

## **Definition of eGovernment**

### **Introduction**

eGovernment is quite difficult to define with many different definitions in the public domain. Defining eGovernment too narrowly as electronic service delivery only (as is the case with the current EU eGovernment Benchmarking exercise) can result in exercises that are overly complex and costly. Such a definition can also miss the transformative potential of eGovernment to speed-up decision-making, streamline or reduce processes, or reduce costs of engagement. However, it is important to have a common “working definition” to guide public bodies in developing focus and priorities. It is expected that any “working definition” will change over time as opportunities and priorities develop.

### **Working Definition**

eGovernment projects can be organisation-specific, cross-organisational, sector-specific or cross-sectoral. In all cases, the following categories should be classed as eGovernment projects for the time being –

1. the provision of information to the public or to other civil and public service bodies through electronic means such as the web, mobile phone text messaging (SMS), data/file transfers;
2. the provision of services to the public or to other civil and public service bodies through electronic means (in whole or in part) such as the web or SMS;
3. the automation of services to customers by negating the need for customer involvement;
4. the provision of high-quality directory-type information such as locations, availability, opening hours, contact information, services on offer at that location, etc. through electronic means;

5. central databases of information that are of wide/general interest across the civil and public service, e.g., identity; birth, marriage and death events; company events, etc.;
6. online precursors or triage processes that help customers determine their eligibility prior to undertaking a formal application for a service, as these can often be provided simply and at low cost while delivering considerable gain in terms of quality of customer service and administrative efficiency;
7. the provision of application forms that can be completed and stored online, but also use smart technologies to produce 2-D or 3-D barcodes which store the contents on the printed version of the form so that they can be automatically scanned and matched – particularly pertinent in cases where physical signatures are required on applications or additional supporting documentation must accompany the application; and
8. improvements or streamlining in internal processes through changes to –
  - the risk approach taken,
  - underpinning law or regulations,
  - procedures,
  - processes,
  - forms,
  - channels used, and
  - job functions,that, in turn, improve information and service provision.