



Workshop Report:

Supporting the implementation of eGovernment at regional and local level

Brussels, 15 November 2016

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Preface

To help regional and local public administrations implement the eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020, a seminar was organised in Brussels, Belgium, on 15 November 2016.

The seminar presented the various funding mechanisms available for actions (other schemes as the eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 has no dedicated budget per se) and discussed how to ensure alignment of these investments with the main priorities of the eGovernment Action Plan.

The one-day event was organised by the European Commission (DG CONNECT) for both the EU fund management community and implementers in regional and local public administrations, to share ideas and tools on how to ensure coherent and effective investments towards the same policy goals in order to increase the impact of support and contribute to the acceleration of the digital transformation of governments in the EU.

One of the expected output of the day is a guidance document including a wealth of links and introductions to funding mechanisms as well as a simple tool that administrations can use to assess whether their planned investment is in line with the principles and priorities in the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020.

The eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 defines a long-term vision for open, efficient and inclusive public administrations. It envisages user-friendly digital public services for all citizens and businesses in the European Union. The Action Plan does not have a dedicated budget or funding instrument, however, it aims to coordinate public sector modernisation efforts, funding resources and accompanying measures available to the Member States through EU Programmes.

The morning session of the workshop provided an introduction to the various funding schemes, while the afternoon was devoted to exchanging experience in a panel discussion and discussing specific issues in small groups.

The seminar was organised for representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, regional and local public administrations and managing authorities.

Introduction

Andrea Halmos, DG CONNECT, Unit H4 eGovernment & Trust

In the past two eGovernment Action Plans we have worked a lot with Member States. However, in recognition of the huge role of local and regional administrations in providing services, we wanted to organise a specific event to help them with the implementation of the eGovernment Action Plan. The Plan does not have a budget, but hopes to act as a catalyst to coordinate all eGovernment-related resources and also to coordinate work towards the modernisation of public administration. Today's event was organised to make sure that available fundings or funding instruments for eGovernment have a real impact on the ground and is focused towards the same policy goals.

Finance is not the only way to support the implementation of eGovernment, so the workshop will also cover the various tools and use case databases that can be used as ideas for similar projects to learn from. We will also discuss the various synergies between funding mechanisms and how they can be better exploited. The final discussion at the workshop will give the participants an opportunity to voice their own needs, and say what would help them work towards the implementation of eGovernment.

I would like set the scene for today's event by introducing you to the eGovernment Action Plan. I would like to present this by focusing on local and regional administrations; why the eGovernment Action Plan is relevant, what the underlying principles are and which concrete actions are relevant to local and regional administrations.

There is an eGovernment benchmarking exercise that looks at various life events from various points of view. We have been looking at these for many years now from various angles, for example – how user-centric these services are, how well they work across borders, how transparent governments are, and various other aspects. We see that there has been a great evolution, but also that there is a lot of room for improvement.

The most recent eGovernment benchmarking was published in October this year and tells us that users are demanding greater and better online experience from public administrations, yet the availability and the ease and speed of use of eGovernment services for citizens and businesses is still not up to the standard of the private sector. Transparency of government and government services is also lagging behind expectations, both in terms of processes and how personal data is being used by administrations. As regards cross-border mobility, which is one of the key ingredients for the Digital Single Market, we see that while for businesses there has been a great improvement, for citizens there is still a way to go. You will hear a lot about the key enablers this morning – these are the basic technological tools that can help both make public services more efficient and also better empower users. These are not being used to their full extent, and there is room for improvement.

In the Committee of the Regions' opinion on the eGovernment Action Plan, which was published in October, they recognised "that implementation of the Action Plan will require shared commitment and ownership at all levels of administration, and highlights the responsibility borne by local and regional authorities as the public sector's primary "interface" with citizens and businesses."

This is the third eGovernment Action Plan. The situation with eGovernment has been evolving very quickly. We see huge problems and societal challenges that cannot be resolved from one policy angle. We also see opportunities offered by technological tools such as mobile technology, and social networks.

The underlying philosophy of the current eGovernment Action Plan goes from the current idea of eGovernment, where eGovernment is a digital tool that tries to make processes more efficient, to one where digital government strategies are integrated into an overall government modernisation strategy. We are seeing governments become more data-driven and, as a result, we are seeing a more coherent use of digital technologies in many policy areas.

There is also a great advantage to be gained from technological tools that can help move from silos to a more joined-up and collaborative and open government, but a cultural shift is needed to make this happen. We see a great advantage in opening up data, services and, eventually, processes, to third parties – of course, keeping in mind data and privacy protection regulations. This will allow them to create new businesses and services, thereby creating new growth and jobs, but also become better engaged in policy decisions. At local and regional administration level, very often we see participatory budgeting – opening up the budgeting process to participation from citizens. We also see engagement in spatial planning.

We need to move away from simple availability of services to actual take-up and to examine what is preventing this. We see that take-up is greater for business than for citizens, and there are many reasons for this. But there are also things that implementers of eGovernment services can think about, related to the user-friendliness of public services and the customisation of these services. There are also significant advantages in moving towards one-stop-shops. Privacy and security (trust) are key barriers to uptake and digital government will only succeed if people feel that they can trust the service.

The DSM strategy called for a new eGovernment Action Plan to be published, and in April 2016 this eGovernment Action Plan was published for the period 2016-2020, with a new vision and new principles and policy priorities. The vision is for public administrations to be open, efficient and inclusive, providing borderless, personalised, user-friendly, end-to-end digital public services. To achieve this vision, a set of principles has been put forward - these are:

- Digital by default
- The once-only principle
- Inclusiveness and accessibility
- Openness and transparency
- Cross-border by default
- Interoperability by default
- Trustworthiness and security

Based on these principles, the eGovernment Action Plan sets up a framework of policy priorities, for each which there is a number of concrete actions. This framework has three pillars: the first deals with modernising public administration, with the help of ICT and key digital enablers. The second focuses on mobility in the single market. Finally, the third pillar deals with engagement and how to help public administrations to create high-quality public services with the use of digital tools.

There are already 20 actions in the eGovernment Action Plan, but it is a dynamic plan, so it is open to new ideas for actions. There are a number of actions that are of interest to local and regional administrations. There is an attempt to work towards full eProcurement, with enforcement at local and regional level, creating a need to work with local and regional administrations. We are also trying to accelerate the take-up of electronic identification as a core element for secure, efficient and accessible digital public services.

There is also a plan to revise the European Interoperability Framework, and to set up a catalogue of ICT standards and technical specifications to allow for efficient, reusable digital services. These will be very important for local and regional administrations, as users and producers of cross-border standards and services, to avoid proprietary lock-in and to implement interoperable and innovative solutions.

As we have seen, the second pillar focuses on the single market, and there are a number of ways to create so-called one-stop-shops. For example the Single Digital Gateway tries to provide a single point of access to Single Market-related information, advice, problem-solving mechanisms, contact points and procedures. There is also an eJustice Portal that will have access to company registers across the EU, for example, thereby facilitating cross-border mobility.

Work is also being carried out towards the interconnection of all business registers and insolvency registers in Member States. There will also be an extension to the Single Electronic Mechanism for registration and payment of VAT, and it is also planned to launch a large-scale pilot project for businesses to test the 'once-only' principle in a European context. Furthermore, there are a number of actions supporting cross-border mobility of citizens, including exchanging social security information (EESSI) and information between job-seekers and employers in the EU (EURES), and cross-border exchange of healthcare data and services.

The third pillar focuses on how the availability of open data can help local and regional administrations to deliver innovative services throughout their operations. There is an emphasis on INSPIRE data – spatial data – to create innovative new services. The European Cloud Initiative will also improve transparency and efficiency by allowing for a shared cloud infrastructure for the provision of digital public services.

So, what does this mean for local and regional administrations? In order for citizens and businesses to access modern digital public services and to benefit from new technology, some basic pre-conditions are necessary, such as high performance networks and high speed broadband in rural areas; the engagement of citizens, businesses and civil society in the design and delivery of digital public services (co-creation), which is perhaps more relevant at local and regional level, than at national level as well as the appropriate skills

How can this be achieved? There is a need to ensure that digital enablers are built on a strong analogue foundation. For this, it is necessary to streamline processes and ensure that the institutional capacity is in place. There is also a need for regulatory and administrative reforms and to build digital skills. To move from availability to take-up of digital public services it is necessary to recognise that the principles we have put forward are something that we believe users require, so they should be respected, and users and stakeholders should be engaged with from the start, to ensure that the services match their expectations.

Session 1: EU funds for eGovernment and concrete use cases in local and regional administrations

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) - Digital Service Infrastructures

Joao Rodrigues Fade, DG DIGIT, B4

This presentation focused on how the CEF can help the eGovernment Action Plan and how projects in Member States can benefit from funding. There are many challenges linked to the digital revolution, but there is also huge potential to be tapped, with EUR 415 billion to be added to EU economy in the coming years thanks to digital. The CEF is one of the enablers of this jobs and growth agenda. The first thing needed to tap this potential is funding to make these projects real. In 2014, a new regulation came into force that made it possible for Connecting Europe, and particularly the telecoms part, to put EUR 900 million into digital projects, split between the Commission and the Member States. So, how can this make the life of citizens better? In the area of justice, for example, the eJustice Portal can be used in the near future by citizens to file a claim in a foreign court. Or, if you buy something online and you have a problem with the goods or service provided, you can use the Online Dispute Resolution portal to resolve the issue. In eHealth, very soon, if you go to a hospital abroad, doctors will be able to consult your records. Through the DG Employment project EESI, citizens will be able to process social security issues easily online. There is also the interconnection of business registers through the Business Registers Interconnection System (BRIS) and eProcurement. Digital affects all different sectors. There are many important digital services that are not yet available to EU citizens, and Connecting Europe is using the EUR 900 million to help bring these services online.

This is being accomplished through two sets of actions. One is to put these core service portals online so that citizens can consult them. Secondly, we give grants to cities, regions and Member States to make available the access points to these services in the Member States – interconnecting the services by making them available through EU-wide portals. So, Member States can benefit from funding by making their services part of these EU-wide networks.

One concrete example is the [European Data Portal](#), which aggregates information from data portals across Europe. Funding is provided to these portals to make their data sets known in the European Data Portal, which means that businesses are able to find data sets from portals across Europe with one simple search. These portals are all based on the same basic technologies, so if you go to the EDP, you can use your national eID to log in and access the services. Content has been translated using the eTranslation building block. Furthermore, the eDelivery building block allows the secure exchange of messages across Europe.

Connecting Europe is enabling all these services and basing them on simple basic building blocks that will enable the Member States and the Commission to save money and to achieve results much faster. The five building blocks we are promoting are: eDelivery, eSignature, eID, eTranslation, and eInvoicing. Reuse of these building blocks results in performance gains of 40-50% and cost savings of 20-40%.

To find out more about the CEF and to participate, there are two portals. On one side, the services provided by the Commission to help stakeholders deploy the building blocks and the access points to the various domains are available on the CED digital [website](#). Then there are the grants, information on which is available on the [INEA](#) site.

Connecting Europe is not only about the public sector – it also involves industry, the European Commission and other EU institutions, thereby creating a large alliance, where we try to create cross-border services based on the principle of co-creation.

Joao's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

ISA² and Joinup

Szabolcs Szekacs, DIGIT, Unit B6 Interoperability Solutions for Public Administrations

The focus of this presentation is the ISA² programme, particularly the instruments created to support public administrations in sharing and reusing IT solutions in the public sector. ISA stands for Interoperability Solutions for Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens and it aims at funding the creation of common tools, common specifications and common services to help administrations exchange information with each other in an interoperable way.

ISA works by central procurement – Member States make proposals on the common solutions that could be developed to help administrations at the European level, and then we develop these proposals using central procurement and offered for the European institutions and for public administrations to use.

ISA believes that the sharing and reuse of solutions is a good approach to better interoperability, to better growth. It also helps administrations to modernise their services and to collaborate at the national and cross-border level, and results in increased standardisation. At the Commission, there are a number of facilitators that have already been created to support administrations in the sharing and reuse of solutions.

The [European Interoperability Framework](#) comprises a set of recommendations for public administrations on how they can become more interoperable. A second version of the framework is now being prepared, with a number of recommendations related to sharing and reuse around openness, transparency and reusability.

This framework makes recommendations on what needs to be done. How these goals can be achieved is covered by the [European Sharing and Reuse Framework](#), which contains a set of recommendations for all public administrations on how to facilitate the sharing and reuse of IT solutions in the public sector. The framework contains 10 main recommendations, 19 recommended measures for central bodies and 20 supporting instruments.

Some of the supporting instruments include the Connecting Europe Facility Catalogue of Common Building Blocks, the EU Catalogue of ICT Standards, the EUPL – European Open Source Licence, business and governance models for shared development and operation of IT solutions, EIRA (European Interoperability Reference Architecture) and cartography, and the [Joinup platform](#) and its catalogue of reusable IT solutions.

Szabolc's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

European Regional Development Fund - Thematic Objective 2

Katja Reppel, DG REGIO, G1

Most operational programmes are implemented through shared management, which is a materialisation of the subsidiarity principle. This means that European policies are implemented at the lowest level where it makes sense, so that they are tailor-made to meet the needs of citizens. What this presentation aims to do is look at this world of shared management within the context of our five different European Structural and Investment Funds.

eGovernment is not new for structural funds. Estonia is one of the stars in this area and an example of a successful project is [eResidency Estonia](#), which has a whole packet of eGovernment tools directed either at citizens, businesses or both. Another example is [Porto Digital](#), which aims to broaden the use of the Internet by citizens of the city of Porto and reduce bureaucracy and increase the efficiency of the city council services. Poland, Spain and Greece have also invested massively into eGovernment initiatives.

With shared management, we are always under very close scrutiny by the European Court of Auditors, which adopted in 2010-2011 a so-called performance audit to assess eGovernment investments from structural funds. Overall the feedback has been positive, but a number of issues were highlighted in which there is scope for improvement. One criticism was that there is not really a strategy for eGovernment in many Member States. The Court of Auditors recommended that Member States should develop eGovernment strategies based on identified needs, with clear objectives and assigned responsibilities and accountability. There were also some concerns related to cost-benefit, and the Court recommended that projects be selected on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. Finally, they stressed the need for trans-European interoperability and EU-wide systems integration.

The European Structural and Investment Funds have 11 thematic objectives for 2014-2020. The one of interest within this context is Thematic Objective No. 2 – ICT. To go further, investment priorities have been set for the European Regional Development Fund. One of these is to enhance access to, and the use and quality of, ICT by strengthening ICT applications for eGovernment, eLearning, eInclusion, eCulture and eHealth.

In the current programming period, there is nothing to which I can point and say 'this is eGovernment funding'. Everything is inter-connected and included in a number of thematic objectives and funding categories. There are three that are particularly important. The first relates to institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration and public services. The second relates to access to public sector information and the third – to eGovernment services and applications.

The question is - does the money go to where it is most needed? Analysis shows that eGovernment country performances in 2014-2015 are uneven (these can be viewed in slide 9 of the presentation, which you can view [here](#)).

But the analysis does indeed reveal that the money is going to where it is most needed. Some countries, the Baltic countries in particular, are at the top and they are expanding their position.

In line with recommendations from the Court of Auditors, the European Commission has introduced a strategic approach to eGovernment investments – the so-called ex-ante conditionalities. The two that are relevant for eGovernment relate to digital growth strategies and strategies for public administrations' efficiency and skills.

The Joint Research Centre has looked into the digital growth strategies and identified a number of issues. Many of these have been addressed, but are still worth mentioning, such as the fact that regional authorities lack knowledge on the Digital Agenda for Europe, and there is a lack of capabilities to develop digital strategies. Also identified was the lack of a 'stakeholder participation' culture, a 'business-as-usual syndrome', and too much focus on tangible (costly) infrastructure instead of ICT up-take & services. The JRC also highlighted poor coordination between strategies when the strategy is not one single document but a framework; and a lack of synchronisation with administrative reforms. For this reason, it is important to make the principles of the eGovernment Action Plan better known in public administrations at all levels.

There are a number of 'dos and don'ts' for ESIF managing authorities:

- Don't finance just digitalisation (hardware & software) without business-process re-organisation and synchronisation with administrative reforms;
- Don't finance projects that develop basic services which are already available;
- Don't delegate eGovernment projects;
- Don't forget the legal and regulatory framework;
- Don't forget to also apply the principles to e-Cohesion.
- Do select projects with a clear policy goal and in line with the Digital Agenda & Digital Growth Strategy;
- Do encourage collaboration across administrative silos and borders and with the EU;
- Do think in "life events";
- Do finance projects with a clear sustainability strategy;
- Do apply innovation procurement principles;
- Do join the [eGovernment4EU](#) discussions and the [Joinup](#) collaborative platform to help e-Government professionals share their experience.

Katja's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

Interreg A - Cross-border cooperation

Nathalie Verschelde, DG REGIO, D2

Cross-border cooperation is one concept that needs a little clarification. There has been a lot of discussion of cross-border in this workshop, and in most cases this means 'across a border'. The focus of this presentation is border regions – the local dimension. Across Europe, we have a number of envelopes that are designed specifically to assist specific territories. Interreg has about 60 programmes in Europe, covering internal borders between Member States, and also borders with Switzerland, Norway, Lichtenstein and Andorra. As regards the funding opportunities for eGovernment under Interreg, interested parties should look at the programmes that cover the regions where they are located. Information is available [here](#). If you come from a border region, there will be some opportunities available that are managed under a shared management concept, which means that the funds are directly managed by the Member State or the region involved, and not by Brussels. There is about EUR 6.6 billion in the envelopes for the current period. The programmes always have a minimum of two Member States working with each other, sometimes more where borders are more complex. We also have some maritime cross-border programmes, where ICT is particularly relevant. The objectives of the programmes are always to reduce the negative impact of having a border and to make the most of what is held in common and to share resources. We work based on grants. Projects are submitted to a programme. If they are selected, they get a grant to achieve a concrete objective. We have a sister unit in DG REGIO with manages trans-national programmes. These do not have a border-based approach, but one based on large geographical areas with common features or shared challenges. Here the aim is less to reduce the 'border effect' but more to think of the region in its functionality or its common challenges and see how these can be better addressed by working together. This envelope contains around EUR 2 billion – this is less than the cross-border envelope, because here the focus is more on governance and processes, rather than investments. We are currently working on identifying, in a much more scientific and objective way, the obstacles to interaction across borders for citizens. We can already see that access to information is a critical issue, provision of data (filling in of forms) is also another major issue – both for citizens and businesses) and we realise that there is a need for more strategic connections to the eGovernment Action Plan and I am confident that in

the future there will be more projects that address these issues, including with Interreg funding. Natalia's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

Urban Innovative Actions

Olivier Baudelet, DG REGIO H1

The Urban Agenda is important because 70% of the EU population lives in cities; 70% of EU legislation is implemented by cities at the end of the chain; 55% of EU funds are spent by cities; and 85% of European GDP is generated in cities. However, until now we have not been working with cities – we have been working mainly with Member States. But, in light of these figures, it is more logical to work more on urban matters, to work more with cities and to ask more from cities.

So, what is the Urban Agenda? The Urban Agenda is there to resolve the problems that cities encounter. The idea is to identify the problems and to come up with solutions. We have identified 12 priority topics, and the digital transition is one of these. For each of these topics we set up a working group comprising Member States, cities, the EU (mainly the Commission) and other stakeholders. These working groups have up to two years to see what solutions already exist, what synergies there are that can be used. Then they look at the problems, what the people would like to improve, and they come up with recommendations. There is one topic focused on digital transition, which covers eGovernment. On this topic we will work closely with DG CONNECT.

This is the Urban Agenda for the EU. At the global level, there is also something called the [New Urban Agenda](#), organised by the United Nations. The idea is the same – to identify priorities for cities and to try to achieve the various targets that have been set. This New Urban Agenda contains a component on governance, which also includes eGovernment. These two instruments are purely policy instruments - there is no funding attached – it is just a way to improve legislation and knowledge of what is available.

However, there are funding instruments for digital transition and eGovernment. The first is the [European Structural and Investment Funds](#). This has been already covered – the only thing I would like to add is that there is about EUR 100 billion of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and EUR 15 billion of the European Social Fund (ESF) which is spent in cities. For the ERDF, of the EUR 100 billion spent in cities, there is EUR 15 billion spent by the cities themselves – where they can choose the projects they want to implement.

The second funding instrument I wanted to highlight is the [Urban Innovative Actions](#). This is a new instrument that has just been created, managed by the Commission. Here the idea is not so much to finance projects, but to experiment with new ideas and to test them in the real world, with real people and real problems. For this we take a real project – every project has an ERDF contribution of EUR 5 million – the co-financing rate is 80% and the duration of each project is three years.

Every year there will be one call, and each call will be EUR 50 million. The digital transition topic will be covered for sure. It hasn't yet been the topic of a call, but perhaps from 2017 onwards there will be a call on this topic. The project holders will be cities – there is no need to have partners in other countries.

Finally, there is [URBACT](#) this is a networking programme worth about EUR 100 million. Here the idea is for a group of cities to come together on an issue, which could include eGovernment, to exchange and try to build on each other's experience to develop pragmatic solutions.

The many various instruments may prove to be confusing, so there is an initiative to set up a one-stop-shop for cities which will group all the initiatives from all the Directorates-General related to urban matters. This is still under construction and the part related to digital has not yet been completed, but it will be ready in the coming months and can be accessed through the Europa website.

TAIEX-REGIO PEER 2 PEER

Laura Indriliunaite, DG REGIO E1

TAIEX-REGIO [PEER 2 PEER](#) is not an investment instrument, it is an instrument that is meant to help Member States and regions to exchange experience on various topics related to cohesion policy, including eGovernment, ICT and so on. There is a large volume of money being invested in eGovernment in various Member States, with many projects being implemented, and other Member States can learn from their experience.

When I talk of exchanging experience, I am referring to three types of events: expert missions, study visits and workshops. These are short-term exchanges – up to five days – that provide quick and targeted support. This is one of

the key parameters for the instrument, others are that it should also be rapid, flexible, targeted and involve quality control of experts and exchanges. The instrument is based on the experience and infrastructure of [TAIEX](#). The Commission itself is not involved in these exchanges from the point of view of content - it just finds the relevant experts.

The instrument is open to bodies that are investing in structural funds, meaning the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund. People in one administration share experience with their peers in another administration. The project is running as a pilot until the end of 2016. In the middle of 2016 an external evaluation was carried out and it was decided to continue the project until 2020.

In the first year and a half we have received 145 applications, of which 107 were approved, with 66 exchanges implemented and 41 more currently under preparation. We have managed to reach a large number of participants – about 1,000 in 23 Member States. The most active requesters of assistance are Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland. The most active providers are Poland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Germany and Romania.

The topics of most interest are financial instruments, integrated territorial investments, state aid and so on. eGovernment does not feature among the topics of interest – so if you feel that there is a need for exchange of experience on eGovernment, then bear in mind that this instrument is available. So far there have been only two exchanges related to this topic – one on eCohesion and one on ICT and public sector data projects. Information on all the events is available [online](#).

Member States use the P2P instrument because it fills in gaps, it is light, quick and flexible. They also noted the fact that it is user-friendly and that there is quality assurance. Some of the challenges identified include the need to be as specific as possible. This is not a call for general conferences or training – it is meant to be hands on and address concrete issues. Study visits have been the most in demand type of exchange, but there are challenges in finding host institutions.

Laura's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

European Social Fund - Thematic Objective 11

Mina Shoylekova, DG EMPL, F1

ESF financial envelopes which could support eGovernment are Thematic Objective 2 - Enhancing access to, and use and quality of information and communication technologies; and Thematic Objective 11 – Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities. There are different rationales and different entry logic for these, but how the money is spent is more or less the same. Historically there have been two different channels – one focused on infrastructure and one on skills, but currently we are adopting a more integrated approach.

TO11 is not available to all Member States because of its focus on institutional capacity building, it is available to countries with at least one least developed region. Of these, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Croatia, Italy and Portugal have specifically indicated a commitment to provide support to local and regional administrations with regard to eGovernment.

Some projects from the last programming period provide a good example of the type of support that is provided. These include [ICT skills for better healthcare in Poland](#), [Computer literacy basics for a Lithuanian E-Citizen](#), [Latvia facilitates access to administrative services](#), and [A one-stop shop for businesses in Slovenia](#): An online portal for entrepreneurs to register a company within three days.

Examples from the current 2014-2020 programming period include:

- The redesign of processes, standardisation and simplification of administrative procedures;
- Interoperability between different back-office systems, digitalisation of registers, eClouds;
- One-stop-shops and delivery of integrated services;
- Open data, reusability of data;
- Management systems – HR, eTraining, workload, financial management, performance management;
- eSkills in public administration, including capacity of IT units.

Regarding the main principles of eGovernment and the organisational impact on administrative capacity, I would like to highlight in particular the unlocking of data across sectors and the sharing of services and solutions. It is easy to recommend taking a particular action, but this then opens up a lot of new questions for administrations – for example, if we have integrated services and if everything is done in the back office without input from citizens, then who owns the service and who should take the financial burden for delivering the service? This is an interesting debate, and the input of local and regional authorities will be very valuable here.

Finally, lessons learned can be summarised in the following recommendations:

- Don't digitalise the bureaucracy;
- Think about the system, not the money– don't confuse means and ends;
- Be user-centric and involve citizens;
- Think open source (share / don't reinvent);
- Re-use public sector information;
- Think inter-operability and cross-border services;
- Consider the ICT implications of EU legislation.

Mina's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

Session 2: EU funds for eGovernment and concrete use cases in local and regional administrations

H2020, Societal Challenge 6

Bart Neerscholten, REA, B3

This presentation aims to give a brief overview of the type of projects that are currently being funded and what projects are in the pipeline. The call topics are very much in line with the eGovernment Action Plan in terms of Open Data, Open Process and Open Service for joined-up government, with an accent on participation, collaboration and transparency. These principles also apply to the eGovernment projects that are already running. These projects range from reflective academic projects to testing of concrete ideas in an operational environment. With what we are doing in Horizon 2020, the Commission is also building upon on the previous framework contract, in which a lot of eParticipation projects are finishing or have recently finished.

A brief overview of Horizon 2020 – within the entire EUR 80 billion, there are the sections Excellent Science, Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges. eGovernment falls under Societal Challenge 6 - Europe in a changing world - inclusive, innovative and reflective societies. Within this challenge there is a whole range of topics that respond to the challenge. In the Work Programme for 2014-2015, the focus was very much on ICT-enabled open government. In 2016, there were two – one on the Once-Only Principle, to which a lot of Member States have responded as a common initiative; and also a broad reflective call on understanding the transformation of European public administrations.

The presentation provides a number of examples of eGovernment related projects, which can be viewed [here](#). What I aim to give is a flavour of what we handle within the Research Executive Agency (REA) and the eGovernment portfolio. Within Horizon 2020, REA oversees a whole range of areas related to eGovernment. Overall there are 16 projects, with EUR 30 million being funded. In total there are 184 partners involved in 59 pilot projects in 23 EU countries and three non-EU countries.

Of the eGovernment pilot projects, almost half are at local level, with the national level accounting for over a third. The regional level accounts for 15.2% and European – 3.4%. Projects at the local and regional level target [youth](#), students, [senior citizens](#), academics and the culture and tourism sector. At the national level projects target the [agricultural](#) and maritime sectors, journalists, and youth; while at the European level the focus is on EU and national policy-makers, young people, students and businesses. Maps showing the distribution of local, regional, national and European projects are provided in the [presentation](#).

There are three calls currently open – but those interested should be quick – the deadline is 02 February. The first is CO-CREATION-04-2017: Applied co-creation to deliver public services. It calls for collaborative service creation (co-creation) with stakeholders, involving the design, production and delivery of high quality services. The second open call is CO-CREATION-06-2017: Policy-development in the age of big data: data-driven policy-making, policy-modelling and policy-implementation, and the third is CULT-COOP-11-2016/2017: Understanding the transformation of European public administrations. More information on these and other open Horizon 2020 calls is available [here](#).

Bart's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

Public Sector Innovation Initiatives

Samy Bettiche, DG RTD, B1

This presentation presents three public sector innovation initiatives: the European Capital of Innovation Award, the Observatory of Public Sector Innovation, and the Knowledge Exchange Platform.

European Capital of Innovation Award

For the 2016 [European Capital of Innovation Award](#) there was a total of 36 applications from 12 countries, of which 34 were deemed eligible. Amsterdam was chosen as the winner from the shortlist of nine finalists. All of the nine finalists this year made reference to the use of digital solutions – both as part of smart city strategies and open government strategies.

To maximise the impact of the award in 2017, it will focus more on experimentation and how cities are placing themselves as test-beds for innovative activities and services, and to what extent they develop open co-creation models. It will also look at citizen engagement to increase uptake of innovation, efforts to increase outreach, and cities as role models for others to maximise impact of local actions.

Cities will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Experimentation – innovative actions proving the city's commitment to act as a test-bed for innovation, and ensuring the mainstreaming of these practices into city's daily policies;
- Engagement – increasing opportunities for a broader range of citizens and ensuring a seamless uptake of their ideas;
- Expansion – of city's potential to attract new talent, resources, funding, investments, and become a role model for other cities;
- Empowerment – the added value provided by the innovative practices above.

Next year's content will open in March 2017, and the winners will be announced at the end of the year and will receive a cash prize of EUR 1 million, with the two runners-up receiving EUR 100,000 each.

Observatory of Public Sector Innovation

The report [Powering European Public Sector Innovation: Towards a New Architecture](#), which was published in 2013, recommended that a platform be set up for practitioners in the field of public administration, that a toolbox be developed and a community created around public sector innovation. As a result, it was decided to support the OECD, which had launched the [Observatory of Public Sector Innovation](#).

The Observatory currently contains almost 300 case studies of public sector innovation projects, with 150 cases to be added in early 2017. Furthermore, partnerships are being developed to bring hundreds more in 2017. The Horizon 2020 support to the Observatory will focus on three pillars. The first is **knowledge** - we will support the generation of new knowledge through reports compiled from the raw material of the case studies, with reports on systems thinking and systemic innovation, innovative cities and lifecycle analysis.

The second pillar will look at **collaboration** and will try to support the creation of a community of public sector practitioners, with a co-creation space linked to an innovation toolbox, which is under construction and should be available next year. The third pillar - **skills and capacity** - will aim to build innovation capacity and provide public sector practitioners with the skills they need.

Knowledge Exchange Platform

The [Knowledge Exchange Platform](#) is an initiative that has been implemented by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and DG Research & Innovation with the goal of presenting new R&I solutions, products and best practice in response to societal challenges facing local and regional authorities in Europe.

The platform works on the basis of two topics per year. The topics for next year are energy and public sector innovation, so there will be seminars organised to address these issues, in addition to peer-to-peer events and showcase events with the participation of successful Horizon 2020 projects.

Samy's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

EU Justice Programme

Alexander Ivantchev, DG JUST, B4

The EU Justice Programme 2014-2020 has a budget of EUR 378 million. This funds procurement activities, which is money spent by the Commission itself, and also provides grants to fund initiatives in the Member States. The programme is the successor of the Civil and Criminal Justice Programmes (2007-2013) and aims to promote the further development of a European area of justice based on mutual recognition and mutual trust. All Member States are participating, with the exception of the United Kingdom and Denmark, and the programme is managed by DG JUST.

The types of actions funded include training activities, awareness-raising, support for main actors and analytical activities. In the area of eJustice, in terms of funding, each year there is an annual [call for proposals](#), and up to 80% of eligible costs are funded. Funding is available to national authorities and other competent bodies. The calls are open to regions, but it is mostly national projects that are successful, because EU-level eJustice solutions require national solutions.

The annual budget varies, but is about EUR 3-3.5 million per year and the call is competitive – on average 50% of applications are awarded. In terms of the specifics of the proposals, EU added value is a must, funding is not available for national capacity building. Projects should also have a cross-border aspect and should benefit more than one Member State.

As regards eligibility criteria - the applicants must be public entities or private organisations. Organisations which are profit-oriented must submit applications in partnership with public entities or private non-profit organisations. The EU grant applied for cannot be lower than EUR 75,000 and the project must not have started prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

Funding is primarily provided to initiatives that directly support the [eJustice Strategy 2014-2018](#), in addition to projects that extend the scope, or otherwise improve existing electronic services available in the [eJustice Portal](#), and new cross-border initiatives in the justice domain which present good added value. The programme is targeted at citizens, businesses, legal professionals and members of the judiciary.

The eJustice calls have already delivered a number of electronic services for the eJustice Portal, for example the interconnection of insolvency registers in Member States in a single access point, or the provision of a service allowing people to find a lawyer or a notary throughout the EU, and a Competent Court Database. In addition, many initiatives have been funded that are unrelated to the Portal, but which provide added value to involved stakeholders – e.g. secure exchange of wills between notaries.

Alexander's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

Session 3: Ensuring coherence with EU eGovernment priorities

European Parliament study on 'Public sector reform and how the EU budget is used to encourage it

Eulalia Rubia, Jacques Delors Institute

The report '[Public sector reform and how the EU budget is used to encourage it](#)' was commissioned by the European Parliament and was conducted by three institutes – the Jacques Delors Institute, the Centre for European Economic Research and the European Policy Centre. The European Parliament asked us to map all the EU budgetary instruments providing direct or indirect support to public administration reforms. It was not about eGovernment only. We were asked to analyse the coherence, EU added value and complementarities within these various programmes as well as their consistency with the overall EU approach on public administration reforms. We also had to analyse expert groups, networks and awards as drivers of these reforms.

We started by revealing the trends in public administration reform in Europe and analysing the role of the EU budget in this landscape. A shift in the reform agenda was revealed towards an emphasis on post-New Public Management approaches, with a focus on horizontal and vertical coordination within public administrations, partly to correct the negative consequences of New Public Management reforms. There is now an increased focus on more transparent and open government, further involvement of private and third sector organisations in the provision of services (co-creation), digitalisation, and on the downsizing and efficiency-enhancing of public administration.

We then looked at the EU action on public administration reform. One important finding here was that the EU budget is a tiny element of the overall context. Single Market legislative acts (such as the Services Directive or the Public

Procurement Directives) impose specific duties and constraints on Member States' public administrations and these have a bigger impact than all the funding that the EU provides to national administrations to reform and modernise.

Another finding is that the EU approach has shifted from a purely instrumental approach towards a more comprehensive and strategic approach, which views good governance at the national level as a pre-requisite to attain the Europe 2020 goals of smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. A third point is that we have noticed that there are more and more Country Specific Recommendations in the area of public administration reform in the European Semester, but there is a lack of a common assessment framework.

The study maps all the EU budgetary instruments offering direct or indirect support to public administration reforms. The most important are European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) interventions under Thematic Objective 11, but it is also interesting to note that the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), under Thematic Objective 2, also provides a lot of funding - EUR 4.4 billion for the seven years of the programming period focused on eGovernment alone, compared to EUR 4.7 billion provided under Thematic Objective 11.

We analysed complementarity at programme level and concluded that overall there is complementarity at the level of objectives between the different programmes providing funding for eGovernment. But when we look at the operational level, at the level of calls for proposals, there is some overlap. We also looked for synergies, how different sources of funding can be used in a synergetic way. Worryingly, we revealed a lack of consistency, especially between Structural Funding for eGovernment and the principles and priorities of the eGovernment Action Plan. In particular, we identified cases in which Structural Funding was used to digitalise services, without consideration for the principles of interoperability and openness from the start.

We made two recommendations in our study related to eGovernment or the use of EU funding for eGovernment. One was to give a more prominent role to DG CONNECT in the preparation of Working Programmes and of calls for proposals with implications for eGovernment, and the second was that DG CONNECT and DG REGIO should work more closely to make sure that the negotiation and evaluation of operational programmes under Thematic Objective 2 are in line with the principles of the eGovernment Action Plan.

Eulalia's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

Toolbox for Quality Public Administrations

Mina Shoylekova, DG EMPL, F1

With the aim of linking policy with funding, it was decided to bring all the practical experience that we have inside the Commission together with experience from all across Europe, at different levels of public administration, to prepare the publication of [Quality of Public Administration - A Toolbox for Practitioners](#). This was a major effort on the part of the Commission, as it brings together all the legislation and guidance and initiatives that exist at EU level. It includes our thoughts on the delivery of the Service Directive, eProcurement and other areas. This publication is the joint effort of 14 Commission services and involved several discussions with the Member States.

We have also held a number of transfer seminars this year, one of which was specifically dedicated to eGovernment and how the Structural Funds will support the promotion of eGovernment. The chapter in the publication of greatest relevance to eGovernment is the chapter on 'Improving Service Delivery,' which reflects on how to ensure various points of access to services for citizens and businesses. It also covers how to implement the basic principles of the eGovernment Action Plan, such as digital by default, and so on. But eGovernment and digitalisation are cross-cutting topics that are covered in other chapters also. It is not a prescriptive document – it merely provides guidance.

The second edition of the toolbox is currently being drafted, and it will have a more prominent focus on eGovernment. It should be ready by the beginning of next year. The main message that we wish to convey with this publication is that, when it comes to eGovernment, technology is a driver, not a means in itself. For this reason it is very important to reap as much benefit as possible from technology. This can be achieved through collaboration between central and local government in order to have exchange of experience and best practice. Reaping the benefits of technology will also require clear frameworks, streamlining, the use of leveraging instruments and the adoption of a holistic approach.

Mina's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

Seal of Excellence initiative

Magda De Carli, DG RTD B5

The [Seal of Excellence](#) aims to build synergies between EU funds to maximize quantity, quality and impact of R&I investments for jobs and growth. These R&I investments also include eGovernment, and the digital solutions that can be used to advance a modernised public administration. The framework conditions exist to exploit synergies between the

two funding programmes – Horizon 2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) – and in 2014 there was a political mandate from President Juncker to maximize synergies between the two funding programmes.

Horizon 2020 conducts evaluations of projects and most of them are rejected and only a small number are pegged above the quality threshold. However, only a small proportion of the projects deemed eligible by the independent assessor actually receive funding, as Horizon 2020 attracts more proposals than it can fund. The Seal of Excellence recognises the value of the proposals that do not get funded. It recognises the investment carried out by the company in preparing the proposal, it valorises the Commission's spending on evaluating the project and, at the same time, we believe that Member States that are interested in this type of project will invest in projects that are certified as being of good quality.

SMEs do not receive any assurances that they will receive funding, but we tell them to knock on the doors of those who could potentially be interested. To funding bodies also, we consistently state that these are good proposals and represent a great opportunity to exploit the Horizon 2020 evaluation system. Statistics on the numbers and geographical distribution of Seal of Excellence projects are available in the presentation, which you can find [here](#).

A Community of Practice has been set up for public authorities interested in investing in Seal of Excellence projects, where they can exchange practices and address bottlenecks. As of September 2016 the Community had 175 members from 25 Member States plus Norway and Serbia. We know that around 200 Seal of Excellence project have already been funded and we are constantly receiving information about new schemes being set up, so it appears that momentum has been created. For more information, check the [website](#).

Magda's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

Di@vgeia and 'Your Data Stories' as an example of synergy between funds

Anna Triantafillou, Deputy Head, Innovation Lab

This presentation showed synergies between two different government initiatives – the Greek Transparency Programme Initiative ([Di@vgeia](#)) and the Horizon 2020 project [YourDataStories](#). Di@vgeia is an open platform, created using open source tools, on which all public institutions should upload all decisions about spending. The portal currently has more than 4,500 public authorities publishing on a daily basis, contains over 20 million acts and decisions, and has more than 70,000 registered users. The initiative has been presented as an example of "open government best practice".

Furthermore, within the context of the Horizon 2020 call INSO1: ICT-enabled open government, YourDataStories has been set up to provide vertical services by using open government financial and economic data. The idea is to build infrastructure in the platform that makes use of available data and link it in such a way as to increase transparency and public engagement. A pilot project "Follow Public Money" focuses on economic data from Di@vgeia and the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) portal for public construction projects with the aim promoting better utilisation of open governmental data by control authorities, the business community and citizens.

Some of the main challenges encountered include the fact that, when dealing with economic open data, the current status is a complex issue. We are also dealing with a lack of standardisation, data is often diverse and incompatible, and there is a plethora of vocabularies and incomplete and incorrect metadata in many cases. There is also a lack of geo-location information, and of solutions and tools for easy access to the data. So we need to find the right tools and infrastructure of resolve these issues.

The added value of the EU initiative YourDataStories to the national Di@vgeia initiative includes the provision of apps to increase visibility and understanding of the data, along with invaluable input for improvements to the portal. The pilot also serves as a best practice and highlights the benefits of combining different sources of open data. Some barriers that need to be overcome include a lack of understanding of the benefits of publishing governmental data, a lack of standardisation and guidelines for public organisations, and low citizen involvement and motivation to collaborate. Existing organisational procedures can also be a barrier, as can the lack government resources for the effective implementation of open data policies.

Anna's presentation is available online, and can be accessed [here](#).

Questions & Answers

Within the context of the Going Giga Conference (also taking place on November 15) a point was raised by a member of the audience about the importance of collaborating with stakeholders. The panel noted that during the workshop there would be information on funding for the facilitation of collaborative service creation.

A question was asked as to whether there were any open CEF calls or plans for future calls next year. In response it was noted that every year there is a similar schedule that is defined one year in advance together with the Member States, so next year we can expect a similar schedule to this year. So, by looking at the schedule for this year it is possible to start

planning for future calls. Secondly, if you have any ideas that you would like to share with the CEF, it is willing to listen. Asked about the chances that Open Data would feature in the CEF again next year, the panellist estimated these as quite high. He recommended following [INEA](#) on Twitter, as they make the calls planning available really early in the year.

The point was made that synergies involve more than people sitting on a panel and presenting their own silos. In this context, a question was asked whether the EU Justice Programme asks applicants if they have received or use Regional Development Fund or Social Fund funding before, or if they plan to in the future. In response it was noted that, first of all, not all Member States receive Structural Funds. Nevertheless, formally, applicants are asked, because they are asked to list all the funding they have received under the various Union programmes and this avoids any duplication of funding. The programme works both with the Commission and the Member States, DG JUSTICE is a stakeholder like any other and it works with DG CONNECT and the Connecting Europe Facility to have interoperable solutions. DG RTD also added that it asks if there are synergies when it conducts surveys, for example it is currently conducting a survey for the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 and is asking beneficiaries and managing authorities to describe how synergies can be implemented. It is also a question of showing how synergies can benefit the implementers at local and regional level. To this end the JRC has been conducting seminars, in which DG RTD has also been taking part.

A question was directed to the representative from DG EMPL as to how they plan to use the eGovernment Action Plan in the new toolbox, in which eGovernment should play a more prominent role. In response, it was noted that the principles underpinning the Action Plan are not new, and that efforts were made to reflect them even in the previous version of the toolbox. What is more important is to make sure that more managing authorities and beneficiaries are really aware of these principles and integrate them into their projects.

The representative from the Jacques Delors Institute was asked about the main challenges to achieve better synergies between the various programmes. In response, it was noted that, during the literature review in preparation for the European Parliament report, the silo approach was very evident in public administration, but also at EU level. The logical recommendation to resolve this would be to say let's make a single fund for public administration reform, and we tried to analyse the feasibility of this. In the end we concluded that perhaps this was not the solution, because the funds have different rationales, they don't overlap in terms of objectives. So the challenge is to exploit the synergies.

A question was asked about the second order effects of the Connecting Europe Facility and whether these were related to the fact that all the different programmes in the various sectors use the same building blocks. In reply, the panellist explained that second order effects refer to two things – firstly if the CEF succeeds in reforming European administration according to the principles of the Action Plan, this will have trickle down effects at the national level. Secondly, the most common way of changing national administration is through EU legislation imposing obligations at the national level. In some cases, particularly when it comes to digitalisation, it is necessary to have a certain level of technological development to set up the standards. In this sense, the CEF can also help – with the deployment and refinement of the necessary technology.

Session 4: Working towards a guidance document for eGovernment funds managers and implementers

During this section of the workshop, the participants split into two groups to discuss what kind of help (information, guidance) or actions they were missing to ensure that their eGovernment investments are channelled towards the policy goals stipulated in the eGovernment Action Plan and to provide feedback.

Feedback:

More attention should be paid to the local level. Perhaps by organising seminars, etc. closer to where the people are. The webinar from Brussels is a good idea – but this should be widely advertised, so that more stakeholders know about it.

Share practices in one place: perhaps there should be better organisation in terms of the information that is available – better categorisation of information so that it is easily searchable.

LinkedIn groups could be useful for cross-country collaboration, allowing people to find each other and share knowledge and best practices and know what other people are doing in other parts of Europe.

Create a network of local contact points. For all Horizon 2020 calls there is a local contact point, perhaps that contact point could cover other funding sources, not just Horizon 2020. In this way practitioners would have a better pool of calls to select from and the Commission would be able to get its message across better.

What to do with good proposals that do not receive funding? It would be good if the Commission could provide some kind of recognition (seal of excellence) of the work that has gone into the preparation of these proposals, so that this work would not be in vain.

Training should be provided on the funding mechanisms, and perhaps it might be beneficial to 'dumb down' slightly the information that is available on funding. Perhaps people don't need to, initially, have access to a huge amount of information – it might be best to provide access to a number of critical points, such as: theme/topics, target, action type, eligibility, specification and total budget.

With respect to eID it was felt that having the hardware closer to the municipalities might help with the uptake of eID. It might also be useful to promote eID through use cases and success stories, showcasing the value of digital service infrastructure to end users in local regions.

It may be beneficial to organise a roadshow on eGovernment and the related instruments.

These instruments are not easy to apply for, so the question is - is there institutional readiness? It may be beneficial to appoint a team to work on the new instruments for eGovernment and to think of ways to reinforce uptake.

Perhaps organising more multi-stage applications is the way to go, for example, starting with small grants for networking and so on. This network could be built on to create a project in which scientists from partner cities could collaborate to create a real heavyweight project.

Border regions provide a good testbed for interoperability solutions and eGovernment convergence, so perhaps there should be more focus there.

Evidence-based policy-making could be used to show how co-creation can act as a catalyst for more data-driven government.

More information should be provided to managers, so they have a better understanding of all the programmes available.

Closing remarks

Andrea Halmos, DG CONNECT, Unit H4 eGovernment & Trust

The eGovernment Action Plan aims to act as a catalyst to bring together all possible funding mechanisms that can help advance the same policy goals. Six or seven months after the launch of the Action Plan, this is what we have managed to do at this workshop. There has been a number of very useful ideas and, at our end, we will try to look at the comments that have been made and how to complement the information that already exists in terms of the funding mechanisms and the databases of information and some of the important missing ingredients to create a checklist that could be used by people starting to work on a new eGovernment project.

Every six months we plan to present the Member States with new ideas that have come forward for actions, so please maintain your activity on the EU platform. The first cut-off date is on 30 November, when we will take stock of ideas submitted so far. But if you miss this one, you can submit your ideas by the end of the first quarter next year before the next cut-off date.

Thank you for your participation.