

Supporting Public Service Reform

eGovernment 2012 – 2015

The Programme for Government and the Public Service Reform Plan highlight Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) as key enablers to delivering improved public services. Implementation of the ICT elements of the Programme and the Reform Plan will ensure a strong focus on the customer and that better and more innovative use is made of technology to improve the customer experience.

To progress these, CMOD, working with the Public Service CIO Council, will develop a series of policy documents. This first one, entitled eGovernment 2012 – 2015 identifies a number of priority action areas for Public Bodies which are intended to enhance public service delivery; ensure that citizens and businesses have ease of access to a range of services through multiple channels; improve data sharing across Public Service organisations; and, develop a more integrated approach.

Possible topics to be covered in further documents include cloud computing, the use of data centres, sharing of common ICT services, open data, and social networking.

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Foreword



The purpose of public services should be self-explanatory. They are there to serve the public, whether that is citizen or business.

The Government is committed to taking action to ensure that, in these economically difficult times, public services are delivered better than before, and that the improvement is continuous.

For this reason, we launched the Public Service Reform Plan in November 2011. eGovernment is a very important element of that Plan. eGovernment 2012 – 2015 sets out a vision of what needs to be done to continue the good progress that has already been made in improving citizens' and businesses' access to and interaction with Government services.

We should recognise that we have already achieved significant progress in delivering what I consider to be the traditional approach to eGovernment. Evidence of this can be seen on the www.gov.ie website which provides links to over 300 informational and transactional online public services. However, Government needs to embrace the potential improvements offered by emerging technologies, like smartphones and tablet devices, that are transforming the ways in which we access information and services. We live in an increasingly connected age, and Government needs to look at how new technologies can improve how we conduct our business and serve the public.

This paper identifies a list of key actions that reflect this requirement. We acknowledge what has already been achieved but reflecting the adage “tús maith leath na hoibre” or “a good start is half the work”, we have an opportunity to build on our successes to date and to address areas where improvement is needed. Citizens and businesses demand that public services adapt to their needs and this is a framework in which we can ensure greater levels of collaboration in a changing world.

Most importantly, eGovernment 2012 – 2015 sets out a vision for where we want to be in eGovernment and the next actions required to make that vision a reality.

eGovernment 2012 – 2015 was prepared by CMOD in my Department in conjunction with the Public Service CIO Council. I wish to express my appreciation for their work on this paper.

Brendan Howlin TD
Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform

Introduction

The Irish Government's Public Service Reform Plan¹ recognises that citizens and businesses expect public services to be delivered faster, better and more efficiently than in the past and that public services are continually improving. Intelligent, targeted use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and eGovernment are key enablers for these improvements.

eGovernment 2012 – 2015 places the user at the centre of eGovernment policy and introduces a new approach which aims to transform how citizens and businesses engage with the state, and reduce the costs of public service delivery and take-up.

eGovernment 2012 – 2015 builds on the significant progress has already been achieved in eGovernment by Public Bodies. It is founded on the understanding that mistakes have been made and that important lessons have been learned. This paper sets out where we would like to be in eGovernment by 2015 and identifies challenges and actions that will get us there.

eGovernment 2012 – 2015 recognises the need for a continuation of existing eGovernment initiatives that deliver real benefits to users. It requires public bodies to consider the potential of new and emerging technologies to improve public service delivery and to ensure that services reach the people for whom they are intended.

eGovernment 2012 – 2015 is centred on the understanding that all citizens and businesses can benefit from using eGovernment services.

eGovernment 2012 – 2015 provides a roadmap for public services embracing the potential benefits of eGovernment and identifies a list of overarching actions for the period until end-2015.

¹ <http://per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/Public-Service-Reform-181120112.pdf>

What are the Key Principles for eGovernment?

1. The needs of citizens and businesses are at the centre of eGovernment.
2. Public services should be delivered through the most appropriate channels.
3. eGovernment should reduce the administrative burden for citizens and businesses.
4. eGovernment projects should reflect Business Process Improvements, delivering demonstrable efficiency, effectiveness and Value for Money gains.
5. Public Bodies should work to ensure that the online channel² is the most attractive option for customers.

What Needs To Be Done?

As Public Bodies continue to reform their processes to improve business and citizen access to and interaction with Government services, the continued move to eGovernment and online delivery of services is inevitable. The delivery of eGovernment must be built around the requirement that change is focussed around the needs of business and the citizen.

eGovernment 2012 – 2015 sets out the parameters or context in which this should happen. The potential for eGovernment to become a genuine means of transformation in public service delivery requires collaboration between public bodies and their customers. It also requires different public bodies to share experiences and expertise to ensure that lessons learned by one organisation can benefit others.

This new approach to eGovernment requires actions by Public Bodies responsible for delivering specific services; by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, as the organisation responsible for eGovernment Policy for the public service; and by Public Service customers.

eGovernment 2012 – 2015 identifies a list of actions for the period until end-2015. It identifies where we are and the challenges we face. It shows where we would like to be and the actions we need to take to get there.

What do Public Bodies need to do?

eGovernment services are delivered by Public Bodies and in the timeframe for *eGovernment 2012 – 2015* they will build on successes to date and continue developing eGovernment services that meet the needs of their customers. They will ensure that appropriate consultation and

² In this paper, 'online channels' refers to digital delivery of services; this includes websites, web services, and mobile technologies such as SMS and mobile applications ("apps").

collaboration takes place with citizens and businesses in developing eGovernment services. To help reduce administrative burdens, Public Bodies will ensure that data sharing takes place when possible to reduce the number of times that the citizen or business will be asked for data. They will examine using mobile and emerging technologies when delivering their services. In line with the concepts of re-use of public service information and open data, Public Bodies will ensure that, where possible, data made available publically will be produced in a re-useable format. In order to keep track of progress, Public Bodies will also submit eGovernment project plans as part of the regular Public Service Reform Plan reporting arrangements.

What does the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform need to do?

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will continue to provide and support key infrastructure and services underpinning eGovernment developments. The Department will raise awareness of eGovernment achievements and lessons. It will also ensure that eGovernment actions are consistent with the overall objectives of the *Public Service Reform Plan* and *European Commission eGovernment Action Plan 2012-2015*. The Department will continue working with the Public Service CIO Council³, will monitor progress of eGovernment projects and will provide regular reports to Government.

How will the impact be measured?

Impacts and benefits can be monetary or non-monetary for both the public service customer and the public service provider. Measureable impacts and benefits will be reported on to ensure value for money. Mechanisms will be put in place, including the use of social media, to get feedback from citizens and businesses on eGovernment services. During the lifetime of *eGovernment 2012 – 2015* a summary of feedback received will be presented to Government as part of the regular reporting process.

³ A Public Service CIO Council, comprising senior ICT Directors from across the public service, was established in 2011. Its purpose is to work with CMOD in the on-going development of ICT and eGovernment policies and in that role has assisted in preparation of *eGovernment 2012 – 2015*.

Principles

Challenges

Putting citizens and businesses first

The needs of citizens and businesses are at the centre of eGovernment

Public services should be delivered through the most appropriate channels

eGovernment should reduce the administrative burden for citizens and businesses

eGovernment projects should reflect Business Process Improvements, delivering demonstrable efficiency, effectiveness and Value for Money gains

Public Bodies should work to ensure that the online channel is the most attractive option for customers

Ensure eGovernment improves the quality of public service delivery

Ensure e-services deliver real benefits to citizens and businesses

Utilise life-events to group related public services

Raise awareness of online public services

Introduce common or corporate identity for e-services

Improve approaches to accessibility and usability

Identify, re-use and share existing resources across the public service

Maximise re-use of internal resources for service delivery

Ensure greater interoperability of eGovernment services

Actions

Where We'd Like To Be

Putting citizens and businesses first

Continue Momentum With
Online Services
(Actions 1 – 8)

Use New And Emerging
Technologies And Media
(Actions 9 – 11)

Ensure That eGovernment Is
Designed Around Real Needs
(Actions 12 – 14)

Take Steps To Improve Take-
Up
(Actions 15 – 20)

Ensure That Public Service
Data Is Available For Re-Use
(Actions 21 – 26)

Digital Mapping/Geographic
Information Systems
(Actions 27 – 30)

Identity And Authentication
(Actions 31 – 39)

Back-End Integration
(Actions 40 – 44)

Governance
(Action 45)

- Electronic delivery of services will become the norm where appropriate
- Citizens and businesses will have greater opportunities for and greater levels of electronic engagement with Public Bodies
- Citizens and businesses will access Public Services using the channel or device of choice
- There will be greater integration of public services around citizen and business life events
- There will be greater sharing of data between Public Bodies which will mean that citizens and business will be asked for less data
- Greater automation and self-service will free up staff from front-line work to provide value added services or to provide different or better services
- Greater use of electronic services will reduce the costs of providing services and reduce delivery timelines
- Availability of Public Service data will promote openness and transparency

Actions

eGovernment 2012 – 2015 recognises that significant progress has already been achieved by Public Bodies delivering online information and services. The Government is committed to ensuring that the Public Service builds on achievements to date and continues to improve how technologies are utilised to improve the quality of service delivery to our customers.

This chapter sets out key actions to be delivered in this phase of eGovernment that will help deliver on this commitment.

The actions are grouped under eight key priority areas which reflect the commitment to deliver services that are important to citizens and businesses, that promote collaboration between Government and the people, and that reduce the administrative burden associated with doing business with the State:

- Continue Momentum With Online Services
- Use New And Emerging Technologies And Media
- Ensure That eGovernment Is Designed Around Real Needs
- Take Steps To Improve Take-Up
- Ensure That Public Service Data Is Available For Re-Use
- Digital Mapping/Geographic Information Systems
- Identity And Authentication
- Back-End Integration

Continue Momentum With Online Services

eGovernment enables public service customers to access information and services at a time that suits them. Public Bodies will continue to deliver eGovernment services that are underpinned by an understanding of the real costs and benefits to the customer and to the Public Body.

Action 1

Public Bodies will continue to provide information and transactional services online and through all appropriate channels.

Action 2

Public Bodies will provide access to their eGovernment services via a prominent “Online Services” section of their website.

Action 3

Public Bodies will group their transactional services around life events, where appropriate. These should be integrated across organisational boundaries where relevant and feasible.

Action 4

Where a deadline for a service is approaching, e.g., state examinations, tax returns, grant applications, or in the case of a specific event or occurrence, relevant information should be highlighted on the organisation’s homepage and through other appropriate channels.

Action 5

Public Service organisations will

- notify any existing or new services to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for inclusion and direct linkage on www.gov.ie
- have a link to www.gov.ie on their home pages
- optimise website content and design to achieve best placement in search results and to improve traffic to and time spent on the websites

Action 6

Public Bodies will continue to push out e-payment facilities appropriate to their customers’ requirements.

Action 7

Public Bodies will meet EU targets on e-procurement.

Action 8

Upon successful completion of the e-invoicing pilot by the National Procurement Service, e-invoicing will be introduced which will be open to all public bodies and suppliers.

Use New And Emerging Technologies And Media

Public Bodies will take account of the emergence of new technologies and social media when delivering their services. Smartphones and mobile devices are becoming more common across society and large numbers of people and organisations use social media for communication purposes. These devices are likely to be increasingly popular channels for accessing online services into the future.

Action 9

Public bodies will review existing web provision of services to determine if an online or offline “app” based and/or a mobile optimised approach could better facilitate mobile users. When new eGovernment services are being developed, these will, where appropriate, be designed to be usable on smartphones and other smart mobile devices.

Action 10

All public bodies will develop a social media usage policy and will prepare a short plan regarding how they will maximise the potential of social media to improve access to services, e.g. appointments, advertising key dates for applications, opening hours, public works etc.

Action 11

The Citizens Information Board will explore the possibility of using social media and networking to deliver an online Citizens Information Centre.

Ensure That eGovernment Is Designed Around Real Needs

Social networking and collaborative tools can help citizens and businesses to contribute and gain insights into the development and improvement of public service delivery. The Programme for Government requires more collaboration with citizens to ensure that services are designed to meet their needs.

Action 12

All public bodies will identify opportunities for using electronic collaboration tools to empower citizens and businesses and to encourage their engagement.

Action 13

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will develop an electronic channel allowing citizens and businesses to suggest potential new eGovernment services and to track progress of their suggestions.

Action 14

Opportunities for users to provide feedback should be integrated into the design of new electronic systems to facilitate suggestions from those that use the systems with a view to ensuring continuous improvement. This feedback could be through the system itself or through links with social media where appropriate.

Take Steps To Improve Take-Up

The outcome of collaboration should be that services are developed based on the needs of the customer. When a public service is delivered through the most appropriate channels, there should be a positive impact on take-up and participation.

Government Bodies should raise awareness of which services are available online and provide incentives to encourage citizens and businesses to use the eGovernment channel.

Action 15

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will, using the Public Services Card, develop a common facility where Public Service customers can view their information and access services.

Action 16

All Public Bodies will analyse existing legislation, regulations, and service procedures in the work and processes of the Body to determine provisions that could promote the use of electronic channels.

Action 17

Public bodies will examine the potential for incentives to encourage take up of electronic services where making the service mandatory is not possible or in the interim to a service being mandated as electronic only.

Examples of incentives include:

- if a fee is involved, can different fees be charged for the on and off-line service, the electronic service being cheaper? (see example from the Companies Registration Office – reduced fees for online registration.⁴)
- can electronic applications be given priority and processed ahead of off-line applications?
- can electronic applications be given a later closing date for return? (see example from Revenue for customers who both file and pay electronically.⁵)

Action 18

Public bodies will encourage take-up of electronic services by raising awareness of electronic services and the incentives available for using them. Accordingly, public bodies will promote and direct users to electronic options whenever possible e.g. via the body's official website, in press releases, on printed forms, information leaflets, letter heads, email footers etc. and/or through the use of appropriate social networking channels.

⁴ <http://www.cro.ie/en/downloads-company.aspx>

⁵ <http://www.revenue.ie/en/practitioner/calendar-note.html>

Action 19

Public bodies will assess if those using electronic channels can monitor the progress of their request/application etc. and will put this facility in place, where appropriate.

Action 20

All public bodies will monitor and evaluate take-up of eGovernment services with a view to achieving at least the 50% (for citizens) and 80% (for businesses) targets set out in the EU eGovernment Action Plan by 2015.

Where take-up falls short of the EU targets, public bodies will identify, through direct interaction with citizens and businesses, reasons for this and take appropriate actions to address these reasons. As well as actions public bodies might take with a particular eGovernment service, these actions could include assisting citizens and businesses, for example, through targeted local training initiatives or improved use of online access in public offices such as libraries.

Ensure That Public Service Data Is Available For Re-Use

- i). The concept of **Open Data** is about making data held by public bodies available and easily accessible online for reuse or redistribution at no or marginal cost. This includes for example data on environment, transport, education and crime but it does not include personal data unless it is sufficiently anonymised and/or aggregated. Public bodies in Ireland already publish significant amounts of data online. This data can be re-used by citizens and businesses, but much of this data is not available in a machine-readable format.

According to the EU eGovernment Action Plan, open data allows citizens and businesses “to find new ways to use it and to create new innovative products and services”. This reflects the 2003 “Re-Use of Public Sector Information Directive”⁶ which placed an obligation on public sector bodies to provide information about material that they are prepared to release, with the intention of stimulating economic activity, innovation and competition. In December 2011, the European Commission launched an Open Data Strategy for Europe which included a number of proposals including a revision of the 2003 Directive⁷.

The provision of Open Data can help to promote accountability and transparency by encouraging new solutions, removing inefficiencies, and improving decision making. Easy access to public data can also encourage participation and collaboration by citizens and businesses.

The concept and methods of providing Open Data can also be used for internal sharing of appropriate data and consequently should assist with minimising related duplication of tasks and associated costs. Data that is routinely requested by or provided to other public bodies could be made available, with relevant safeguards, for download as required.

Action 21

All public bodies will publish appropriate data in machine-readable formats to facilitate re-use. Initially this will include data newly released (in reports, on websites etc.). Over time, public bodies should identify additional data that could be released as open data. This action will enable individuals and businesses to use data in ways most helpful to them including developing applications relevant to their own needs and interests.

⁶ www.psi.gov.ie

⁷ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1524&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Action 22

Data released as images and/or included in reports that are published in formats such as PDF should also be made available in parallel in re-useable formats.

Action 23

Each Public Body will be required to identify datasets it holds and release these by default subject to legal or other restrictions e.g. Data Protection, Official Secrets, commercial sensitivity, etc. If there are datasets that a body determines cannot be released, a case to that effect will have to be made to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

- ii). The National Statistics Board's Strategy for Statistics 2009-2014⁸ emphasises the potential for greater re-use of **administrative data for statistical purposes** across the Public Service, to support evidence-informed decision-making, planning and service delivery and to reduce the potential for fraud. Improving the use of data for statistical purposes will depend on the development of a code of practice for the production of statistical data and related technical standards, as well as identifying any necessary legislative changes. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) will take a lead role in this and will work with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to promote consistent approaches to statistical data across the Public Service.

Action 24

The CSO will assess the legislative environment with a view to identifying the scope for additional and greater uses of statistical data, including any potential legislative changes where necessary.

Action 25

The CSO will develop a code of practice and standards for the gathering and use of data for statistical purposes in the Public Service.

Action 26

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, in conjunction with the CSO will develop an integrated approach to the collection of administrative data across the Public Service, including a strategy to promote consistent approaches to, and systematic uses of data (including identifiers, classifications and geo-spatial/postcode data) in service planning and delivery.

⁸ http://www.nsb.ie/pub_documents.htm

Digital Mapping/Geographic Information Systems

When and where things happen is important in many aspects of public policy including the planning, targeting, and delivery of public services. Location details exist to some extent in much of the data gathered and held by public bodies. This is often duplicated, inconsistent, incompatible and unconnected across or even within public bodies.

Digital Mapping is about representing location/geographic data on virtual maps of an area and together with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) facilitates analysis of that data. This could range from relatively static information maps of office locations to maps showing live data such as bus arrival times to maps showing statistical data such as population density changes over time. Specific GIS applications can allow users interact with the data across multiple variables to see details of interest to them, identify patterns and trends, perform operations such as “what-if” analysis and see the results on a map. Public Bodies hold many datasets that are or could be represented through GIS and potentially could be released as Open Data.

Action 27

Public bodies will evaluate the potential for exploiting digital mapping and GIS technologies in ways that are affordable, sustainable and of relevance to the customer bases of their services, taking into account the personal or commercial sensitivities of the data.

Action 28

Public bodies will identify data sets they hold that contain location based data and will make these details available to other public bodies where appropriate to reduce duplication and to facilitate greater area-based targeting of public services.

Action 29

The Public Service CIO Council will work with relevant Public Bodies to progress the development of a location identifier to help improve service delivery.

Action 30

Public Bodies will seek to extract maximum benefit from Post Codes when these are introduced.

Identity And Authentication

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has developed a central system to provide a single view of the identity of Public Service customers, known as the **Single Customer View**.

This system takes identity data feeds from a range of national registers across the public service and seeks to match them. CMOD has successfully piloted the system and a range of associated applications with public bodies such as data matching, PPSN look-up, address matching/validation, household control information, and online authentication services. These will be made available on an incremental basis. These solutions will be instrumental in helping public bodies to improve the quality of customer identity data, improve assurances around identity claims, remove duplication of effort from recording and checking processes, and facilitate the provision of online identity services.

Action 31

Applications based on the Single Customer View system will be rolled out over time by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and availed of by Public bodies.

The Department of Social Protection is introducing a **Public Services Card** which will bring improvements over the existing Social Services Card and Free Travel schemes. The card will include customer photo identification and will introduce a number of significant improvements, including an improved, strong registration process and new smart card technology which will bring additional security features and reduce the potential for forgery or fraudulent use. The new card will incorporate a contactless integrated ticketing chip for travel entitlement on services which have been enabled with smart card reading devices.

Action 32

The Department of Social Protection will continue rollout of the Public Services Card and develop an awareness programme for both Public Service bodies and for residents on the availability of the card and its potential.

Action 33

The Department of Social Protection and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will agree on an investment programme and the allocation of required resources to support the rollout of the Public Services Card.

Action 34

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will examine the best way of using the Public Services Card and its underlying registration facilities and data services as the means of accessing public services over electronic channels.

Action 35

The Department of Social Protection, in conjunction with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, will seek Government approval to mandate all public bodies to use the Public Services Card and/or associated data services as the means of accessing their high-value services.

Organisations must not use alternative cards without providing a very strong reason for not using the Public Service Card. This reason will have to be signed by their organisation's Accounting Officer and agreed with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Action 36

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will ensure that there is a common mechanism to allow customers to authenticate themselves for public services.

Improved **sharing of data on businesses** will increase transparency and assist with better decision-making across the Public Service.

Action 37

A common vocabulary for identifying businesses using the Revenue Commissioner's Business Register will be introduced and used by all Public Bodies.

Action 38

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will introduce legislation to allow public bodies to collect one of the business identifiers included in the Revenue Register and match these identifiers against that Register.

Action 39

Revenue, in conjunction with relevant Departments, will provide technology solutions to allow public bodies to match data against the Revenue Register and/or synchronise with it.

Back-end Integration

High volume eGovernment services can only be successfully delivered and sustained with the provision of robust, integrated ‘back-end’ processes with a high level of ICT support, including appropriate levels of resilience and security. Public Bodies should ensure that back office business processes and ICT systems are integrated to deliver efficiency improvements and to facilitate greater interoperability. While there is already a great deal of back-end integration between the systems and processes of public bodies, there is scope for doing more.

Action 40

Public bodies will promote practices and procedures that enable single point of data capture for cross system use, both within and across organisations.

Action 41

When new eGovernment services are being developed, these will, where appropriate, be designed to support cross organisational data sharing opportunities and to facilitate interoperability. This will be a key element of the National Interoperability Framework which will be prepared to comply with the EU Digital Agenda.

Action 42

Public Bodies will make data that is in high demand from other Public Bodies available across Government Networks for re-use, as appropriate and where legally permissible, to minimise duplication in data-sharing.

Action 43

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will ensure that a Federated Authentication System is put in place.

The Public Service Reform Plan contains a commitment that all relevant legislative provisions in relation to data sharing between public bodies will be reviewed and that principles for the sharing of data will be developed.

Action 44

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will chair a Data Sharing Clearing House to review relevant legislative provisions and produce and promote guidelines on best practice in the area of data sharing.

Implementation

Implementation of *eGovernment 2012 – 2015* and the specific actions it sets out will require public bodies to review and re-prioritise eGovernment related activities in parallel with general reforms arising from the Government's reform programme.

Governance

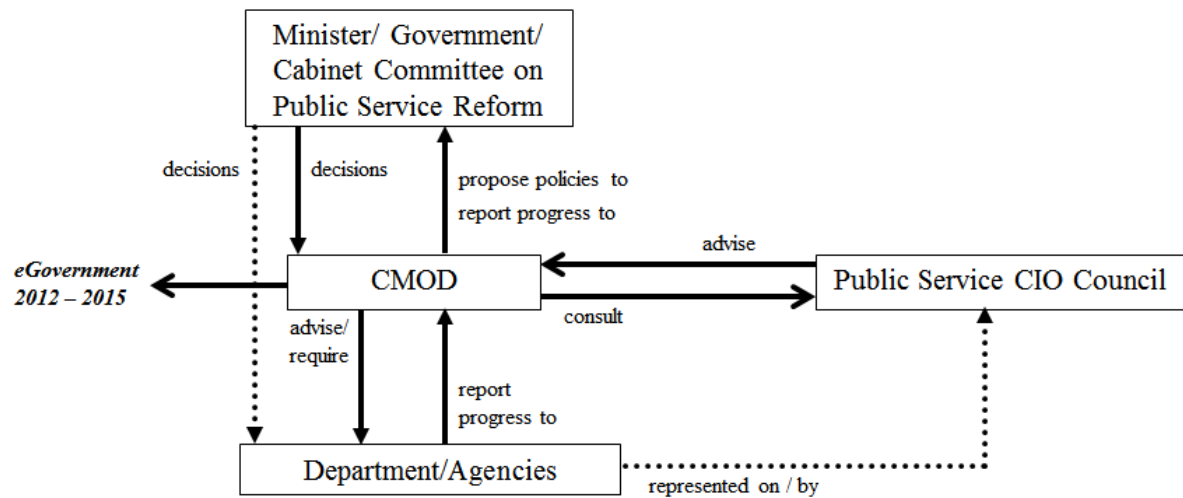
Responsibility for eGovernment policy and central operations was consolidated in CMOD⁹ in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in May 2008. CMOD is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of eGovernment policy and for central eGovernment operations. It is advised and assisted in this by the Public Service CIO Council. Individual Departments, Agencies and Offices remain responsible for the delivery of eGovernment services relevant to their own specific remits.

To ensure a coordinated approach to the implementation of *eGovernment 2012 – 2015*, CMOD has taken into account the views of a wide range of stakeholders across the public service and considered relevant contributions from the public to the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure which was conducted during 2011. Decisions and plans at EU level also influence eGovernment policy and consequently this paper.

All heads of Civil Service and non-commercial public bodies are required to ensure that the actions set out in *eGovernment 2012 – 2015* are implemented within their organisations and that they contribute to the on-going governance activities, as coordinated by CMOD.

⁹ CMOD (Centre for Management and Organisation Development) is a division in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (previously Finance). It has a public service-wide brief with responsibility for researching, developing and implementing policies in the areas of telecommunications, technology, shared ICT services, and eGovernment. CMOD also operates as the sanctioning authority for ICT expenditure in the Irish public service. It represents Ireland at EU level in relation to public service ICT, eGovernment and CIO working groups and fora

The following diagram illustrates reporting and consultation arrangements.



Governance Structure

Action 45

All Public Bodies will develop detailed eGovernment Plans, in accordance with advice issued by CMOD following consultation with the Public Service CIO Council. Regular progress reports will be submitted by CMOD to the Cabinet Committee on Public Service Reform and to the Government.

Annex I

Background

This is a brief outline of what has happened since the publication of the Comptroller and Auditor General's Special Report on eGovernment in late 2007¹⁰. This report resulted in a renewed emphasis on achieving progress in this increasingly important area. A wide range of measures aimed at renewing the focus on eGovernment have been introduced since then and CMOD in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has been charged with responsibility for coordinating the development of eGovernment policy. Key measures were aimed at developing proper eGovernment plans, setting specific targets, strengthening reporting arrangements and improving Ireland's standing in the EU Commission's eGovernment Benchmarks.

Initially, these measures were set out in Department of Finance Circular 6/09 in early 2009¹¹ and were reinforced and expanded in *eGovernment Strategy 2010*¹², issued in December 2009, which was centred on three key goals:

- **Enhanced Information Provision** – online information about all services will be improved;
- **Enhanced Electronic Delivery of Services** – the online delivery of services by all public bodies will be improved and every effort will be made to eliminate the need for non-online channels; and,
- **Enhanced Use of Shared Approaches** – the public service will seek to make as much use as is feasible of shared approaches in the achievements of the above goals.

eGovernment Strategy 2010 also acknowledged barriers to progress, identified approaches to be used by public bodies in delivering improvements and overcoming these barriers, and set out implementation steps supporting the strategy.

¹⁰ http://audgen.gov.ie/documents/vfmreports/58_eGovernment.pdf

¹¹ Circular 6/09: <http://per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/circ62009.pdf>

¹² eGovernment Strategy 2010: <http://per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/eGovernmentStrategy2010.pdf>

Progress regarding these measures has been outlined in a series of detailed reports to Government.

Since *eGovernment Strategy 2010* was issued, a number of other key documents have been produced at both National and European levels, including:

- *Public Service Reform Plan*¹³ – eGovernment is a key part of this plan published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in November 2011,
- *Government for National Recovery 2011 - 2016*¹⁴ – the Programme for Government prioritises “more progress on eGovernment and moving services online”,
- *A Digital Agenda for Europe*¹⁵ – this EC Communication was published mid-2010 and is one of the seven flagship initiatives of the *Europe 2020* strategy,
- *The European eGovernment Action Plan 2011 - 2015: Harnessing ICT to promote smart, sustainable & innovative Government*¹⁶ – this EC communication was published at the end of 2010. The Action Plan identifies priorities based on the declaration made at the 5th Ministerial eGovernment Conference (the Malmö Declaration¹⁷) and is intended to support and complement *A Digital Agenda for Europe*,
- *Digitizing Public Services in Europe: Putting ambition into action: 9th Benchmark Measurement*¹⁸ – this was the final EU eGovernment benchmark report under the old methodology and shows that Ireland achieved a 100% rating for all of the services included in the Benchmark and was ranked 1st of 32 countries for online provision of information and services, for the online sophistication of its services, for eProcurement availability, and for integrating services as “life events” for both businesses and citizens. A new methodology is being prepared for introduction in 2012.

When the Government was formed in March 2011, it announced the establishment of a new Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Among other things, the Department has specific statutory responsibility to formulate and develop policies to modernise and enable

¹³ <http://per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/Public-Service-Reform-pdf3.pdf>

¹⁴ http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_2011/Programme_for_Government_2011.pdf

¹⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0245:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/egovement/action_plan_2011_2015/index_en.htm

¹⁷ <http://www.egov2009.se/wp-content/uploads/Ministerial-Declaration-on-eGovernment.pdf>

¹⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/item-detail-dae.cfm?item_id=6537

the efficient and effective provision of public services and to coordinate the implementation of these policies¹⁹, including in the area of eGovernment. In this context, the Department developed a Public Service Reform Plan which includes eGovernment as a key component. Consequently, *eGovernment Strategy 2010* is being updated to take account of these developments and to set out priorities for eGovernment for the period 2012–2015.

¹⁹ Section 10, [Ministers and Secretaries \(Amendment\) Act 2011](#)

Annex II

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 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 communications, 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 mobile communications;
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;
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; and
9. those back-end electronic components necessary to complete electronic transactions.

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

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Annex III

Action No.	eGovernment 2012 - 2015 Action
1	Public Bodies will continue to provide information and transactional services online and through all appropriate channels.
2	Public Bodies will provide access to their eGovernment services via a prominent “Online Services” section of their website.
3	Public Bodies will group their transactional services around life events, where appropriate. These should be integrated across organisational boundaries where relevant and feasible.
4	Where a deadline for a service is approaching, e.g., state examinations, tax returns, grant applications, or in the case of a specific event or occurrence, relevant information should be highlighted on the organisation’s homepage and through other appropriate channels.
5	Public Service organisations will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notify any existing or new services to CMOD for inclusion and direct linkage on www.gov.ie • have a link to www.gov.ie on their home pages • optimise website content and design to achieve best placement in search results and to improve traffic to and time spent on the websites
6	Public Bodies will continue to push out e-payment facilities appropriate to their customers’ requirements.
7	Public Bodies will meet EU targets on e-procurement.
8	Upon successful completion of the e-invoicing pilot by the National Procurement Service, e-invoicing will be introduced which will be open to all public bodies and suppliers.
9	Public bodies will review existing web provision of services to determine if an online or offline “app” based and/or a mobile optimised approach could better facilitate mobile users. When new eGovernment services are being developed, these will, where appropriate, be designed to be usable on smartphones and other smart mobile devices.
10	All public bodies will develop a social media usage policy and will prepare a short plan regarding how they will maximise the potential of social media to improve access to services, e.g. appointments, advertising key dates for applications, opening hours, public works etc.
11	The Citizens Information Board will explore the possibility of using social media and networking to deliver an online Citizens Information Centre.
12	All public bodies will identify opportunities for using electronic collaboration tools to empower citizens and businesses and to encourage their engagement.

13	The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will develop an electronic channel allowing citizens and businesses to suggest potential new eGovernment services and to track progress of their suggestions.
14	Opportunities for users to provide feedback should be integrated into the design of new electronic systems to facilitate suggestions from those that use the systems with a view to ensuring continuous improvement. This feedback could be through the system itself or through links with social media where appropriate.
15	The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will, using the Public Services Card, develop a common facility where Public Service customers can view their information and access services.
16	All Public Bodies will analyse existing legislation, regulations, and service procedures in the work and processes of the Body to determine provisions that could promote the use of electronic channels.
17	Public bodies will examine the potential for incentives to encourage take up of electronic services where making the service mandatory is not possible or in the interim to a service being mandated as electronic only. Examples of incentives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if a fee is involved, can different fees be charged for the on and off-line service, the electronic service being cheaper? (see example from the Companies Registration Office – reduced fees for online registration. http://www.cro.ie/en/downloads-company.aspx) • can electronic applications be given priority and processed ahead of off-line applications? • can electronic applications be given a later closing date for return? (see example from Revenue for customers who both file and pay electronically. http://www.revenue.ie/en/practitioner/calendar-note.html)
18	Public bodies will encourage take-up of electronic services by raising awareness of electronic services and the incentives available for using them. Accordingly, public bodies will promote and direct users to electronic options whenever possible e.g. via the body's official website, in press releases, on printed forms, information leaflets, letter heads, email footers etc. and/or through the use of appropriate social networking channels.
19	Public bodies will assess if those using electronic channels can monitor the progress of their request/application etc. and will put this facility in place, where appropriate.
20	All public bodies will monitor and evaluate take-up of eGovernment services with a view to achieving the 50% (for citizens) and 80% (for businesses) targets set out in the EU eGovernment Action Plan (by 2015). <p>Where take-up falls short of the EU targets, public bodies will identify, through direct interaction with citizens and businesses, reasons for this and take appropriate actions to address these reasons. As well as actions public bodies might take with a particular eGovernment service, these actions could include assisting citizens and businesses, for example, through targeted local training initiatives or improved use of online access in public offices such as libraries.</p>

21	All public bodies will publish appropriate data in machine-readable formats to facilitate re-use. Initially this will include data newly released (in reports, on websites etc.). Over time, public bodies should identify additional data that could be released as open data. This action will enable individuals and businesses to use data in ways most helpful to them including developing applications relevant to their own needs and interests.
22	Data released as images and/or included in reports that are published in formats such as PDF should also be made available in parallel in re-useable formats.
23	Each Public Body will be required to identify datasets it holds and release these by default subject to legal or other restrictions e.g. Data Protection, Official Secrets, commercial sensitivity, etc. If there are datasets that a body determines cannot be released, a case to that effect will have to be made to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.
24	The CSO will assess the legislative environment with a view to identifying the scope for additional and greater uses of statistical data, including any potential legislative changes where necessary.
25	The CSO will develop a code of practice and standards for the gathering and use of data for statistical purposes in the Public Service.
26	The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, in conjunction with the CSO will develop an integrated approach to the collection of administrative data across the Public Service, including a strategy to promote consistent approaches to, and systematic uses of data (including identifiers, classifications and geo-spatial/postcode data) in service planning and delivery.
27	Public bodies will evaluate the potential for exploiting digital mapping and GIS technologies in ways that are affordable, sustainable and of relevance to the customer bases of their services, taking into account the personal or commercial sensitivities of the data.
28	Public bodies will identify data sets they hold that contain location based data and will make these details available to other public bodies where appropriate to reduce duplication and to facilitate greater area-based targeting of public services.
29	The Public Service CIO Council will work with relevant Public Bodies to progress the development of a location identifier to help improve service delivery.
30	Public Bodies will seek to extract maximum benefit from Post Codes when these are introduced.
31	Applications based on the Single Customer View system will be rolled out over time by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and availed of by Public bodies.
32	The Department of Social Protection will continue rollout of the Public Services Card and develop an awareness programme for both Public Service bodies and for residents on the availability of the card and its potential.
33	The Department of Social Protection and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will agree on an investment programme and the allocation of required resources to support the rollout of the Public Services Card.

34	The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will examine the best way of using the Public Services Card and its underlying registration facilities and data services as the means of accessing public services over electronic channels.
35	The Department of Social Protection, in conjunction with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, will seek Government approval to mandate all public bodies to use the Public Services Card and/or associated data services as the means of accessing their high-value services. Organisations must not use alternative cards without providing a very strong reason for not using the Public Service Card. This reason will have to be signed by their organisation's Accounting Officer and agreed with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.
36	The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will ensure that there is a common mechanism to allow customers to authenticate themselves for public services.
37	A common vocabulary for identifying businesses using the Revenue Commissioner's Business Register will be introduced and used by all Public Bodies.
38	The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will introduce legislation to allow public bodies to collect one of the business identifiers included in the Revenue Register and match these identifiers against that Register.
39	Revenue, in conjunction with relevant Departments, will provide technology solutions to allow public bodies to match data against the Revenue Register and/or synchronise with it.
40	Public bodies will promote practices and procedures that enable single point of data capture for cross system use, both within and across organisations.
41	When new eGovernment services are being developed, these will, where appropriate, be designed to support cross organisational data sharing opportunities and to facilitate interoperability. This will be a key element of the National Interoperability Framework which will be prepared to comply with the EU Digital Agenda.
42	Public Bodies will make data that is in high demand from other Public Bodies available across Government Networks for re-use, as appropriate and where legally permissible, to minimise duplication in data-sharing.
43	The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will ensure that a Federated Authentication System is put in place.
44	The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will chair a Data Sharing Clearing House to review whether specific data can be released or shared.
45	All Public Bodies will develop detailed eGovernment Plans, in accordance with advice issued by CMOD following consultation with the Public Service CIO Council. Regular progress reports will be submitted by CMOD to the Cabinet Committee on Public Service Reform and to the Government.

