Workshop report

Workshop on new eGovernment Action Plan

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Preface

The eGovernment Action Plans are important instruments that have helped advance Public Sector Modernisation across the EU over the past 15 years. In order to continue eGovernment activities in the EU beyond the mandate of the current eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015, the recently published Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe foresees that the Commission will present a new eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020.

In preparation for this, the European Commission's DG Connect organised a workshop, the aim of which was to gather views and opinions from key stakeholders on their expectations from the new Action Plan. The workshop also aimed to improve citizens' and businesses' experience when interacting with public administrations and to facilitate their relationship with government.

The discussions at the workshop were structured around three sessions:

Policy principles: with the aim of identifying the underlying principles for future public administrations and institutions in Europe to ensure a well-functioning Digital Single Market, a prosperous economy and the wellbeing of European citizens.

Key enablers: this session explored the basic elements that the new Action Plan should take into account in order to achieve its policy principles.

Strategic objectives: the aim here was to identify possible priority areas that can ensure that activities launched under the Action Plan will stimulate innovation and growth, reduce administrative burden, speed up service delivery and increase transparency and trust.

Introduction

Opening the workshop, Mechthild Rohen, Head of Unit H3 Public Services at DG CNECT, said that the main reason for the new eGovernment Action Plan is the fact that Europe is facing a triple challenge of finding resources for growth and employment, of delivering better faster and cheaper public services across Europe and, thirdly, renewing the legitimacy of public policy making through greater citizen involvement. eGovernment and the new Action Plan will be important measures towards achieving these goals.

eGovernment plans have been important instruments in advancing public sector innovation across the EU, and to continue the eGovernment activities beyond the mandate of the current Action Plan, which expires at the end of 2015, the recently published Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe foresees the preparation of a new Action Plan by the European Commission for 2016-2020.

This workshop was organized with a view to gaining input from the wider stakeholder community in preparation for the new Action Plan. In particular, participants were encouraged to provide their views on how citizens' and businesses' experience when interacting with public administrations can be improved. This workshop will be the first in a series of four dealing with topics relevant to the eGovernment Action Plan. The European Commission is also planning to launch an open Public Consultation, most likely after the summer break. Following these efforts, it is planned that the new Action Plan will be launched in early 2016.

The workshop was also an opportunity to present the 12th eGovernment Benchmark Report. The report analyses all the related services offered online for various life events. Evaluating whether government services are available for the digital age, the report found that more services are available online for starting entrepreneurs, unemployed / jobseekers and students, but that user experience remains insufficient.

Government services need to meet three challenges if they are to match rising customer expectations: they need to be mobile-friendly, open and transparent, and personalised and simplified. The report found that there is a correlation between internet browsing through mobile devices and the mobile-friendliness of public sector websites. However, public administrations should take a more pro-active approach, and not simply accommodate users' demands. To support the DSM, governments should develop seamless services to allow entrepreneurs to set up and run a business anywhere in Europe and allow individuals to study, work, reside, receive healthcare and retire anywhere in the EU. Company registration in Sweden was cited as an example of best practice.

As regards the mandatory use of online public services, the best results are achieved when frameworks conditions are satisfied. The highest use of mandatory services is for business start-up and university enrolment.

An explorative bench-learning analysis was conducted based on three performance indicators: digitisation, satisfaction and penetration. This ranked countries in five eGovernment maturity clusters: neophytes, high potentials, progressives, builders and mature. Countries were then compared with their peers in three categories: eGovernment supply, eGovernment demand and environment, as a result of which five groups of countries were identified with the same characteristics. The performance of each was evaluated by comparing it to a benchmark country.

To read the report in full, click here.

Session 1: Policy Principles

1.1. Open and collaborative government vision

Jean-Francois Junger, Deputy Head of Unit, H3 Public Services, DG CNECT

This section of the workshop aimed to provide an understanding of the current political context and current thinking with respect to drafting the eGovernment Action Plan. In order to be able to take the necessary actions, it is first necessary to understand why public administrations need to be improved. It is then necessary to examine how ICT-enabled public sector modernisation and innovation can help. Finally, it will be necessary to conduct an inventory to see what initiatives are being taken at EU level to support open government.

As regards the why - public administrations need to be improved due to the significant economic pressure for administrations to be more effective. Citizens and businesses are calling for government to reduce the administrative burden, without losing the legal security that government provides. Then there is a technological / single market rationale for improving public administrations. Technology is advancing at such a pace that it is able to deliver services in different ways. There is also a need to renew the credibility and legitimacy of government and regain public trust and to meet increased user expectations from public services.

With respect to the current EU policy background, one element that has existed for several years is the European Semester. This is a measure of what EU Member States are doing and where they stand, and provides recommendations to the MS on how to modernise. It recognises the modernisation of public administration as an economic priority. Another new political element is the Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe. This contains a section on eGovermment that calls for more to be done to modernise public administration, achieve cross-border interoperability and facilitate easy interaction with citizens. There is also further impetus from Council Conclusions and OECD Principles on Digital Government Strategies.

The current eGovernment Action Plan has four priorities: empowering citizens and businesses; efficiency and effectiveness; key enablers; and strengthening the internal market. These are still valid, but there may be a need to rethink what the priorities of the new Action Plan should be. Some of the elements not so prominent in the previous Action Plan are the user-friendless of services, the need to connect public administrations within the European Union and the need to open government data, services and processes, in order to enable businesses to offer better services. The Commission's vision for open, innovative and collaborate government is based on three elements: open data, open process and open services. This will also involve an open governance structure with the active participation of citizens, the private sector and administration in order to design and deliver services that will create jobs and opportunities.

This will require thinking to change regarding the role of government. There is also a need to change the attitude of civil servants to make them more open to innovation and less wary of technology. The first, and perhaps the most important, element in the preparation of the new Action Plan is the mid-term review of the current plan. This offers two key recommendations - to focus on open data, citizen involvement, interoperability and the once-only principle, and to move away from a static five-year Action Plan towards a dynamic, flexible 'rolling' Action Plan.

1.2. Report of the Expert Group on Public Sector Innovation

Andrea Erdei, DG RTD, B1, Innovation Union Policy

In order to build a case for change in the public sector, the Expert Group was asked to analyse the key issues hampering innovation in the public sector and to provide policy recommendations for action at EU and national level to foster innovation.

The barriers to innovation identified in the report include insufficient enabling framework conditions, such as access to finance and risk capital, legal barriers, evidence, best practices, incentives and so on. Also

identified were a lack of strategic innovation leadership and employee engagement in innovation at all levels of government, a limited knowledge of methods to drive effective innovation and insufficient use of data to inform, drive, learn from and measure public sector innovation.

To overcome these barriers, the Expert Group recognized four design principles that should be at the heart of the public sector: co-design and co-creation of innovative solutions with other Member States, government departments, businesses and citizens; adopting new and collaborative service delivery models; embracing creative disruption from technology; and, finally, adopting an attitude of experimentation and entrepreneurship.

The logic behind these recommendations was to provide a governance model that would ensure a systematic, strategic effort at EU level and foster a set of concrete actions to dramatically power innovation efforts across the EU. An EU innovation governance model would include a public sector innovation platform to coordinate work at EU level and a three-year innovation mainstreaming programme for all major EU initiatives. It will also be necessary to catalyse an innovation movement to build energy and momentum in the public sector, analogous to now social movement are created and maintained.

Recommended actions were grouped according to the innovation principles upon which they are based and the particular institutional challenge they address, namely: enabling innovation, leading innovation and informing innovation. To lead innovation in the public sector, the experts suggested that there should be a programme to empower and network innovative public leaders through innovation workshops. They also promoted a 'right to challenge' mechanism, which would give a public organisation, local government or even a Member State the ability to correct an exemption from an existing rule in order to create innovative solutions that are currently not possible. The experts also called for an Innovation Lab inside the European Commission, to foster more innovation within the work of the EC and to legitimise collective action.

To enable innovation, the experts called for Innovation Single Contact Points in all Member States to provide organisations with fast, practical and low-cost assistance through a peer-led process. Furthermore, there should be an instrument for technical assistance to Member States in replicating existing innovations via ad-hoc EU Innovation Delivery Teams. The experts also called for an Accelerator for Digital Innovation in public services via agencies with transformative potential, and a Public Sector Angel Fund to encourage more experimentation in public services. Finally, to inform innovation, the experts called for a Dynamic Innovation Toolbox for public managers and a European Citizen's Scoreboard where citizens can measure the performance of public services.

Implementation of this agenda will require political and financial commitments from all stakeholders at EU, Member State and local levels. The experts estimate that collective investment of approximately EUR 5 billion over 5 years will be required. The EU Innovation Lab has been created - the Joint Research Centre has set up a unit that acts as an EU Innovation Lab and works with various services creating new solutions and new methodologies. The 'right to challenge' mechanism is currently being investigated and tests are being run to examine where the right to challenge could be applied and how much European action would be needed. The EC is also working in close partnership with the OECD, supporting the work of the Observatory of Public Sector Innovation. A new Inter-service Group on Public Sector Quality and Innovation is being created to pool all the niches of innovation across the EC to create the collective action needed at the level of the European Commission and the other European intuitions.

To read the report, click here.

1.3. Discussion

Asked if the Commission would create a body to implement its vision which has been in place for quite a while, the panel responded that the Commission has been working with Member States on a series of actions. Faced with the choice of an immediate major transformation or a step-by-step approach, the latter was chosen. The Once-only Principle is a way to move towards this vision. Creating a body is

something that needs to be discussed, but this is a fundamental element of the governance of the Action Plan.

The mid-term review calls for a dynamic Action Plan, so now the question is how to achieve this and to involve all stakeholders in steering the Action Plan and how to implement the actions it contains. The question was asked whether innovation is the only means of transforming public services and what other elements could be used. One of the participants expressed the concern that the mind-set of ministries throughout Europe is still 'Napoleonic' and that what is being done is to digitise Napoleonic-era public administration processes. However, unlike the private sector, public administrations have not been using new technology to achieve their goals.

Asked whether the Action Plan should contain actions aimed at changing administrative culture, one participant said that IT cannot just be implemented; organisations must be changed in order to take best advantage of IT. However, this is not happening, IT is being encapsulated in existing systems, which prevents public administration from deriving the same benefits from IT as the private sector. It was suggested that an awareness-raising campaign for the new eGovernment Action Plan might be a useful tool.

If a dynamic Action Plan is implemented, stakeholders will have to react faster, so ways to improve the communications channel will have to be sought. The question was asked why the private sector has been faster to embrace technology to deliver better services than public administrations. It was suggested that the reason for this is financial - if the private sector does not provide what their customers want - it will lose out financially. Whereas for 'customers' of public administration have nowhere else to go.

Personalisation is also a key driver in the private sector and this is something that can be embraced by the public sector also. However, there are also drivers for competition in the public sector - specifically competition between channels, and the cost of completing various actions and transactions has been modelled in different channels and the cost is cents if a service is provided online and euros if it is provided face-to-face in an office. So, there needs to be an understanding of the costs and benefits of channel shift.

Public sector modernisation should be viewed within the broader context of growth and job creation, as the administrative burden could be turned into business opportunities for companies and citizens who can address some niche areas of public administration.

Session 2: Key Enablers

2.1. ISA / Interoperability

Konstantinos Bovalis, Deputy Head of Unit, B6 Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations (ISA)

It is generally accepted that interoperability is an enabler for eGovernment and can be an enabler for building better public services. The main principles of interoperability are the once-only principle and open services and data that are digital by default. For these principles to be applicable, certain elements are required, such as the ability to interconnect the various sources of information and to share information. This will result in more coherent policy, better services to citizens and businesses and more business opportunities.

All of these have a common enabler - interoperability. All of the Commission's work in the area of interoperability is put in place by the Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations (ISA) Programme. This Programme expires at the end of this year and will be succeeded by the ISA[2] Programme, which will start in January and run for five years. The Programme is being implemented within the context of two instruments, the European Interoperability Strategy (EIS) and the European Interoperability Framework (EIF), which define interoperability strategies and frameworks. The EIF establishes the main principles that should be respected when achieving interoperability, and makes recommendations for observing these principles. It sees interoperability as being not only about ICT - but rather as a multi-layered process, incorporating legal, organisational and semantic levels, among others.

The ISA Programme also assesses the ICT impact of EU legislation and identifies interoperable assets in the Commission and the Member States that can be reused. These assets are mapped to ensure that the necessary ones are developed. The focus of the existing and the new Programme is on public services - specifically those that are cross-border or cross-sector. ISA[2] is a five-year programme with a budget of approximately EUR 131 million that will be used to finance actions aimed at achieving the Programme's objectives. The Programme will receive proposals from Member States and the Commission services for actions to be taken, and then these actions will be executed by the Commission.

As regards the future, there will be a focus on the Digital Single Market, as this is a top political priority. There will also be a focus on public sector modernisation, which is linked to the once-only principle. Here there are two actions that support this principle: a Catalogue of Services, which aims to define the various services in the Member States that can be linked to each other; and Base Registries (cadastre, land, business and so on), where best practice will be promoted and solutions developed to allow interconnection between these registries.

The EIS will be revised and aligned with EU political priorities and the EIF will be revised and extended with the European Interoperability Reference Architecture (EIRA). There will also be a focus on organisational interoperability. It is necessary to show people that interoperability is important. The conditions are not yet in place to monetise the benefits of interoperability - so there will be a definite cost-benefit focus going forward, and by next year a model will be proposed for monetising the benefits of putting interoperability in place.

2.2. CEF DSIs / eSENS

Serge Novaretti / Bert Hauschildt, Unit H3 Public Services, DG CNECT

Policy and political insight are required to underpin work in eGovernment, as are frameworks. However, there is also a need to remember that all this work is eventually aimed at delivering services to real people. The effectiveness of this delivery can be assessed in pilot projects.

A programme has been set up to pilot various use cases in different areas, such as health, public procurement and so on. A pilot phase has been started with five Large-scale Pilots (LSP): Peppol, eCODEX, Stork, EPSOS and SPOCS. During the piloting phase, each domain has been working in silos, and now it is necessary to open up these silos by connecting them. These LSP have started to develop solutions for themselves and they have also started to reuse the solutions developed by the others. Consequently, the eSENS project is currently in a consolidation phase. The role of eSENS is to consolidate all the resources produced by the LSP and to see what the commonalities are, and then to improve on the generic solutions and extend them to new sectors. An ecosystem consisting of these building blocks will be rolled out under the Connecting Europe Facility.

The Connecting Europe Facility is an infrastructure programme to support the establishment of trans-European networks to reinforce an interconnected Europe, in the area of transport, energy and telecoms. Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs) come in two versions: building block DSIs provide basic functionality and are reusable by sector-specific DSIs; while sector-specific DSIs provide trans-European interoperable online services for citizens, business and public administrations.

It is a precondition of the CEF digital programme that any building block DSI or sector-specific DSI must reuse the building block services, so the building block DSIs take priority. If data is to be freely moved across borders, common rules and regulations are required. The building blocks being discussed at the workshop (eID, eSignature and so on) are simply a set of specifications and standards, and by promoting them an ecosystem will be created consisting of architecturally coherent building blocks that build digital bridges across Europe.

2.3. EU Quality of Public Administrations Toolbox

Florian Hauser, Unit E1 ESF Policy and Legislation, DG EMPL

There is no EU policy on public administration - this is subject to the principle of subsidiarity and is left up to the Member States. However, many different services have elements that directly influence how administrations are run in the EU. In order to facilitate funding of programmes and to give guidance to the Member States that receive funding, all the knowledge of the various EC services has been complied in one document. In total, twelve different European Commission services collaborated on the toolbox.

The Toolbox has already has some successes. Some of the reasons for its success are that is it non-threatening and non-prescriptive, it is purely informative. Demand has been high and feedback has been positive. The aim is to link policy to funding. In the European Semester, the Commission gives recommendations to Member States every year on various issues, including public administration. This often generates a demand for guidance from the Member States to the Commission.

The Toolbox will also guide Member States in meeting ex-ante conditionalities regarding strategies for public administration reform. The Toolbox also meets the demand for guidance with regard to Thematic Objective 11 Operation Programmes (TO11 OPs).

As regards the process of compiling the toolbox, work was conducted by a Commission Inter-service Group, which agreed the structure and developed content. This was then presented and discussed with stakeholders, such as the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN), the European Social Fund (ESF) committee, TO11 practitioners, and academia. The Toolbox also contains a number of up-to-date case studies, many of which are on regional and local level.

The Toolbox contains a general section on the principles and values of good governance, followed by seven chapters that deal with, respectively: Better policy-making; Embedding ethical & anti-corruption practices; Professional and well-performing institutions; Improving service delivery; Enhancing the business environment; Strengthening the judicial system; and Managing public funds effectively. The main messages are the need to fight corruption, reduce red tape and increase transparency. It is hoped that the Toolbox will provide guidance in real life cases that will deliver the best value for money.

In order to disseminate the Toolbox, a training of trainers (ToT) approach will be adopted. There have already been a number of requests for workshops in Member States. The Toolbox is only one instrument to ensure that money spent on improving public administration bears fruit. Better country knowledge and an understanding of the political economy in countries and the drivers of (and obstacles to) change are also important. Increased peer-to-peer interaction will also foster transnational cooperation where Member States can meet and share their experience.

An abridged version of the toolbox has been printed. The full version is available [here].

2.4. Discussion

With respect to interoperability solutions, proposals are received from the Member States and from the Commission services and DGs. There is a Committee that represents Member States where a decision is reached on the actions to be funded for each of the 5 years of the programme. Within the scope of the specific contracts for these actions, Member State involvement can be requested, in terms of running pilots, for example. Once the solutions have been actually built, they will be available on Joinup.

It was suggested that there should be increased involvement of civil society in decision-making. In Member States where there is no political appetite for change, it would appear axiomatic to involve civil society in this discussion. Efforts are being made to be more actively collaborative, drafts are put online and citizens can comment for a three-month period. It is problematic for the EC to go to a country and start talking with civil society, independently of the country's government. One approach is to discuss civil society involvement with the governments in question and to encourage the full participation of all stakeholders.

Dialogue between Europe's 500 million people cannot be achieve without ICT, and DG CNECT is best positioned to launch specific actions in this area, together with the Member States via the principle of multi-level governance and with the help of instruments like the CEF. In May this year the Commission issued a package on better regulation, which has taken all this into account, and issued concrete guidelines on how better regulation can be achieved, with tools to support these guidelines. There is also the action Participatory Knowledge for Supporting Decision Making. This action deals with identifying tools that will make it possible to capture the opinions of citizens when legislation is produced at national level. The European Citizens' Initiative has also produced good results.

Another area of interest is the fact that the Action Plan could be a domain where citizens and businesses are engaged to work with public administrations, with Member States and the Commission to define actions that need to be taken. This would require the appropriate governance structure that would enable decisions to be taken.

Session 3: Strategic Objectives

3.1.   Report on Workshop 5 'Promoting eSociety' at the Digital Assembly 2015

Andrea Halmos, Unit H3 Public Services, DG CNECT

The aim of the Digital Assembly 2015 in Riga was to get stakeholders more involved in, and have a better understanding of, the main actions under the Digital Single Market strategy. The event was structured around several workshops dealing with key aspects of the DSM strategy. One workshop focused on promoting eSociety. Points of discussion included a list of potential fundamental digital rights of businesses and citizens when interacting with public administrations; user expectations when accessing a service in their own country or across borders; and how to make dealing with government services easier.

Participants at the workshop were asked what they would expect when interacting with public administrations. This resulted in some interesting input. It emerged that, on average, a person uses public services only 2.6 times a year (one of which is a tax declaration). This generated a discussion about how to make interaction with public administration a smooth experience, even if it is so rarely used. Digitisation alone will not resolve problems, services should be designed as an end-to-end process to solve a problem. This is especially relevant as 40% of Europeans do not have basic digital skills. That said, in the EU 8 million people have disability and many of them have accessibility problems, so digitisation is a way of reaching them. However, it will only be possible to speak of real digital government service when the term 'document' has become history.

This discussion resulted in the drawing up of a list of 24 fundamental digital rights:

1.	Digital/eService by default;	13.	Quality for information;
2.	Cross-border by default;	14.	Right to do business anywhere in EU;
3.	Inclusive/services for all/accessible;	15.	Right to control access by citizens;
4.	Multilingual;	16.	Security;
5.	Once-only;	17.	To 'exist' digitally;
6.	Privacy/Confidentiality;	18.	Access to cheap, fast network;
7.	Open;	19.	Access to data;
8.	User-friendly/intuitive;	20.	One-stop-shop;
9.	Transparency;	21.	Receive/Submit eDocuments;
10.	Collaboration/citizen involvement;	22.	Digital literacy;
11.	Fast/efficient;	23.	Automated services
12.	Access to machine-readable format;	24.	eDemocracy.

These 24 potential rights were then put to a vote to select the top-ten. The most votes were received by (in descending order): Once-only; User-friendly/intuitive; Digital literacy; Digital/eService by default; One-stop-shop; Right to control access by citizens; Inclusive/services for all/accessible; Cross-border by default; Access to cheap, fast network; and Security.

These were then grouped together under four headings:

User-friendly public services - services should be digital, one stop-shops, intuitive fast, efficient, accessible and so on;

Modernising public administration - public administration should be open, transparent, collaborative, and involve citizens;

Facilitating mobility within the single market; data and digital services should move seamlessly across borders and people should have the right to do business anywhere in the EU; and

Basic pre-conditions, such as privacy / confidentiality, the right to exist digitally, the right to control access to personal data, security and so on.

For more information on Workshop 5: Promoting eSociety, click here.

3.2.   Discussion

The final discussion centred around a series of questions. The first question was: 'What would you like your public administration to have achieved by 2020?' One of the suggestions from the Riga conference was that documents should become history. The participants discussed whether this was the goal, or even achievable. It was suggested that, if thinking moves on from documents to data, then it is more likely that the data will be shared. If 'paper thinking' becomes a thing of the past, then automated services will come more to the fore. One participant said that he would like public administration to provide more solutions for better policy-making, better regulation and better law-making, using the multi-level governance principle. ICT can act as an enabler for more efficient public services- it is not just a question of being able to do everything online, it is also a question of reducing the number of administrative processes and having public administration deal internally with processes currently managed by citizens or businesses.

One participant expressed the opinion that the question should be phrased in a different way, and that asking where we should be in 2020 will encourage lethargy in thinking. There is a need for public administrations to be more flexible and reactive and to respond to demand for services more adaptively if they are to keep pace with technological developments. So, it is better to ask, where should we be today in terms of public sector modernisation.

Modernisation and the use of technological advancements should see a reduction in public administration. Asked if we should aim for invisible administration, and whether this is achievable by 2020, one participant expressed the opinion that invisible administration should not be the goal, because we want to encourage civil society participation in administration. The operation and implementation aspects of administration can be invisible, but the policy-making should be participatory, transparent and open.

The discussion suggested that the response to the second question: 'What are your main expectations when interacting with publication in your home country and across the EU?' was that, in general, people expected minimal administration delivering better services. Asked how broad public administration should be specifically at EU level, it was suggested that if simplification of processes is the objective, then more should be done at EU level.

That said, the average citizen in Europe does not have any need for cross-border administrative processes, so contact with administration should be local as much as possible. In the back-office, there can be interconnections between all layers of administration at local, regional, national and EU level, but the point of contact should be local. EU institutions should provide the ICT tools needed for a horizontal social dialogue, and this dialogue can also be used as a basis for policy-making at local level.

The discussion then touched on the main enablers and pre-conditions needed for the modernisation of public administrations in the digital age. From discussions earlier in the day, it emerged that interoperability and an ecosystem of common services fall into this category. Commodification and reuse of services were mentioned by one participant as a key enabler. The subsidiarity of competences that exist should be respected, but it might be a useful exercise to examine services that are delivered across the EU at various levels, and what part of these services could be commodified. The EU could play a role

in creating the common components that Member States could reuse to build digital services, so they don't have to be built from the ground up in each Member State.

Another key enabler might be to break the silos and to create smaller silos based on a common set of elements - this process of disaggregation and re-aggregation is already being seen in the private sector. Processes should be data-driven rather than institution-driven, so the data within a process should be broken down and then re-aggregated in the way that makes the most sense. Creating trust between the people operating within the various silos will be a key requirement here. Cooperation to achieve common objectives can be a positive experience, which will in turn generate trust.

There is sometimes a lack of awareness at local level as to what solutions are available to public administrations. Increasing this awareness will also be a key enabler. However, it is important that local administrations be shown what is available, rather than being told what to do.

A change in mind-set will be needed if outcome-driven processes are to emerge. Civil servants will only change following a directive from above. And the higher powers will only be influenced by financial considerations or pressure from citizens. Rather than seeing 'digital' as a helpful tool, digital should be put at the heart of public services. Changing the mind-set in this way also has potential for economic growth and job creation. Studies have been conducted that monetise the impact of higher digitisation.

Asked about which policy tools or instruments could enable the new eGovernment Action Plan to help achieve these goals, one participant suggested introducing funding criteria for the allocation of money within the Structural Funds package, to be used for eGovernment modernisation. Financing instruments could be streamlined to create a common pot of money for public administration modernisation. The Commission is also now more inclined to work with Public Private Partnerships, and the creation of a PPP for eGovernment is a possibility.

A suggestion was made for the Commission to make a call for proposals for innovation actions in the eGovernment area. In Horizon 2020 there are two instruments that can be used - pre-commercial procurement (PCP) and public procurement of innovation (PPI). The Action Plan could be used as a European Innovation Partnership (EIP) where actors take on board the actions contained within it and implement it jointly. In this way, the Action Plan could become an instrument that promotes better work between the public and private sector.

The final discussion touched more generally on how the Action Plan will take shape, and how the various stakeholders would like to participate in the shaping of the new Action Plan. There will be a public consultation that will help define the pillars of the Action Plan and its top priorities. National agencies and other national multipliers should be involved in the dissemination of the public consultations, to ensure the widest possible participation by citizens and businesses in the shaping of the Action Plan, and not just participation by the usual actors.

Conclusion

Jean-Francois Junger, Deputy Head of Unit, H3 Public Services, DG CNECT

In conclusion, Jean-Francois Junger said that it is important to have discussions and workshops of this kind, to have a better understanding of the requirements of various stakeholders. More meetings will be organised to go into greater detail on what the Action Plan should look like and to see how more citizens can be engaged in shaping it.

Summing up the discussion, he noted that a lot had been said about modernising public administration, breaking silos and helping public administrations to cooperate better between each other and to offer better services. The discussion also focused on citizen involvement, in order to ensure that services delivered are in line with what users want.

There are a lot of pre-conditions that need to be achieved to allow all the actions discussed to be implemented, such as privacy, quality of data and the opening up of data and other interoperability and security prerequisites.

It is also very important to engage citizens and businesses in the decision-making process. As the mid-term review of the current Action Plan has shown, it is somewhat unrealistic to have five-year planning is an environment in which technology changes so quickly.

In preparing the Action Plan, it will be necessary to see how to implement actions where citizens and businesses can offer ideas for actions and Member States and other actors can agree on how to implement these actions at the local, regional or national level.

Annex I: Agenda

10.00 Welcome/Introduction European Commission

10:00-10:15	Opening	Mechthild Rohen, Head of Unit, DG CNECT H3 Public services
10:15-10:30	eGovernment Benchmark Report 2015	Alexandre Mateus / Gianluca Papa DG CNECT F4 Knowledge Base

10.30 - 11.00 Session 1: Policy Principles

10:30-10:45	Open and collaborative government vision	Jean-Francois Junger, Deputy Head of Unit, DG CNECT H3 Public Services
10:45-11:00	Report of the Expert Group on Public Sector Innovation	Andrea Erdei, DG RTD B1, Innovation Union policy
11:00-11:30	Discussion with audience	

11.30 - 12.30 Session 2: Key enablers

11:30-11:40	ISA / interoperability	Konstantinos Bovalis, Deputy Head of Unit, DG DIGIT B6 Interoperability solutions for European public administrations (ISA)
11:40–11:50	CEF DSIs / eSENS	Bent Hauschildt/Serge Novaretti, DG CNECT H3 Public services
11:50-12:00	EU Quality Public Administrations Toolbox	Florian Hauser, DG EMPL E1 ESF Policy and Legislation
12:00-12:30	Discussion with audience	

12:30 -14:00   Lunch

14:00 - 15:30   Session 3: Strategic objectives

14:00-14:15	Report on Workshop 5 'Promoting eSociety' at the Digital Assembly 2015 (Digital Rights of Citizens and Businesses when interacting with public administrations)	Andrea Halmos, DG CNECT H3 Public Services
14:15-15:30	Discussion with audience	

15:30 - 16:00   Conclusion

15:30-16:00	Closing remarks – preparations for the upcoming eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 and launch of public consultation	Jean-Francois Junger, Deputy Head of Unit, DG CNECT H3 Public Services