

E-government services



Why reinvent the wheel?
Capitalising on regional policy achievements in promoting E-government services



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About the author

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Why reinvent the wheel? Capitalising on regional policy achievements in promoting E-government services

E-government presents many new challenges but also opportunities for regional policymakers. In this context, the interregional cooperation programme, INTERREG IVC, has recently published the results of an important policy analysis, one in a series of 12, each focusing on a different policy theme. This brochure offers just a brief preview of what you can find in the report on 'E-government Services', which details a raft of tried-and-tested good practices and offers timely evidence-based policy recommendations.

E-government services: why they matter

E-government – the digital interactions between a government and its citizens – improves the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery, promotes development and helps authorities to use available resources to their best advantage, thus contributing to the economic sustainability of regions. E-government services are seen as a cost-effective route to providing better service for every citizen and business, and promoting open and transparent participatory government. They can reduce costs and save time for public administrations, citizens, and businesses as well as help to mitigate risks stemming from climate change, natural and manmade hazards by promoting the opening up and sharing of environment-related information.

The average E-government Development Index in Europe is almost 50% above the world average, demonstrating Europe's clear leadership in this domain. Given the benefits, there is clearly a need

to promote E-government among people; despite a high level of availability of E-government services in Europe, differences still exist among Member States and the uptake of E-government services by citizens is low. In 2009, only 38% of EU citizens had ever used the Internet for accessing E-government services, compared to 72% of businesses.

The Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE) is one of the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and defines the key-enabling role that ICT will have to play if Europe wants to succeed in its ambitions for 2020. DAE makes proposals for actions to get Europe on track for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. One of these 13 specific goals contained in the DAE is directly related to the adoption of E-government and aims for "50% of citizens to use E-government by 2015, with more than half [of them] returning completed forms".

“Europe as a region has been in the vanguard of information technology and setting the pace for others to follow. Building on the existing strength of high levels of human capital and infrastructure, the transformative role of ICT has been recognized and adopted to further streamline E-government services.”

United Nations E-government Survey 2012.



E-government services: challenges at regional level

Although public administrations in Europe are committed to making user-centric, personalised, multi-platform E-government services a widespread reality by 2015, the levels of current deployment are clearly below these goals, and there is strong evidence that lack of awareness is one of the main barriers to a wider take-up.

The six projects that focus on E-government, in spite of their different objectives and focus, do share common features and identify similar obstacles to the successful implementation of E-government services:

- Infrastructure (internet access and public infrastructure)
- The digital divide (access, interest and use of ICT)
- The lack of competencies and skills (basic and advanced ICT skills)

Other obstacles may be legal and regulatory or budgetary and in several practices, cultural and historical barriers have also been identified.

“To date, E-government, which should be part of the solution, has been part of the problem. National E-government systems have been developed in isolation, creating new digital borders where physical ones have long since disappeared – fragmenting the EU rather than unifying it.”

Neelie Kroes, EC Vice-President responsible for the Digital Agenda for Europe





Meeting the challenges: good practices from INTERREG IVC

INTERREG IVC can play a fundamental role in addressing challenges and overcoming barriers to the successful implementation of E-government, and consequently, can help achieve the objectives of the European E-government Action Plan, decisively contributing to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

INTERREG IVC includes the sub-theme on **Information Society** that allows regions in Europe to work together with a view to developing ICT-based public services, which will help to:

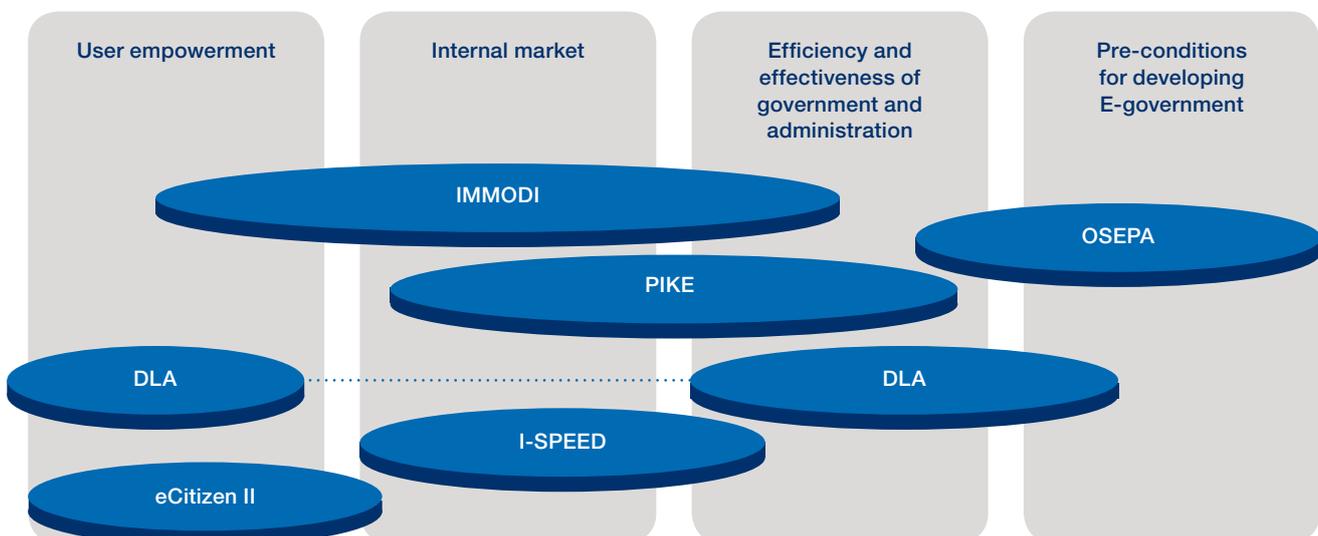
- increase business effectiveness;
- promote the development and use of ICT-based services and products, for example in public services, such as government and healthcare;
- increase the participation of the public in the information society

The E-government Action Plan aims at maximising the complementary nature of national and European policy instruments by supporting the transition from current E-government services to a new generation of open, flexible and collaborative E-government at local, regional, national and European levels that will empower citizens and businesses.

The four main priorities and actions set out in this action plan are:

- **User Empowerment**, related to the promotion of services designed around user needs and inclusive services, the collaborative production of services, the re-use of public sector information both for commercial and non-commercial purposes and the involvement of citizens and businesses in policy-making;
- **Internal Market**, related to the provision of seamless services for business, promoting personal mobility and the EU-wide implementation of cross-border services;
- **Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government and Administration**, related to improving organisational processes, reducing the administrative burden, and promoting green government;
- **Pre-conditions for developing E-government**, related to open specifications and interoperability, key enablers and innovative E-government approaches.

Figure 1: E-government services projects by priority





The six projects developed a total of 36 good practices, 19 of which are directly related to E-government services (53%). Here are just a few examples of the innovative practices explored in the full report. These practices and related policies address the four priorities set out in the E-government Action Plan and the barriers to the successful implementation of E-government services.

User empowerment

IMMODI and DLA have similar approaches aimed at addressing user empowerment by targeting services designed around users and the collaborative production of services.

Internal market

IMMODI and PIKE address the internal market with different approaches, both aimed at providing seamless services for business and personal mobility.

Cybercantal telecentre (IMMODI project) is a tailor-made facility designed to boost entrepreneurship in the Auvergne region (France) by providing new job opportunities for citizens, thereby leading to the creation of micro-enterprises, stimulation of the local economy, and the attraction of new workers. The telecentre targets teleworkers who are either employees or self-employed, offering office space and equipment, a pooled secretarial facility, and access to meeting rooms, video-conferencing, and free training to project leaders who want to set themselves up for teleworking.

Integrated Aid System (PIKE project) is a solution for the management of aid, corresponding to the Common Agriculture Policies in the regional government of Cantabria (Spain). It gathers and validates the applications interactively via Internet, thus totally eliminating the manual exchange of data.

The efficiency and effectiveness of government and administration

DLA and PIKE have similar approaches to addressing the priority efficiency and effectiveness of government and administration and aim at improving organisational processes, reducing the administrative burden and improving transparency.

Online municipal services (DLA project) is an innovative concept of an internet portal that provides all the information and tools needed for citizens to interact with local government in Porto (Portugal), displayed according to the needs of the users, and not as a services view used by traditional portals.

eLocal (PIKE project), launched by both public and private partners, is part of the Government of Cantabria's 2004-2007 Governance Plan, which includes actions designed to modernise diverse areas of the public administration and adapt them to social, economic and technological changes.

Pre-conditions for developing E-government

PIKE and I-SPEED have similar approaches to addressing this priority which aim at providing free internet access coupled with interoperable services (which is a major barrier and key enabler to the successful implementation of E-government).

Wireless cities (PIKE project) was a major initiative aimed at stimulating the creation of a market for broadband services within the learning, government and visitor/tourism sectors in the Derry City Council area, UK.

Free Italia Wi-Fi (I-SPEED project) is an initiative designed to promote collaboration between public administrations with a view to developing free wireless networks within the areas covered by individual administrations as well as to federalising area networks within a single national Wi-Fi infrastructure.



Discover more about current E-government policy

The full capitalisation report includes a detailed analysis of the six core projects that focus on E-government, their thematic and strategic focus, goals, approaches, main outputs and findings, their effectiveness and potential transferability. The 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 E-government.

The full report addresses and discusses many important aspects related to E-government policy development:

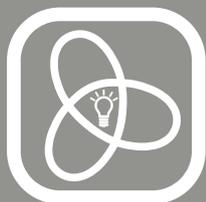
- How are European authorities dealing with the challenges created by this paradigm shift in E-government, with its greater focus on user-empowerment and on the role played by open data and citizen-to-citizen relationships?
- What practices and policies have already been tested by different regions in Europe to address these challenges?
- How can all regions in Europe benefit from this experience and knowledge?

Finally, it makes a whole set of policy recommendations organised into four major groups:

- Political recommendations: to increase cooperation with all stakeholders and to define long-term adoption roadmaps;
- Technological recommendations: to invest in broadband, ICT, supporting training of staff and to improve internal organisation;
- Socio-economic recommendations: to provide user-centred public service, built on public-private partnerships, and to involve all stakeholders in the public service delivery chain;
- High-level recommendations: to promote and build on success stories.

Download the full report from: www.interreg4c.eu/capitalisation

INTERREG IVC Thematic Capitalisation



Innovation systems



Innovation capacity of SMEs



Eco-innovation



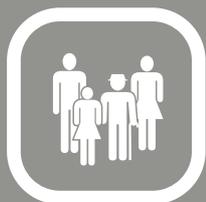
Creative industries



Entrepreneurship



E-government services



Demographic change



Rural development



Climate change



Energy efficiency



Renewable energy



Sustainable transport

Over the last seven years the INTERREG IVC programme has been enabling public institutions all over Europe – over 2000 in total – to ‘learn through cooperation’ across 204 different interregional projects aimed at improving regional policies.

In June 2012, the programme commissioned a team of thematic experts to analyse, benchmark, and capitalise on the wealth of knowledge generated by projects working on similar regional development issues. Altogether, 12 policy themes, ranging from innovation to the environment, have been covered. 12 reports are now available detailing the insights and lessons from this capitalisation process for the benefit of all regions across Europe.

In their presentation of the wide range of innovative good practices and policies improved by the projects, the reports offer a timely inventory of up-to-date evidence and experience to help regional authorities and interested stakeholders introduce or develop their regional policies. Policymakers and practitioners at all levels – regional, national and European – will find theme-specific recommendations tailored to them.

This brochure is a preview of the full-length report in the field of E-government.

The Interregional Cooperation Programme INTERREG IVC, financed by the European Union's Regional Development Fund, helps Regions of Europe work together to share experience and good practice in the areas of innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention. EUR 302 million was granted for project funding but, more than that, a wealth of knowledge and potential solutions are also on hand for regional policy makers.



www.interreg4c.eu