Reasons for Electronic Government
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Reasons for e-Government

The main reasons to embrace e-government:

- e-government improves efficiency
- e-government improves service quality
- e-government helps achieve policy outcomes
- e-government contributes to achieving economic objectives
- e-government can be the major contributor to reform
- e-government builds trust between citizens and government

Until now, the main drivers for e-government have been efficiency gains and effective delivery of policy outcomes.

Recently, the focus has shifted to other objectives: improving services, increasing accountability, facilitating engagement.
Efficiency

Cost reduction is the major driver for ICT use by governments:

- replacing paper-based application processes with Internet applications – cut down costs of data re-entry and checking

- improved booking arrangements – more efficient use of scarce resources: skilled staff and facilities

- greater sharing of data within government – eliminate costs of multiple collections, data reconciliation and checking

- reduce government publication and distribution costs by relying more on on-line publications, etc.

Greater efficiencies are generated from ICT projects that involve transformation of business processes.
Example: Efficiency

Example [e-Procurement in Italy]

Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance adopts e-procurement to increase efficiency, policy outcomes and stimulate e-commerce.

Three procurement channels:

- e-auctions
- e-marketplaces
- on-line product catalogues

New legislation, transactional procurement website, ICT applications created, existing businesses processes re-engineered.

Benefits: 30% reduction in the cost of goods and services, adoption of e-commerce practices by suppliers, etc.
## Exercise: Efficiency

### Exercise [Efficiency]

Consider how your agency introduced ICT.

1) was it an aim to reduce costs? ..............................................

2) were any cost reductions created? ..............................................

3) was ICT adoption preceded by process restructuring? ........... ..............................................

Provide examples of ICT-induced cost reductions that:

4) have taken place ..................................................................................................................

5) could have taken place ..............................................................................................................
Customer Focus

Adopting customer focus is the main part of the countries' public reform agendas and e-government strategies.

Definition [Customer Focus]
Customer focus is about providing citizens and businesses with a coherent interface with government which reflects their needs rather than the structure of the government.
Customer Focus Initiatives

e-Government initiatives to improve customer focus:

- **on-line portals** focused on particular topics or groups, bringing together relevant information and services

- **targeting** of on-line information to specific groups of citizen so that relevant information can be found more readily

- **e-mail lists** to push customised information to specific groups, whenever the information becomes available

- allowing identified users to carry out routine transactions with the government as **on-line government services**
The Government of Mexico launched a government-wide portal that organizes information in a thematic and not institutional fashion. For instance, under “work” theme one can find:

- labour rights
- public housing
- job matchmaker services
- taxation on labour services, etc.

Over 1500 services from about 100 government agencies.

The bundling of information and services in thematic channels required horizontal coordination of government agencies.
Exercise: Customer Focus

Consider how your agency serves citizens and businesses.

1) Is customer focus part of your agency's service policy?

...................................................

2) Provide examples of the measures taken to enhance customer focus:

...................................................

3) What measures could have been taken?

...................................................
Improved Policy Outcomes

e-Government can help achieve better outcomes in major policy areas, such as:

- **taxation policy** - improved collection of taxes through increased sharing of information by agencies

- **health policy** - reduced demand for health services through better use of health information and scarce health resources

- **fiscal policy** - reduced unemployment payments owing to better matching of the unemployed and vacancies

- **social policy** - promoting the use of native languages and awareness of indigenous people

- **environmental policy** – through better sharing of information between national and sub-national governments

It is expected that all policy areas will be affected by e-government.
Economic Objectives

Through reduced corruption, greater openness and increased trust in government, e-government contributes to economic objectives.

Specific measures:

- improving **business productivity** by administrative simplification and online support for small and medium-size businesses

- **business portals** providing access to economic information - market trends, export opportunities, assistance programmes

- reduced government calls on **public funds** through more effective programs and operations

- direct consumption of **ICT goods and services** by government is significant and more stable than by private sector
Public Management Reform

Public management reform has been on the agendas of many countries long before e-government emerged.

Reform and e-government are mutually dependant:

- reform is necessary for e-government to deliver
- e-government is an enabler of the reform
Reform for e-Government

Reform is necessary for e-government to deliver:

- The promise of e-government will not materialise by simply digitising government information and placing it on-line.

- Instead, e-government is about the use of ICT to transform the structures, operations and the culture of government.
e-Government for Reform

e-Government is an enabler of the reform:

- it serves as a tool for reform:
  1) simplifies administrative processes
  2) makes such processes more transparent
  3) helps to deliver services in more efficient ways
  4) facilitates the integration of services and processes
  5) enables seamless government

- highlights internal government inconsistencies

- underscores commitment to good governance objectives

Modernizing government structures and processes to meet e-government will have a major impact on how services are delivered.
Exercise: Public Reform 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise [Public Reform]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider a major process change performed by your agency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) What was the reason for the change?


2) Was the process change supported by ICT?


3) Were the expected benefits produced? If not, why?


Exercise [Public Reform]

Consider a major ICT system deployed in your agency.

1) What is the system's function?

................................................................................................................................................

2) Was the deployment followed by process change?

................................................................................................................................................

3) Were the expected benefits produced? If not, why?

................................................................................................................................................
Citizen Engagement

Building trust between government and citizens is fundamental.

In the absence of trust:

- the rule of law
- legitimacy of government decisions
- support for specific government reforms

may be all called into question.

ICT is an enabler to build trust by engaging citizens.
Citizen Engagement

Ways of engagement:

- consultation and feedback by service users – web logs, questionnaires and feedback contacts

- citizen engagement in policy making – consultation and active participation to better address constituents' needs

- helping individual's voice be heard
### Example: Citizen Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example [Engaging the Citizen in Scottish Parliament]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Parliament maintains a website to inform and engage citizens in the democratic process:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1) public education about parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) web casting of parliamentary sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) enabling citizens to petition parliament on-line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) enabling citizens to contact their parliament members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) providing for direct participation using discussion boards</td>
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</tbody>
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All serve to advance the principles of openness, accountability and citizen engagement in the parliamentary process.
Exercise [Citizen Engagement]

Consider the measures taken by your agency to engage citizens in deciding how public services should be improved.

Provide examples of the measures taken:

1) ..............................................................................................................................

2) ..............................................................................................................................

What other ICT-enabled measures could be taken? Provide ideas:

1) ..............................................................................................................................

2) ..............................................................................................................................
Summary: Reasons 1

The case for e-Government:

1) improves efficiency

mass processing tasks, data collection and transmission, communication with customers, greater sharing of data within and between governments

2) improves services

online services are build with understanding of user requirements, seamless services for one-government interface, multi-channel service delivery

3) can help achieve specific policy outcomes

more sharing of information means: improved collection of taxes, better use of health services, better matching of unemployed and vacancies, etc.
Summary: Reasons 2

4) can contribute to economic policy objectives

improvements in business productivity, effective government programmes, promoting e-Commerce, government consumption of ICT goods, etc.

5) can be a major contributor to the reform

e-government enables public reform through: transparency, simplification, information sharing, enabling seamless government, etc.

6) can help build trust between government and citizens

e-government enables citizen engagement in the policy process, prevents corruption, promotes accountability and openness, etc.