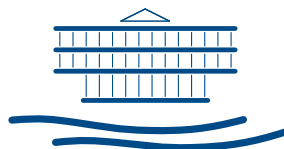


# Balanced E-Government



## **E-Government – Connecting Efficient Administration and Responsive Democracy**

*A study by the Bertelsmann Foundation*



**Bertelsmann Stiftung**

*In cooperation with:*

Booz | Allen | Hamilton



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The investigations and analyses that form the basis of the present study were conducted by the Bertelsmann Foundation and Booz | Allen | Hamilton in the fall of 2001.

The present brochure is an abridged version of the total report which is due to be published by the Bertelsmann Foundation Publishing House in 2002. If you wish to be informed about its publication, please send an e-mail to: [info@begix.de](mailto:info@begix.de)



## The Internet Challenge

Throughout the world the Internet is impacting all areas of life – business and politics as well as the cultural and private spheres. For some time the dynamism of these seismic changes has also been felt in the public sector – in the activity of local authorities, the State and administration. Those in positions of responsibility at all levels have recognized that a developed net culture can contribute to a realization of those visions that are being discussed under the key term *New Public Management*. Internationally, the competition to devise the best concepts and implementation strategies is intense. Everything is in a state of flux: a single strategy for achieving the objective of good e-governance does not exist. As this study is intended to show, successful e-government concepts require the necessary courage to come up with innovative solutions as well as the willingness to constantly re-learn.

Meanwhile numerous key players in the civil society arena have discovered that the new media also present unique opportunities for the further development of democracy. They use the Internet to coordinate and network their activities, as a platform for PR, as a channel for acquiring new members, and for fundraising. A new culture of participation in the political process is developing under the umbrella of electronic democracy – or e-democracy.

Accordingly, there is a distinct lack of clarity with regard to the current level of knowledge about the pilot projects and pioneering models that are being implemented worldwide in the e-government domain. The prime objective of the present study is therefore to examine the diverse activities towards digital administration and compare them on an international scale. The study examines economically viable applications of the new information and communication technologies that are accepted by citizens. Only in this way is it possible to identify the challenges that accompany the introduction of the Internet into the communication process that takes place between administration and citizens. Only thus is it possible to determine the means by which a greater degree of democratic participation can be achieved. The study always remained focused on the extent to which the service offer promotes participatory processes and commitment on the part of citizens. These service offers contribute to the development of democratic structures and communities. However, the comparison of different approaches is the only rational means of setting the reform of public administration on course for efficiency, transparency and clear orientation towards the needs of citizens.



## The approach: integrated e-government

### What is good e-government?

A wider understanding of the concept of e-government serves as the model for this study. It combines electronic information-based services for citizens (e-administration) with the reinforcement of participatory elements (e-democracy) to achieve the objective of “balanced e-government”. The State or individual local authority institutions grant citizens more opportunities to influence public life by making their views known electronically. At the same time, the Internet allows the public sector to extend its role as a client-oriented service provider. Modernization and democratization are two sides of the same coin which must be carefully balanced and harmonized.

The present best-practice study explores the question of the degree to which electronic services contribute towards the process of bringing state or local authority institutions and their citizens closer together. Taking citizens’ needs as its starting point, this question is not only oriented towards the quality of the electronic services that are being offered. The crucial factor is instead the degree to which comprehensive e-government is realized.

The study is based on the following hypotheses:

- I. The characteristic feature of “correct” e-government shall be a balanced combination of electronic services and forms of electronic participation. Many decision-makers still concentrate onesidedly on the provision of electronic services.

*The model: the balance between information and transaction*

### Balanced e-Government Combination of electronic services and participatory services

#### e-administration

Transaction of user-oriented services offered by public institutions that are based on information and communication technologies.

#### e-democracy

Digitally conveyed information (transparency) and the political influence (participation) exerted by citizens and business on the opinion-forming processes of public – state and non-state – institutions

## The approach: integrated e-government

- **II.** E-democracy in the form of specific possibilities for participation must be anchored as a central element in all e-government strategies from the very start. If the modernization of the public sector initially concentrates exclusively on the implementation of electronic services, it will make the subsequent introduction of participatory elements more difficult.
- **III.** The Internet permits a more direct and geographically independent self-organization of affected or concerned citizens. Public (sub-) spheres that are interlinked like networks result. New political players extend the traditional political spectrum.
- **IV.** The implementation of participation-promoting e-government initially increases the complexity of institutional control, inter alia, as a result of the increasing influence of the citizens and the demands on the service providers in the form of a mix of technical and business management elements.
- **V.** The advantages of e-government lie in the improved quality of the service provided to citizens and enterprises and greater efficiency for all participants. The level of satisfaction among the citizens as well as the acceptance of the public sector also increase. However, cost reductions in individual areas of administration are only to be expected in the medium to long term.
- **VI.** An internationally standardizable formula for the development and introduction of e-government does not exist. It is, though, possible to identify key principles which an e-government strategy must satisfy. Above all, there is a need for the establishment of a central, responsible authority as well as a need for long-term planning.

From these hypotheses that marked the start of the benchmarking process resulted an ideal type of reference model. Described as “integrated e-government”, it goes far beyond the efficient provision of administrative services. To achieve best scores throughout according to the present catalogue of demands, it is necessary for current services to employ the most modern data-management technologies as well as proven controlling and management methods. At the same time, however, these solutions must also be characterized by innovative forms of citizen integration and offer services that take the citizen seriously as a client of the administration. Therefore, in the present study, high ratings are achieved, above all, by those online providers that manage to achieve a balance between these, at times, contradictory objectives.

Attention is also paid to the sustainability of the elected strategy: according to the defined criteria, investigated approaches that shine as a result of good one-off solutions which are not integrated into a comprehensive concept can at most hope to score in the individual evaluation. Since, however, these solutions may also help in the implementation of an e-government program, the individual categories are documented separately on pages 8 to 12.

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## Methodology employed in the study: Balanced scorecard and “Begix”

### The balanced scorecard

The study that was performed in the fall of 2001 was subdivided into five phases:

1. Evaluation of the secondary literature; the development of research hypotheses and of an ideal type of reference model for e-governments.
2. The production of a catalogue of key categories with whose help potential case studies – approximately 60 online portals belonging to national and local authorities from four continents – were collated and examined more closely within the framework of a preliminary inspection process.
3. On the basis of our own research, consultation with external experts as well as the analysis of existing studies, the long list of potential study subjects was reduced to 12 services from the USA, Canada, and Europe which were going to be subjected to closer analysis.
4. The next step in the process consisted of a detailed program of face-to-face interviews in the course of which more than 50 individual conversations were conducted.
5. At the same time, the reference model was developed further and transformed into an operational model that permits the assessment and comparison of the individual online services.

The selection of case studies (e-government portals belonging to governments, regions and local authorities) was based, above all, on the criterion that as many different approaches as possible were to be included. In cases of doubt, a decision was made in favour of less known concepts which are in each case briefly characterized in the annex. Electronic services for citizens are en vogue worldwide, in many regions interesting experiments are being conducted in the field of e-democracy and e-government. Well-known and frequently discussed services which are not represented here (such as, for example, those in Singapore or Victoria/Australia) will be taken into consideration in the detailed documentation that is scheduled to appear in 2002.

The *balanced e-government scorecard* served in the recording and evaluation of the various dimensions of e-democracy and e-government services. Scorecards permit the uniform checking of different objectives within the framework of a higher order strategy. The matrix which forms the basis for the e-government scorecard comprises a dynamic and a static component – with a total of five fields – as follows:

**Benefit:** This first scorecard area relates to the quality and quantity of the services and therefore to the benefit that the citizens derive from the service offering. Eleven assessed criteria fall into this category, e.g.

- The range of services that have already been implemented
- The realization of the “one-stop shop” (accessibility of all services via one portal)
- User-friendliness of the services

**Efficiency:** A total of 16 criteria are examined in the second scorecard area. They serve in the analysis of the extent to which actual improvements in efficiency are realized, e.g.:

- Availability of a process, application, system and database architecture
- Elaborated finance and resource planning (business case)
- State of the utilized IT infrastructure and platform technologies
- Quality and scope of the training and qualification programs for staff and managers

**Participation:** This part of the matrix is concerned with the question of whether the services are designed so as to promote political communication and enable a higher degree of citizen participation:

- Direct user access to relevant contact persons via e-mail or the web
- Consideration of user wishes
- Influence and consultation of citizens in decision-making processes
- Possibilities for debating public topics (chat rooms, forums etc.)



### Benefits

What is offered and which advantages result?

*11 criteria*

### Efficiency

How and how well is it offered?

*16 criteria*

### Transparency

How transparent and accessible are public institutions for the individual?

*5 criteria*

### Participation

How can the individual citizen influence the system?

*6 criteria*

### Change management

How do public institutions cope with the transformation to an electronic service provider?

*9 criteria*

## The balanced e-government scorecard

**Transparency:** Whether e-government contributes to the realization of the transparent state is recorded here. Inter alia, the following aspects are measured:

- The amount of information on executive and legislative processes (such as, for example, committee meetings, press conferences, local meetings)
- The extent to which the processing of a query can be traced – i.e. realtime information for the clients about ongoing queries or applications
- The topicality of information

**Change management:** the course of the planning and implementation process in the e-government program is determined via this section of the scorecard. For example:

- Strategy development, e.g. the degree to which regular comparisons are made with other e-government programs
- Monitoring and controlling
- Inclusion and motivation of the employees

In accordance with predefined and qualitatively described “levels” (a total of five different levels of markedness are distinguished), the total of 49 criteria form the basis for detailed grading. These grades can subsequently be translated into a score (0-100) for each of the five tested areas, the maximum number of points relating to an ideal reference model, i.e. “next-generation best-practice”.

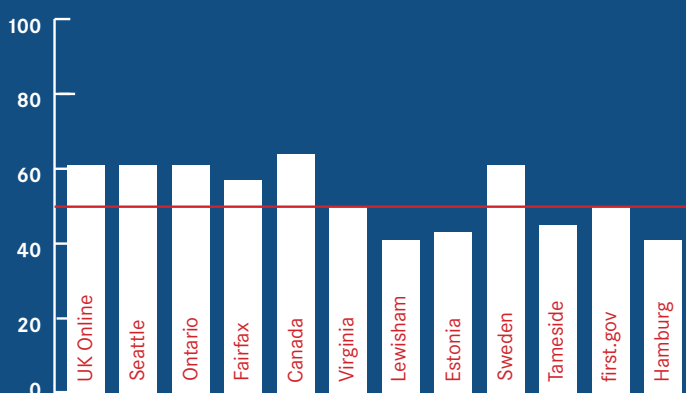
The diagnosis and measurement approach employed in the scorecard is finally compressed into Begix, the balanced e-government index, which indicates the point at which a certain online offering – whether from the federal Government or a local authority – is to be found along the route towards the realization of e-government. 12 selected examples of best practice (cf. annex) were sought out by the members participating in the

project, examined and assessed in detail within the framework of analyses and interviews with a view to subjecting the validity of the assessment criteria to an initial practical test. The results are presented here in summary form and are intended to stimulate discussion between experts and interviewees, decision-makers and the users of e-government services.

Begix is also available online under [www.begix.de](http://www.begix.de).

## Dimensions of e-government – The results of the study

Points on the BEGIX for the  
dimension benefit



### Benefits

The benefit scores determined in the 12 case studies are mainly located in the mid-section of the scorecard's assessment scale. Many best-practice candidates have already made considerable progress in the service sector and, from the perspective of user-friendliness and coverage of special user groups, can already point to specific successes. However, even the highest ranked providers here could harness significant potentials for improvement.

The greatest degree of user orientation was demonstrated by services from North America.

- The Canadian government stands out due to exemplary integration of users. For example, information and services are not provided along the administrative structures but are instead offered according to user needs (subdivision into three so-called gateways: "Canadians", "non-Canadians" and "Canadian business").
- The city of Seattle distinguishes itself thanks to an exemplarily structured and clear portal design. The central entry portal "city-ofseattle.net" unites more than 50,000 websites belonging to various authorities and offices within the city administration as well as those provided by external institutions.
- The US state of Virginia's convincing offering is based on a well-considered use of safety technologies that is geared to users' actual needs. For example, each citizen is provided with a personal identification number ("My Virginia PIN") which he or she can use to access diverse services that go beyond the bounds of individual authorities.

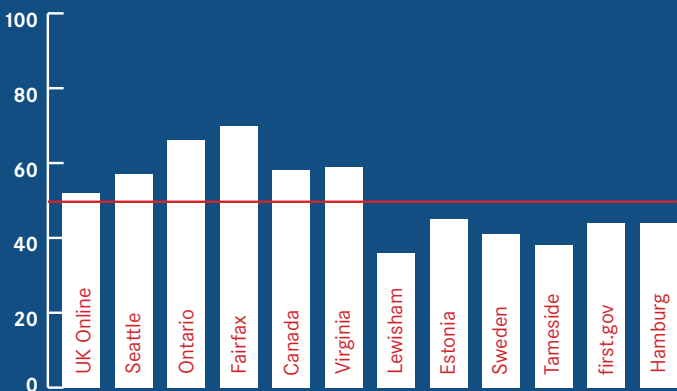
Even the best-practice candidates such as Seattle or UK Online could further improve their activities in the following five areas:

- The so-called "life episodes" and "one-stop shop" principle have thus not yet been consistently put into practice. By far, not all of the possibilities have been effectively exploited.

- The degree to which electronic services have been realized is not yet satisfactory. The repertoire of the available services should be as wide as possible and users should be able to complete all of the steps online.
- In general, the necessary amount of attention is already paid to ensuring the uniform appearance of the respective portal. However, in most cases, further expansion of user guidance, documentation and help functions is possible.
- There is also room for improvement in the area related to the development and protection of privacy policies, i.e. those rules that determine the reason for the transmission and storage of user data and the extent to which this occurs. This aspect, which is generally regarded as being of a sensitive nature, is crucial for determining the degree to which citizens take advantage of the e-government services. In future, best-practice candidates must make greater efforts to win the trust of users in respect of the particular privacy policy. This also includes clear communication of the principles that are applied.
- A further critical aspect is data security. Although the relevant encryption and safety technologies must always be available, it is necessary to question whether they have to be used across the entire spectrum of e-government services. The complicated and time-consuming highest safety level is not necessary in all cases. Further research is required here in order to ascertain those areas in which the clients expect a high level of safety and those areas in which they would be satisfied with a lower level.



Points on the Begix for the dimension efficiency

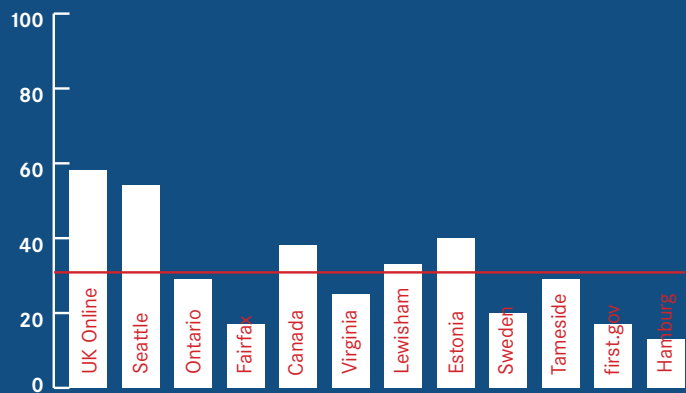


## Efficiency

The scorecard area efficiency is concerned with the internal step of producing the offering as well as with the information technology that is employed here. A total of 16 criteria that are assigned to the areas “processes”, “information technology”, “training of staff” as well as “the creation of intellectual capital” are intended to measure the progress at the investigated institutions with regard to the “back office”. With values ranging from 36 to 70, the measured efficiency scores reveal a greater spread than is the case with the benefit scores. Overall, however, they are still located in the middle range. Investigated services whose operators have already introduced wide-ranging measures for the modernization of the administration can demonstrate above-average success. Only in isolated instances has it proven possible to detect measurable increases in efficiency or cost reductions as a result of the implementation of e-government. For example, the introduction of an electronic tax return in the USA and Canada is known to have already resulted in significant increases in efficiency within the administrations. Parallel to this, it has been possible to observe that the introduction of e-government has, without exception, led to an increase in the complexity of work processes and that has, in part, met with resistance from members of the staff. Exemplary institutions such as, for example, Fairfax, have understood the need to counter this trend by offering comprehensive training and qualification measures. This approach allowed the city to win the support of staff with regard to coping with the transformation process. Fairfax can also point to the highest overall score for efficiency. A striking feature is that the 12 investigated models frequently employ contrary approaches with regard to the design of public-private partnerships as well as operator and financing models. The spectrum ranges here from an almost entirely internal solution, as in the case of Fairfax, to a considerable degree of openness towards external investors and providers of IT infrastructure – as in the case of Ontario or Hamburg. Institutions continue to use a number of different and non-compatible platforms and technologies. Overall, however, a clear trend towards standardization and increasing interoperability between applications and systems is discernible. In addition to the comprehensive definition of an IT architecture, leading providers can already refer considerable successes

with regard to the implementation of basic components. Likewise, the networking or connection of distant points has largely been realized by all of the investigated providers. The construction of “storage area networks” by Fairfax already points to the future course of development in the data-storage field. The systematic promotion of the exchange of knowledge between the administrative institutions as well as the institutionally controlled creation of “intellectual capital”, i.e. subject and process-related competence, within the administrations are still at an early stage. Further progress could be made in these areas. A comparison between North America and Europe reveals that, without exception, the North American services have received better scores in this area. This situation is probably not least due to their greater openness towards business management models and management approaches that are more oriented towards efficiency.

Points on the Begix for the dimension participation



One of the central concerns of this study is to identify strategies that are suited to the realization of new possibilities for participation within the framework of e-government solutions.

However, not much progress has yet been made in connection with the development of instruments, processes and principles (for example: the electronic right of petition) for the direct integration of the popular will into political decision-making processes. This may, on the one hand, be due to the fact that comprehensive statutory rules, and possibly also changes to the constitution, are required for the realization of such forms of participation. On the other hand, however, there also tends to be little political interest in these new forms of citizen participation. Many decision-makers in the political and administrative domains still primarily regard participation as an unnecessary complexity and cost factor. Such approaches fall into the “nice to have” category. This, however, is as far as it goes. It is therefore hardly surprising that the corresponding area of the scorecard tends to reveal low values overall. e-democracy is still not much more than a slogan.

However, those cases where direct-democracy approaches have already been implemented confirm the thesis that increased integration of citizens into decision-making processes increases people’s trust in their State. The assumption expressed at the outset, namely that services aiming to facilitate the direct electronic participation of the citizens will, at most, only reduce administrative costs in the long term, is also confirmed. The interviewed decision-makers frequently expressed the concern that more far-reaching participation-related services caused an increase in technical expenditure and required greater resources in terms of personnel.

UK Online and the city of Seattle lead the field with regard to the successful integration of e-democracy approaches into an overall e-government concept. Both present convincing solutions on their websites in the form of exemplary feedback mechanisms which can be used by citizens to participate in the political process via the Internet. The UK Online’s offering is a world-leader in the areas related to the provision and discussion of draft bills and other parliamentary processes. This offering is also widely accepted by the citizens in the UK.

Equally innovative are the efforts made by Estonia and Scotland to turn the digital service for citizens and political participation into a permanent part of their e-government strategies. To reduce the distance between politics and citizens, both countries offer their citizens the opportunity to introduce proposals for legislation via the Internet and to also use the Internet as a forum for discussing the proposals. A similar option is also available in Edinburgh for commenting on current legislative procedures (e-consultation).

In spite of the emphasis that the majority of interviewees placed on the importance of participation and a few noteworthy approaches, the integration of citizens into existing e-government services is still in its infancy. In connection with the further development of forms of direct democracy, decision-makers could take the experiences of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as a point of orientation. In some cases, these organizations have a much longer track record of relevant Internet competence than state players. Transnationally operating NGOs such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International have a great deal of experience with organizing their partial publics over large geographical distances and keeping them informed to a similar degree. Although these organizations are also characterized by a strict style of leadership and professional management, in their online communication with their members they succeed in creating a climate of grassroots democracy and of direct interaction between the functionaries and the members. Political activists have increasingly also moved voting and opinion-forming processes to the Net. Among the most striking examples of this are the worldwide networked opponents of globalization and the experimental Virtual Party Rally of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen in the German state of Baden-Württemberg held in the spring of 2001. NGOs are increasingly also succeeding in collecting so many signatures for particular matters of concern via the Internet that, although the result that is achieved is not equivalent to legally qualified petitions, they still represent impressive manifestations of opinion. It was by adopting this approach that the US organization People for the American Way managed, with the help of the Internet, to collect within an extremely short space of time 270,000 signatures opposing the appointment of a controversial Federal Public Prosecutor.

*Leader in terms of citizen participation:  
Scottish parliament, U.K.*

There is no doubt about it: as regards participation, Scotland is out in front. The parliament in Edinburgh that was founded in 1999 is also making an effort to achieve openness and transparency on the Internet. Whereas the executive is closely bound to the UK Online initiative, the legislative decided in favour of its own initiatives such as e-consultation and e-petition. Via the Net, citizens are able to initiate and comment on legislative procedures. Sitzings of parliament and a number of committees are broadcast online.  
[www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk)

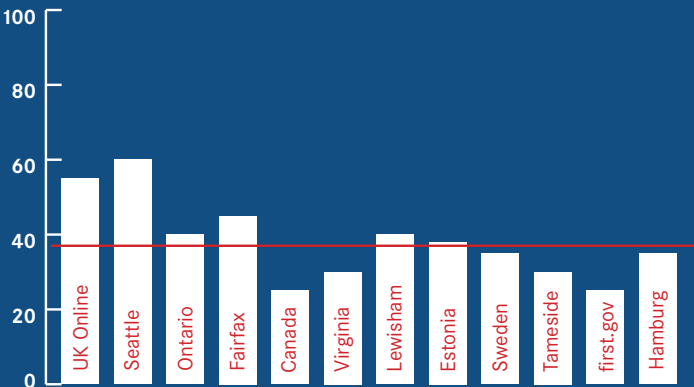
## Transparency

In addition to the new forms of electronic service delivery, this study also records the increased need for transparency and accountability on the part of state institutions vis-à-vis citizens and corporate players such as, for example, business.

The scores for the criteria indicating transparency are conspicuously lower than the values achieved in the areas efficiency and benefit. The decision-makers in e-government clearly still pay too little attention to this area. The UK, which sets a good example both at national level (UK Online) and local authority level, e.g. Lewisham, deserves special mention in this context.

Well advanced in the USA is the development of differentiated, manageable and extremely up-to-date person-related service directories (directory services) which allow citizens to follow the processing status of their applications and queries in a targeted manner. For example, the city of Seattle provides a track-and-trace system by means of which the status of planning-application procedures can be called up. Other institutions are currently working with urgency on the realization of modern content-management or editorial systems. These are designed to ensure, at justifiable cost, that the information provided is up to date. By contrast, there is an urgent need for action at parliaments – at all levels. In most cases, both the documentation relating to current legislative procedures and the ability to follow political processes at all on the Internet leave much to be desired. General speaking, it would be sensible to draw the legislative and executive institutions closer together in terms of their web services. From the citizen’s point of view, no service is currently available which includes equal consideration of both of these areas. Here, too, the implementation of a “one-stop shop” principle would appear appropriate.

Points on the Begix for the dimension transparency



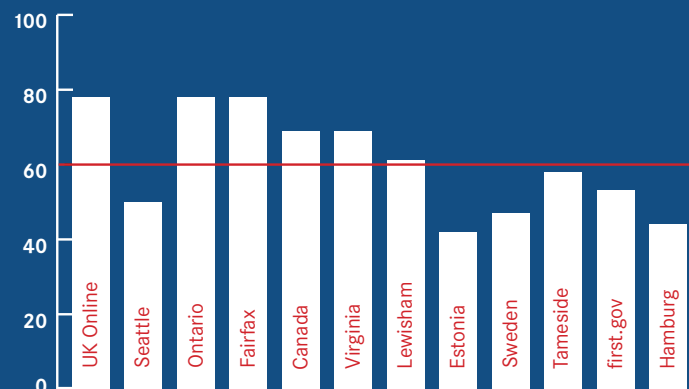
## Change management

E-government is a dynamic concept that needs to be constantly checked, developed and continued. To meet this demand, a scorecard section for the recording of transformation processes was established. Recording is performed via a total of 9 criteria. Of key importance are the areas “strategy development”, “monitoring and controlling processes” and “members of staff”. For example, the existence of a master plan encompassing all of the individual projects and fields of activity is assessed. There is also consideration of the extent to which, in the development of the strategy, systematic comparative analysis with other regions has been or is being performed. The inclusion of the members of staff and the design of bonus models is recorded in the same way as the communication of the strategy and the successes that have been achieved with regard to the outside world.

The investigated online services basically achieve a good to excellent ranking in the area of change management. The very high scores achieved by the North American administration are striking here. Once again, a particularly strong conception characterizes the UK Online’s offering – it is also a leader in this field. With considerable commitment it is ensured here that a central agency is accountable for e-government: the office of the e-envoy serves as a central coordinating authority for all participants. A benchmarking and strategy development process has already been taking place for a number of years now.

The aspect of ongoing development of the conception and constant checking is therefore well covered and, at least with regard to the investigated services, hardly allows for further optimization. By contrast, clear further progress is possible in connection with the implementation of the strategy – whether in the area of project management or in relation to the management of staff. For example, only in extremely rare instances is there an explicitly agreed system of motivation that goes beyond simple bonus models.

Points on the Begit for the dimension  
change management



## Conclusions

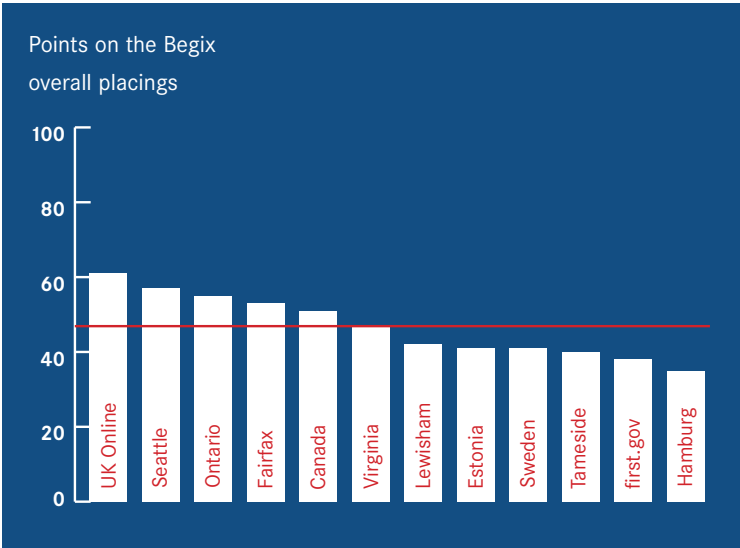
Even in the case of the best examples of e-government, the potential of participatory elements is nowhere near exhausted. The primary interest of decision-makers is to make available in electronic form the traditional spectrum of services. This is also the area in which the greatest progress has been made (even though the possibilities offered by the scorecard have by no means been exhausted). Just recently, however, more attention has also been paid to the inclusion of forms of direct democracy and immediate citizen participation – even though considerable uncertainty surrounds the specific arrangement of the statutory and technical framing conditions here.

In the further discussion on the topic of e-government, each strategy should, from the outset, stand out due to equal consideration being given to the two factors

- (1) electronic service delivery and
- (2) e-democracy

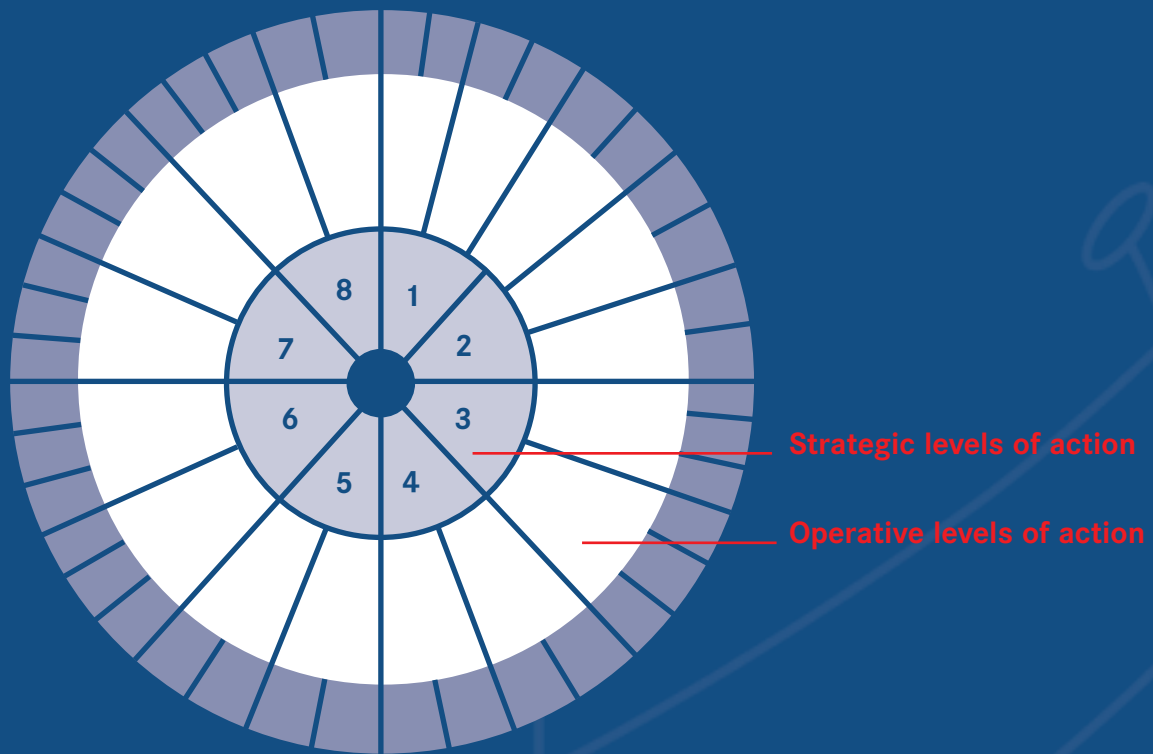
Overall, the climate for a constructive further development and implementation of democracy-enhancing e-government concepts is good. First, governments worldwide are competing with each other to deliver citizen-friendly e-government projects. Second, it is already discernible that the penetration of the Internet in other service areas will demand clear orientation towards citizens' interests from the State, too. Both trends require further research, further experiments and global exchange of the experiences that have already been gained.

However, an initial provisional appraisal can be performed now. Accordingly, e-government strategies with a promising future profit from the interaction of various externally influenceable factors. International research has revealed that most of these factors (even though to a different extent) have already been – or are in the process of being – implemented by some providers. However, successful e-government strategies do not require consideration of particular factors among those that are mentioned here but, instead, an overriding strategy into which as many of the elements considered critical to success must be integrated.



*The overall placings for the investigated online services*

## Recommended courses of action for balanced e-government



The following 8 strategic factors form the core of a comprehensive e-government concept:

1. Undertake strategic overall planning
2. Create clear responsibility structures
3. Develop long-term action plans
4. Draw international comparisons
5. Introduce standardization
6. Ensure user orientation
7. Initiate the integration of staff
8. Prepare cooperations





## Strategic level

- ✓ 1. Combine the overall strategic planning and the operative detailed planning
- ✓ 2. Create clear responsibility structures in order to achieve stringent planning and implementation
- ✓ 3. Develop long-term action plans including definitions of objectives and parameters (visionary, strategic, tactical and operative level).

## Examples of the tactical/operative level

- ✓ Firmly anchor electronic services and participatory services from the outset: even if at first it is only possible to offer a few services, interfaces for participation and consultation services should be afforded equal consideration. The two tasks of “citizen orientation” and “increased efficiency” must be balanced against one other. 14/15
- ✓ Plan process optimization and service implementation simultaneously but execute them successively: digitalization can reduce the complexity of administrative processes. However, this reduction in official routes (simplification of forms, the checking of individual steps in a process etc.) must be effected prior to the introduction of e-government in order to be in a position to exploit to the maximum the advantages in efficiency.
- ✓ Modern project controlling: change management affecting both the internal sequences and the communication with the outside world can only be controlled with the aid of modern business-management methods. Furthermore, only through controlling is it possible to determine the extent to which the anticipated efficiency gains have actually occurred or the extent to which a change in strategy is required.
- ✓ The institution responsible for e-government must have clearly defined competencies and be able to formulate unequivocal guidelines. These guideline competencies include, for example, a greater share of votes in work groups, the ability to influence part of the e-government budget and authority over personnel.
- ✓ The first step should be a pragmatic definition of objectives with clear prioritization: user needs and technical feasibility shall determine the concept for implementation. Technical or legal hurdles must be taken into consideration (e.g. digital signature). If it does not prove possible to provide particular services in a fully electronic form (e.g. documents sent by post), this does not signify failure of the e-government approach. The only assess-

## Strategic level

- ✓ 4. Draw international comparisons and relate best-practice models to other contexts
- ✓ 5. Combine sensible standardization with the freedom to experiment.
- ✓ 6. Place the emphasis on user-orientation

## Examples of the tactical/operative level

ment criterion is the maximum possible improvement relative to the status quo.

- ✓ The provision of financial aid for e-government to subordinate authorities should be linked to instructions about standardization: if budgets pass through central authorities (as, for example, in the case of the US Executive Office of the President), this authority is in a position to link the approval to the adherence of certain technical and procedural standards in cases where e-government projects are affected. This leads to the gradual formation of an overarching standard and therefore improves successively the level of efficiency.

- ✓ Create central service centers: the establishment of a central “e-government service center” can put a stop to the process of developing from scratch solutions that are already available elsewhere. This center should constantly conduct research into international best-practice models and provide standardized software. The advantage of this to the individual user lies in the uniform user interfaces and more rapid updating of the services. e-government providers enjoy the benefit of lower development costs and improved cooperation with other authorities. Only the beginnings of such service institutions are discernible internationally (e.g. the “Amtshelfer” or “official assistant” in Austria: [www.help.gv.at](http://www.help.gv.at); the British coordination point LEAP: [www.leap.gov.uk](http://www.leap.gov.uk)).

- ✓ Release on-site members of staff: every institution planning its own portal should release at least one member of staff in order that this person has the opportunity to familiarize himself or herself with the new approaches within the framework of training courses or on the basis of his or her own research.

- ✓ Promote regional laboratories: experimental (small-scale) projects at local authority, regional or national level allowing equal testing of the needs and demands of citizens, enterprises and authorities should be supported. However, the central service center must ensure that good solutions that meet the interface standards are made available to all.

- ✓ Implement consistently the “one-stop shop” principle: it should be possible to call up a service via one competent authority in each case. For the providers, this means the need to create platforms that bring together the most frequent matters of concern (e.g. the notification of a change in address, the registration of a business). If a registration is cancelled at one authority, the data are forwarded from there to the institutions that are also affected (e.g. new place of residence).

7. Integrate members of staff, allow possibilities for shaping the process, offer qualification and in-house training courses.

8. Work at a supra-institutional level

Formulate safety rules: communication between the State and its citizens must be characterized by trust on the part of the citizen vis-à-vis the recipients of the data or information. It is therefore necessary to formulate readily understandable and accessible privacy and security policies that are binding and dispel any doubts about the misuse of data by the authority (e.g. investigations into suspected tax offences, criminal prosecution).

Establish focus groups: regular surveys among the users with regard to the overall strategy, the services on offer, the design and user-friendliness of the services increase the level of acceptance of the services and thus form the basis for continual improvements. In order to achieve this, the results of the investigation must take a clearly defined route towards the point of implementation.

Employ incentives to encourage use: citizens can be encouraged to create an increased demand for electronic services by guaranteeing rapid processing, fee reductions, one-stop transaction of administrative services and similar services.

Employ incentives: possibilities for awarding bonuses to committed members of staff must be identified and implemented (certificates, commendations, presentation on the website, greater degree of personal responsibility for parts of projects, job enrichment).

The creation of supra-institutional topic portals (cross agency portals): user-orientation means topic orientation, implemented in an exemplary manner, for example, by applying the life-situation principle. Consequently, institution-related portals that mirror the inner structure of an authority or administration with their complex array of responsibilities ([www.city.gov](http://www.city.gov); [www.ministry.gov](http://www.ministry.gov)) are counterproductive for the user because they are not oriented towards user needs.

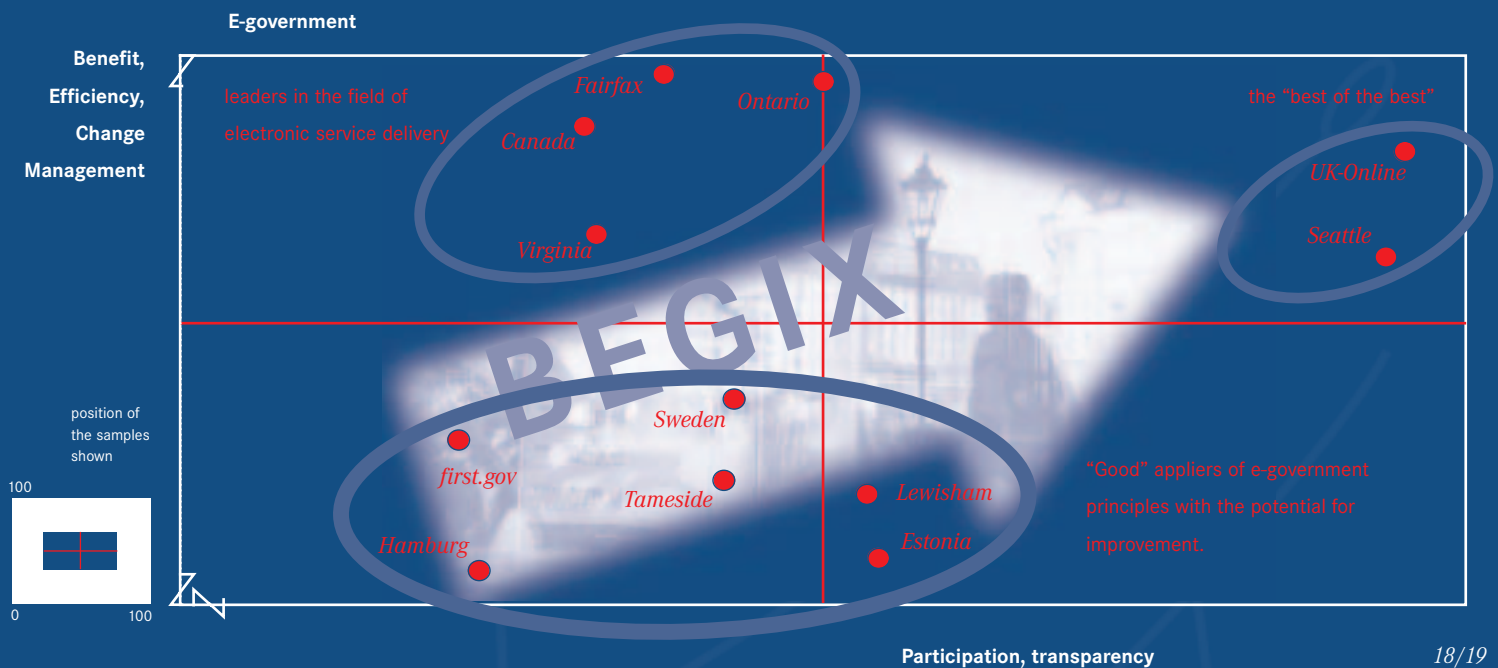
Establish coordination groups: in the case of complex tasks such as the implementation of e-government, regular communication within and between participating institutions is absolutely essential. An increased need for harmonization is rewarded by a reduction in frictional losses later. In order to guarantee efficiency, these groups must be well-steered and provided with specific tasks. There should be regular evaluation of whether or not this objective has been achieved. Standards can be decided and objectives set on the basis of the results obtained within these coordination groups.



## The best-practice models: An overview of e-government services selected

All of the online services subjected to detailed analysis here represent outstanding examples of the application of the principles of e-government. In the main, the values achieved on the scorecard are in close proximity to each other. There are therefore only winners. However, in the case of particular criteria, it is indeed possible to identify differences which indicate the areas on which the decision-makers have focused so far. The following matrix, which only represents one section of the total possible spectrum, permits the identification of three groups:

- “Good” examples of the application of e-government principles which have the potential for improvement. The first group includes examples that are already well-advanced with regard to the realization of e-government and, in part, already offer participatory services but which still have some catching up to do in relation to the leaders in this field;
- Leading appliers of e-government principles in the field of electronic service delivery. This group has focused on the provision of electronic services and does particularly well with regard to the values efficiency, benefit and change management; and finally
- The “best of the best” which achieve the highest placings in practically all of the categories.



BEGIX score classification		Portals / online services
33-45	"serious e-government program"	Lewisham, Estonia, Sweden, Tameside, first.gov, Hamburg
46-55	"outstanding successes in particular aspects of e-government"	Ontario, Fairfax, Canada and Virginia
56-70	"e-government offering extremely well placed in all areas"	UK Online and Seattle
> 70	"exemplary models for the next generation"	Not yet realized



## Selected e-government services

### Lewisham, UK

The Internet strategy pursued by the London borough of Lewisham stands out due to an ongoing consultation process and further development by the citizenry and the users of the services. Participation in various British reform and pilot projects enables the municipal administration to integrate innovative technologies into its business processes. Particular attention is paid to the training and qualification of staff as well as to the design of the holistic reform concept.

[www.lewisham.gov.uk](http://www.lewisham.gov.uk)

### Tameside, UK

Located about 20 kilometres to the east of Manchester, the local authority of the district of Tameside is faced with the challenge of actively shaping the profound structural change in the region with the aid of new technologies. For several years now, the “service first” principle has applied. This involves the consistent attempt to orient administrative reform towards the benefit to citizens and clients. This philosophy is also mirrored in the Tameside website – dispensing with elaborate designs, it offers simple added value to the user. In September 2001 it was possible to initiate or complete the transaction of 41 percent of the approx. 700 identified and described administrative processes online.

[www.tameside.gov.ukk](http://www.tameside.gov.ukk)

### UK Online, UK

The key concern of the UK government’s lead project UK Online is to offer citizens efficient services while at the same time involving them actively in political processes. The offering in the areas of consultation and discussion of draft laws and political topics, which enjoys wide acceptance and use by citizens interested in politics, is a world leader. Integrated into an overall e-government strategy that is constantly being furthered as a result of international investigations and benchmarking studies, the topic of e-democracy currently appears to be most highly developed in the UK.

[www.uk-online.gov.uk](http://www.uk-online.gov.uk)

### Hamburg, Germany

Based on the three pillars of administration, business and citizenry, the public-private partnership Hamburg.de is developing one of the largest German portals. The core offering comprises an extensive form and information server as well as some initial fully transactional online services for the citizens of Hamburg. The development of a long-term e-government strategy for the Hanseatic city is intended to enable the numerous projects to be profitably connected and full advantage to be taken of synergistic effects. Participatory services still require improvements. By extending the pillar representing the citizenry, greater implementation of the opportunities for political participation is intended in future.

[www.hamburg.de](http://www.hamburg.de)





### **Estonia**

The small candidate for entry to the EU presents itself as a forward-looking country in the process of transformation. Since the early 1990s the government in Tallinn has made a name for itself in matters relating to e-democracy through the formulation of a strategy and the implementation of digital information services. In spite of financially limited resources, broad political consensus and strategic leadership have enabled the executive to strike a balance between a digital citizens' service and political participation. The briefing room for the media and the offer extended to citizens to introduce their own proposals for legislation ("I decide today") are particularly worthy of mention.

[www.riik.ee/en](http://www.riik.ee/en)

[tom.riik.ee/en](http://tom.riik.ee/en)

### **Ontario, Canada**

The goal the economically most powerful province in Canada has set itself is nothing less than to become the world leader in e-government by the end of 2003. Strong political leadership and an exemplarily structured implementation program have already resulted in an impressive information and service offering. As a result of diverse activities, Ontario assumes the lead role in the integration of online services that go beyond particular authorities and institutions. Innovatively designed and very largely public-private partnership models help in the rapid implementation of e-government. Although the topic of e-democracy has not been given priority treatment, it now increasingly features on the administrative agenda.

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[www.gov.on.ca](http://www.gov.on.ca)

### **Government Online, Canada**

The Canadian government is pursuing a multi-level approach towards the implementation of its e-government program. In this, the user perspective assumes a key role and essentially determines the online offering. Some important services, for example, the electronic tax return, are already offered in a transaction-based form. Vigorous attempts to integrate the information and services from various providers ("one-stop shop") are currently under way. It is therefore hardly surprising that the present study certifies Canada as being an international leader.

[www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca)

### **Firstgov, USA**

Since September 2000, in the form of "firstgov", the American government has made available a central entry portal for the information services and services provided by the federal ministries and authorities. Via a search engine or links it is possible for the user to access over 31 million webpages relating to national government and also, since June 2001, access over 16 million webpages belonging to the federal states. A newly formed central task force is currently working on the introduction into government and administration of an e-business model that is analogous to private business. As a result of the support given to various pilot projects and central financing, above all, activities involving a number of different authorities are currently being promoted.

[www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov)

### **Commonwealth of Virginia, USA**

Virginia was very quick to realize the importance of the Internet to its government and has always been one of the leaders in e-government. Virginia started the next phase in the evolution of the e-government program at the end of 2000 with the introduction of “the digital dominion”, a concept that allows it to combine diverse activities in the virtual world. This lead project follows a broad approach and addresses the triangular relationship “citizen-authority-business”. “My Virginia” was America’s first fully personalizable regional website that enables the user to determine how information is represented or configure a newsletter according to topics.

[www.state.va.us](http://www.state.va.us)

### **Fairfax County, USA**

Adjoining Washington D.C., Fairfax County focuses its e-government activities on a highly integrated and automated administration. A recently introduced CRM (citizen relationship management) system is intended to help cope with the increasing flood of information in both the administrative and legislative areas. The systematic qualification and in-house training of staff is designed to achieve efficiency gains and build up a citizen-friendly administration.

[www.co.fairfax.va.us](http://www.co.fairfax.va.us)

### **City of Seattle, USA**

Seattle’s online presentation is impressive because of its comprehensive and clearly structured services and information. Transparency and participation assume an important place in the e-government program. By innovatively linking the two media TV and the Internet, Seattle was able to achieve a comparatively wide-ranging e-democracy offering.

[www.cityofseattle.net](http://www.cityofseattle.net)

### **Sweden**

A leader in the use of information technologies and able to point to fantastic figures for Internet and mobile phone penetration, Sweden offers ideal conditions for e-government. And, in actual fact, the Scandinavians number among the more innovative appliers of technology with regard to bringing government and administration online. However, even in the model country of Sweden there are obstacles that still must be removed: for example, unclear positions with regard to the solution of the problem of security in connection with the electronic tax return, the absence of a bracket function between very autonomous authorities and neglectful treatment of the topic of e-democracy, at least at the central government level. The Stockholm region of Kista, in which promising projects for the greater integration of citizens and business are under way, is a positive exception here. What is now limited to discussion forums and the transmission of political meetings could soon become a model for a Swedish participation program. Summary: although certainly a leading example of e-government, Sweden is still some way from delivering the perfect offering.

[www.sweden.gov.se](http://www.sweden.gov.se)



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