



## **WITSA BACKGROUND PAPER**

### **E-GOVERNMENT TRENDS IN 2003: LOCAL GOVERNMENTS USING ICT October 2003**

#### **Introduction**

In a May 2002 Statement, WITSA focused attention on the complex issues surrounding the implementation of e-government. We suggested that the public and private sectors work together to deliver appropriate information and communications technology solutions needed to create new value in the government's relationship with its citizens.

E-Government refers to the use by government agencies of information and communication technologies (ICT) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions.

Barriers do exist that slow the adoption of ICT by the public sector just as they do for the private sector in certain countries. These include: higher costs of ICT introduction due to the scale of public organizations; paper documents required for approval processing; security and concerns; confidentiality of information; obsolete regulations and laws; lack of understanding and computer skills; difficulties of carrying out organizational change; and the nature of public sector financing and procurement practices. More work is needed to better understand these and other factors, and how to address them.

The purpose of this document is to provide an update on e-government trends and to focus attention on the experiences of local authorities interacting with citizens, customers, and other levels of government. We note that various

international studies have addressed national e-government policy, strategy, and implementation, ignoring developments of the local government, where it is estimated that up to 80 percent of citizen-government transactions take place at the local level. We include a few examples on the use of ICT to provide local eGovernment services.

### **Progress Toward E- Government in 2003**

There are vast differences among countries in the maturity of their e-government efforts, as noted in a 2002 study by Accenture, titled "*Rhetoric vs. Reality*." No nation has demonstrated the level of sophistication of Internet presence that one finds in the leading private sector companies. Single sites, or portals, which allow citizens and business to seamlessly interact with several government departments at one visit have not yet emerged as the dominant model for government agencies. Another finding at that time was that even the most mature countries have tapped less than 20% of the potential of ICT for e-government.

In Accenture's April 2003 report, "*eGovernment Leadership: Engaging the Customer*", a main finding is that Government officials are becoming comfortable with using the term "customer" to describe the citizens and businesses. They are also recognizing that the principles of customer relationship management (CRM) form a basis for sound eGovernment. As in last year's assessment, it was noted that improvement in eGovernment will not come easily for many countries. The new measures of success demanded by increasing eGovernment sophistication are much more difficult to implement and track than those at the introduction stage of e-government projects. Moreover, with significant investments being made in eGovernment programs, Governments face the considerable challenge of increasing demand for online services to justify their investment in them.

The Accenture study identifies five major trends in eGovernment in 2003:

1. eGovernment matures through a series of levels.
  - Each successive level acts as both a barrier to and foundation for progress to the next.
2. Value drives eGovernment visions.
  - There is a growing demand for projects to deliver Return on investment.
3. CRM underpins eGovernment.
  - Improved service delivery is the key strategic imperative for leading countries and executives.

4. Increasing demand is a priority.
  - Driving demand is one of the key challenges for mature eGovernments.
5. New eGovernment targets are needed.
  - There is a recognition that broad-brush availability targets have not matched objectives.

<b>Characteristics of the eGovernment Maturity Levels<sup>1</sup></b>		
<b>Level</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>
<b>Online Presence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identify quick wins</li> <li>•Focus on high-volume repetitive services</li> <li>•Build infrastructure</li> </ul>	
<b>Basic Capability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Central plan created and a legislative framework developed</li> <li>•Infrastructural developments around security and certification</li> <li>•Broad online presence</li> <li>•Quick-win transaction capabilities implemented</li> <li>•Revenue-generating sectors lead the way</li> <li>•Other agencies learn the lessons of the early adopters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Articulate vision</li> <li>•Agree clear targets</li> <li>•Build framework for service provision</li> <li>•Encourage agency cooperation</li> </ul>
<b>Service Availability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Basic portals</li> <li>•Driving to make as many services as possible available as quickly as possible</li> <li>•Broad targets in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create and empower central agency or individual to direct initiatives</li> <li>•Structure service provision</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Based on an analysis found in Accenture's April 2003 report, "eGovernment Leadership:Engaging the Customer",

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Some sophisticated transaction capabilities implemented</li> <li>•Some cross-agency cooperation</li> <li>•Initial customer focus</li> </ul>	<p>around customer needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Develop transactional capabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Mature Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Value added approach — do more with less</li> <li>•Clear ownership and authority —CIO or central agency</li> <li>•Intra-agency relationships and collaboration across different levels of government where appropriate</li> <li>•Deep strengths in services that have proven to add value</li> <li>•Move from blank availability targets to customer service objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identify high-value services and focus on them</li> <li>•Involve customers in the process</li> <li>•Develop a consistently high standard of implementation</li> <li>•Market the services</li> </ul>

<b>Service Transformation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Improved customer service delivery is the vision</li> <li>•Demand for services is a key measure of success</li> <li>•eGovernment is no longer a separate initiative but part of wider service transformation</li> <li>•Multichannel integration</li> <li>•Organization, process and technology changes</li> </ul>	
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## Challenges for Local E-Government

A 2002 study, titled “Local E-Government Now: A Worldwide View,”<sup>2</sup> examines local municipalities in fourteen countries around the world engaged in the establishment of best practices in efficient and effective e-government. The report, led by two non-profit organizations in the United Kingdom the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and Society of IT Management (Socitm), was conducted to help local municipalities meet the deadlines countries have set to introduce e-government on the local level. It offers case studies and identifies best practices on customer service, internal efficiency, and citizen engagement, focusing on a variety of e-government initiatives.

This study shows local governments are facing common challenges and similar objectives around the globe and that local authorities can learn from other governments that have already faced the challenge of introducing e-government.

The study identified some interesting developments at the local level:

- When introducing new services, successful e-governments examine and follow best practices from other local authorities, central governments,

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<sup>2</sup> The study was based on case studies from fourteen countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Case studies from these countries were supplemented by information about progress in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan, to provide complete coverage of five continents.

and independent training organizations to learn from their implementations.

- Countries that use technology to collaborate across organizations noticeably improve information management and are able to transform the quality and efficiency of online services (e-services) by connecting public administrations with citizens, suppliers, and other organizations via the Internet.
- Rather than implementing e-government in a piecemeal fashion, local authorities are working together to entirely transform local government services to the benefit of their citizens.

### **3 Local Government Case Examples – Japan, Spain and Brazil**

From the “Local E-Government Now: A Worldwide View” study, we have selected three examples to highlight local e-government developments.

#### **Local eGovernment in Japan**

In Japan, local governments seem to be the proving ground for eGovernment services in general.

- Electronic voting, for example, is still at a local rather than central government level. In June 2002, the city of Niimi in Okayama Prefecture became the first municipality in Japan to implement electronic voting, when it allowed voters to cast their ballots in the mayoral and local assembly elections from electronic voting machines.
- Sapporo City, Japan’s fifth largest city, located in Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan, is providing a call center to citizens, the very first in local governments. The call center will process about 80 percent of the inquiries that were previously handled separately by the respective departments in the organization.
- At the local government level, Gifu Prefecture, located in the center of Japan, is applying IT in developing the “Digitalization of Municipal Government ” (D-Government), starting the very first IT outsourcing contract for e-municipalities services, including electronic documentation management, electronic applications and electronic procurement.

#### **Local eGovernment in Spain**

In 1997, the City of Catarroja in the province of Valencia in Spain decided to create and promote change by offering citizens access to the data that local government holds. The CAVI project (Catarroja Virtual Town Hall) consists of a wide range of services that allows Catarroja’s citizens to carry out transactions with a 24-hour online service, 365 days of the year. CAVI offers citizens the ability to access and check their personal details in the database of the local administration, providing clear, comprehensive and easy-to- access information in the following areas:

- individual or family query
- legal residence
- salary and personal details in the payroll of the town hall (if a public officer)
- up-to-date data on the municipal register
- historical report of changes in the municipal register
- digital registration certificates with full legal validity
- validation of electronic certificates for registration
- up-to-date data on the electoral register
- new and/or removed taxable items

### **Local eGovernment in Brazil**

The e-government program in the city government of Santo André, Brazil focuses on meeting the demands of citizens and delivering on the city's social responsibilities.

- The most advanced of all the elements of the e-government program is the city's website. This provides information on and access to a range of services including taxation, public tenders, council proceedings, forms and opportunities to submit complaints. There are also links to the public education network, to the city's 'basic health units', and to a number of "virtual libraries".
- Another key e-government project is the implementation of an 'Integrated Public Health System' (SISP) — providing a better and speedier service for the most needy section of the population. This project is being integrated into the Federal Health System and the magnetic card of the National Health System — the SUS.
- The city government also placed a priority on social inclusion and computer literacy, whether providing the low-income population with cheaper access to Internet or making tools available for e-learning.

### **CONCLUSION**

From recent studies on the developments of eGovernment, WITSA notes:

- E-government provides an opportunity to develop a new relationship between local governments, citizens, service users and businesses, by using new ICTs, which enable the dissemination and collection of information, and services both within and outside of government (government to citizen; government to business; government to government) for the purposes of service delivery, decision-making and accountability.
- The challenges presented to local e-government include encouraging all citizens to use e-service delivery, involving the private and civil sectors, and making government willing and able to change.

- Many local authorities are moving from using ICT just to automate local government processes to linking information and services for online delivery of local government.
- National policies to promote e-government should include support for local e-government projects.
- The challenge of fully exploiting the opportunities afforded by ICT — the challenge of e-government — is to find ways of stimulating demand for information and online government services, thereby enabling citizens' participation and involvement.