe – from Algeria and Argentina to Russia, Vietnam and Uganda. The Bulgaria country gateway is coordinated by the Applied Research and Communications Fund (www.arc.online.bg) under the broad umbrella of an Internet Alliance for Economic Development (www.online.bg/iaed), a public-private coalition established in mid-1999 to foster wider use of Internet and related technologies to the benefit of economic and social development in the country. The Alliance brings together Members of Parliament, cabinet ministers, public sector officials, representatives of large IT companies, private business associations and major Bulgarian NGOs.

Objectives

The Bulgaria Development Gateway is about:

- *establishing a virtual community* of government, civil society, and private sector organizations having common interests in promoting democratic reform, sustainable development, poverty reduction or any combination of these developmental themes;
- *empowering local stakeholders to use the Internet* as a cost-effective tool for knowledge-sharing, networking and collaboration;
- *assisting these stakeholders* by providing links to ideas and good practices, information about development activities and trends, funding and commercial opportunities;
- *increasing global access to locally-generated development knowledge.*

Activities

The Bulgaria Development Gateway implements a broad range of activities, including:

- developing a knowledge sharing portal to serve as a one-stop-shop repository for development stakeholders in Bulgaria (www.bulgaria-gateway.org);
- informing and assisting policy-making in the field of ICT by conducting relevant studies and promoting coalition-building among stakeholders;
- raising public awareness on the importance of ICT as an instrument for development;
- testing and implementing specific pilot projects which can demonstrate the practical impact of ICT on increasing transparency and accountability of government, development of SMEs and e-commerce, coordination of international donor assistance,

knowledge-sharing among civil society organizations, and development of e-learning applications.

BgDG is also strongly focused on enhancing regional cooperation and transfer of good practices among country gateway teams and other e-development partners in Southeast Europe.

The Portal Site

The Bulgaria Development Gateway portal is a fully interactive portal site providing information on sustainable development and poverty reduction, and offering a space where communities can share their experiences on development efforts. The site is primarily targeted at development practitioners in government, NGOs, academia, civil society, private sector and international donor agencies.

The Portal offers the following features:

- Common databases with a global network of more than 40 country development gateways;
- Databases of news, events, publications, web sites, documents, statistics, research and studies, etc.;
- Database of development projects assisting donors' coordination;
- Links to development resources, institutions, organizations and companies in Bulgaria and the world;
- Topical communities and discussion forums.

The Portal's main characteristic is its full interactivity:

- All registered users can add their content to selected development topics;
- All topic pages can be assigned to organizations and companies;
- Topic guides can freely add new sub-topics and build sub-topic pages choosing automatically page elements to appear;
- Therefore the portal features a dynamically expanding taxonomy tree.

Visit www.bulgaria-gateway.org

A project supported by Development Gateway Foundation - www.dgfoundation.org