

Policy  
recommendations  
to promote  
**eGovernment  
services**



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# Can EU regions benefit from capitalisation on eGovernment services?

eGovernment improves efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery, improves access to services by citizens and helps authorities to use available resources to their best advantage, thus contributing to economic sustainability of the regions. A number of regions participated in 13 interregional cooperation projects, pioneers in the transition from current eGovernment to a new generation of open, flexible and collaborative seamless eGovernment services.

The knowledge and experience gained by these frontrunner regions, present in the more than a 100 good practices shared, has been analysed and the main outcomes are presented here. These policy recommendations, targeting policymakers and public administration officials, are broken down in four categories: **integrated policies, open government, public-private-population partnerships and flexible organisation.**

*Gil Gonçalves and Christophe Pannetier were contracted by the INTERREG IVC programme to analyse, benchmark and capitalise on the wealth of knowledge generated by cooperation projects in the field of eGovernment services.*

*These policy recommendations are the result of a two-year analysis, providing targeted actions for those involved in this policy field.*

## 1.

### Towards more integrated policies

Public authorities have invested significantly in the development and implementation of digital policies, but often these policies are not linked to “mainstream” policies such as tourism, education, economic development, transportation, and healthcare, to name but a few.

The crucial challenge is to adapt and evolve existing policy frameworks considering the new and emerging possibilities created by pervasive technologies, the impact they have on public organisations as well as on territories, and to create fluidity and coherence between “mainstream” policies and digital policies.

#### → Favour digital strategies and policies

The development of digital strategies and policies through digital agendas is the main driver for an accelerated implementation of eGovernment. These agendas must be set up and discussed with a medium and long-term perspective as background. However a digital strategy is not set in stone: it has to be flexible enough to evolve constantly and adapt itself to the socio-economical context, to changing citizen needs as well as to technological evolution.

*I-SPEED* produced a document entitled “A Digital Agenda for Tourism” which is a good example of how a digital agenda can be used to develop mainstream policies and agendas. Other interregional projects preconise the joint development of action plans, best practice descriptions, thematic workshops and guidelines for policymakers and public organisations as a way to favour digital policies.

#### → Digitise public policies

The digital policymaking process must not focus on digital development only, but embrace the whole spectrum of public policy. It is essential to make policymakers aware of the important and crosscutting role of ICT in policy regeneration.

Regions must “digitise” their policies by setting up the “digital reflex” when regenerating or creating for example their tourism, healthcare, economic development, inclusion, transportation and mobility policies, thus promoting the e-inclusion of the policy framework. The “digitisation” of policies, which will start making use of innovative and emerging technologies, helps to orientate regional policies towards specialisation.

*I-SPEED* is a clear example again where the digital agenda is used to support policy regeneration, in this case the development of regional tourism products.

## 2.

### Towards an open government

Citizens increasingly want to be involved in the definition of public policies and in the development of new services. This is a key upward trend that will transform the relationship between citizens and policymakers.

How can ICT-based tools and open innovation approaches change how citizens, public administration and policymakers interact, and increase the participation of citizens in policymaking?

#### → Recognise the new role of policymakers

Policymakers must recognise that their role and relationship with citizens has changed. Previously, they just communicated to citizens once they had made all decisions about the territory. Building on the power offered by the Internet, groups of citizens have grasped the opportunity to express their ideas on policies and services all around Europe.

Several interregional projects, such as *PIKE*, show that the modernisation of public administrations applying eGovernment in rural areas maximises the effects of new business development measures, allowing the administration to boost the economy. But this requires early involvement of decision/policymakers who must reconsider their role of “territory stimulators” and “evangelists”, interacting with citizens and using new ways of co-developing policies and services through open innovation.

#### → Promote “participatory government”

Internet has radically transformed the relations between people, but also their relationship with authorities. New forms of “participatory government” are emerging around Europe, involving policymakers, public administration, citizens, local groups, businesses and researchers to redefine public policies and services. Very high-speed broadband, fixed and mobile networks, secured ICT systems, easy-to-use interfaces and reliable services are preconditions for developing these new forms of government.

Projects like *DLA* show that citizen involvement can create sustainable services. Opening up regional

data (e.g. historical data) is one way to create user involvement, but feedback and recognition of citizen participation is key to long-term sustainability.

Not everyone is an “e-citizen” just yet! *eCitizen II* is a good example of why the right balance between new (internet and social media, e-mail etc.) and traditional (printed materials, information centres etc.) channels is required to achieve “participatory government”.

## 3.

### Towards a new public-private-population partnership (4P)

The effective implementation of eGovernment policies and solutions has to be based on a strong alliance between policymakers, public administration, citizens, researchers and businesses. This is what we call the “4P” – public-private-population partnership – also known as the “Quadruple Helix”.

The main drivers of the 4P model are the radical reductions of public budgets and the need to ground the development of these services on the available collective knowledge.

#### → Become a 4Ps evangelist

Traditionally, public-private partnerships are given as examples of new business models. As public budgets are reduced, businesses work together with public administration to provide capital expenditure and competitive services. However, it ignores the social dimension by not involving citizens in the process.

Policymakers have to reinforce this partnership by adding the missing P, to develop new innovative services and explore creativity and collective knowledge. Local businesses, especially start-ups, and research centres are a huge source of creativity and innovation.

*IMMODI* findings help to understand how to overcome the typical market failure scenario found in low-populated areas. Policymakers have to become 4P evangelists and guarantee the involvement of all local and regional stakeholders. Active communities and the provision of essential services in these areas will attract commercial ICT companies to regions that otherwise would be avoided.

#### → Create the ambiance

Hybrid spaces and integrated research centres – where businesses, public administration, researchers and people interact are instrumental in fostering 4Ps. By creating these spaces, policymakers stimulate new activities at the local level and can help to re-industrialise territories. With *I-SPEED* it is possible to see how integrated approaches for the development of the tourism economy built a joint, integrated system of multi-source information. This also creates the basis for research and development in new technologies for tourism.

#### → Popularise public procurement

Public procurement is often too complex for many local businesses and start-ups, as they do not have the knowledge to apply even though they have the capability to supply. Policymakers should become skilled in popularising the technical aspects of public procurement and use them as an instrument, integrated with the regional smart specialisation strategy, to validate innovative services and promote their industrialisation at the local and regional levels. This will not only promote an increase in the participation of SMEs in public contracts, fostering their growth and innovation potential with a positive impact on the European economy, but will also be beneficial for public administration by increasing competition and therefore the quality of services.

The transformation of administrative processes such as “one-stop shop” or “single-window” approaches require substantial process reengineering that then have to be translated into new organisational and informational architectures. They need to be flexible and open, not only to be interoperable with existing systems, but also to be able to involve other stakeholders outside the public administration.

How can we introduce flexibility, interoperability and anticipation into public organisations to prepare them to face these challenges?

#### → Promote digital appropriation

Invest strongly in training skilled personnel to enable smart ways of cooperating and sharing or producing knowledge among relevant stakeholders. Training in public administration is crucial for the future: it is impossible to create and implement innovative policies and projects without adequate human resources, a good knowledge of ICT and a vision of the future of technologies and their use. Free open-source software solutions (FOSS) have proven valid in the implementation of eGovernment, reducing costs but not eliminating the need for skilled people.

Findings and lessons from the *DLA* project demonstrate that adopting ICT tools in public administrations’ day-to-day practices bring more efficiency, more productivity and better services for citizens and businesses. Continued promotion and training over a 4-year-plus timeframe is the main challenge, not the technology.

## 4.

### Towards flexible organisations

eGovernment cannot be implemented without redesigning public organisation and its processes.

## Learn more, do more...

This publication presents examples of recommendations for the effective and efficient implementation of eGovernment services. The full capitalisation report includes a detailed analysis of interregional projects and other European initiatives focusing on eGovernment, their goals and strategic focus, approaches, main outputs and findings. Good practices, lessons learned and policy recommendations gathered by these front-runner regions are an invaluable resource for regions planning or already taking their first steps in the adoption of eGovernment.

This publication is one of a series of twelve thematic policy recommendations. For more information and downloads, visit:  
[www.interreg4c.eu/capitalisation](http://www.interreg4c.eu/capitalisation)

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