



Transforming Government Service Delivery:
New service policies for citizen-centered government

*By: Martin Duggan
and
Cathy Green*

Table of Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Executive Summary	6
Nine key trends in service policy	7
Five recommendations for governments	10
1. Citizen-Centered Service	12
1.1. Australia: Service delivery based on life events	13
1.2. Canada: Putting the citizens at the center of service delivery	15
1.3. British Columbia: Services organized around client segments based on needs	17
1.4. Establish integrated service delivery provider organizations	18
2. Choice and Access	19
2.1. UK: Developing modern channels for citizen and business access services	20
2.2. Australia: Centrelink’s “no wrong door” policy	22
2.3. Ireland: Integrated service delivery through a single common access point	23
2.4. Italy: Legislating citizen rights to choice in communicating with public bodies	25
2.5. Enabling access to services for remote communities	26
2.6. Expanding citizen choice and access through new channel offerings	26
2.7. Providing services in multiple languages	28
2.8. One-stop integrated access portals	29
3. Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	32
3.1. Belgium: AnySurfer accessibility standard	32
3.2. Australia: Eliminating barriers for persons with disabilities	33
3.3. UK: Customer service accessibility standards	35
4. Service Delivery Professionals	37
4.1. Australia: A training framework for service delivery professionals	37
4.2. Canada: Professionalizing the role of service delivery	38

5. Integrated Citizen Information	39
5.1. Belgium: Providing information once, using it many times	40
5.2. Europe: Information sharing across governments	41
6. Identity Management	42
6.1. Belgium: Electronic identity cards for identity management	42
6.2. UK: Adopting a National Identity Scheme	43
7. Collaboration and Partnership	45
7.1. Australia: Collaboration across departments for better service delivery	45
7.2. Service Canada: Whole-of-government approach to service delivery excellence	46
7.3. Singapore: Partnering with the private sector to integrate service offerings	48
8. Citizen Engagement	49
8.1. Singapore: An interactive portal for citizen involvement in national issues	50
8.2. Belgium: Engaging citizens in administrative simplification	51
8.3. US: Allowing the public to participate in the regulatory process	52
9. Accountability and Governance	53
9.1. Australia: Transparency in accountability and results	54
9.2. US: Standards of performance for customer service delivery	56
9.3. Canada: Ensuring transparency, accountability and service	57
9.4. Iowa: Legislating the flexibility to be more autonomous	59
Implications for Public Services around the World	60
For More Information	63
Bibliography	64

Foreword

In today's globally accessible and technologically advanced era, service excellence is becoming equally as important to consumers as the products they receive. The market leaders in many consumer industries understand this. Companies like eBay, Starbucks and Barnes & Noble have perfected a customer service experience that is personalized, fast, easy and accessible.

Citizens and businesses have also come to expect the same level of service from government that they experience in the commercial sector.¹ But how does the public sector stack up with respect to service innovation? The general perception is: not well. Government is often characterized as being slow, bureaucratic and rarely innovative. However, in our experience, this is not always the case. Governments, worldwide, have moved to embrace the Internet to make information more accessible, but service transformation in the private sector and some governments has moved even beyond that.

Some governments are recognizing that service transformation, and particularly citizen-centered service delivery, is necessary to meet desired public service outcomes. By putting the citizen at the center of service delivery, programs and services can be organized around client needs, and in turn aligned more closely with expectations.

This paper presents a selection of international service policy practices that we have gathered from our experience and from research around the world. We hope this provides valuable information and insights to help transform the delivery of government service, and that this evolution continues. Our work is based on open and published material, and we welcome any additions, comments, updates or corrections.

Martin Duggan
IBM Global Social Segment

¹ *Citizens First 4*. Institute for Citizen-Centered Service (ICCS). November 2005. See www.iccs-isac.org

Introduction

Transformation in government service delivery is taking place around the world, as the public sector adopts citizen-centric service ideals. Leading governments are shifting from a programmatic model of service delivery to a citizen-focused model where service delivery is focused on people, not programs. Governments are realizing that more efficient service delivery can dramatically improve public sector value.

We see common service delivery trends emerging around the world. Leading governments are not only using technology as a new platform to deliver programs and services; they are using technology as an enabler to make services available, integrated and accessible to citizens through all modes of delivery channels. They are building the capacity to offer services to citizens based on citizens' particular needs, rather than just specific programs. They are working collaboratively across departments and jurisdictions to provide services in an integrated fashion, so that citizens and business can access services through one simple and convenient entry point into government without having to mine through the complex web of departments and agencies. World-class administrations are using information that already exists within government to automatically grant benefits to citizens as they become eligible, eliminating the need to complete forms or even apply for benefits.

In this paper, we present a selection of international trends and innovative practices in service delivery transformation and the associated policy frameworks² that have guided these transformations. The information has been grouped into chapters that represent nine broad categories of service delivery innovation. We hope this research will offer insights into policy trends that can help shape and transform the delivery of government service.

Our research has been gathered from open and published material, the majority of which is available on the Internet. Input has also been provided by IBM subject matter experts from around the world including Martin Duggan, Brian Lee Archer, John Kamensky and Scott Moon. The author would like to thank these individuals for their valuable contributions to this paper.

Cathy Green

IBM Global Business Services

² Policy frameworks include directional documents, legislation, governance structures and supporting policies.

Executive Summary

Innovation and transformation in service delivery are taking place around the world as governments recognize the value that can be achieved by this – both in terms of desired policy outcomes and increased citizen trust in government. Citizens have come to expect the same level of service from government that they experience in the commercial sector. Research shows there is a strong link between service and the trust and confidence citizens have in government.³ While governments have often been

perceived to lag behind the private sector in service, this perception is shifting. Some governments are adopting truly innovative practices to effect change in service delivery to their citizens.

This paper presents examples of innovative practices in service delivery transformation observed from around the world. It offers insights into policy trends that can help shape and transform the delivery of government service. Information has been grouped into nine chapters according to the service delivery categories described in Figure 1.

³ *Citizen First 4.*

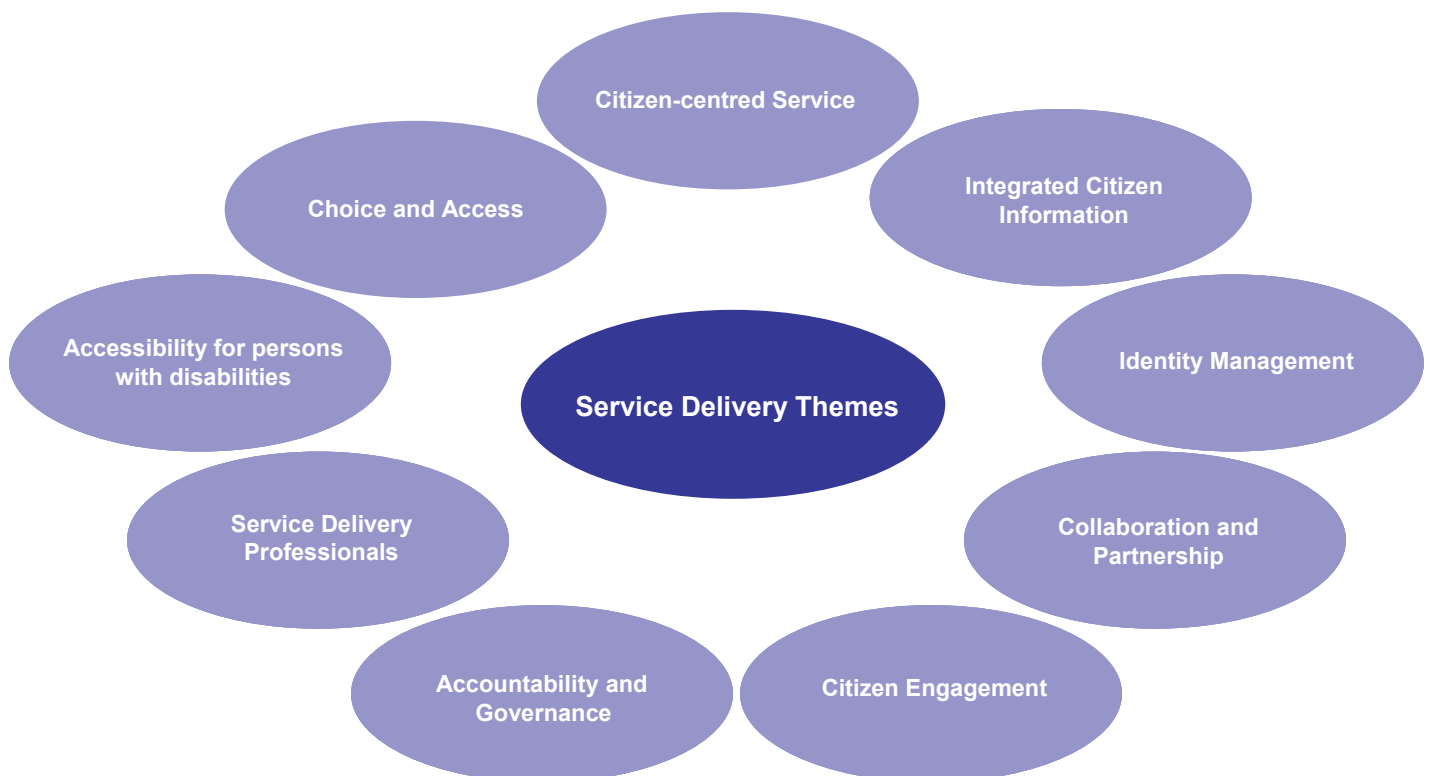


Figure 1: Categories of service delivery innovation practices

Nine key trends in service policy

Our research has observed nine service policy trends emerging in governments around the world:

1. Client segmentation strategies are being developed to identify the diverse needs of citizens.

The fundamental concept behind citizen-centered service bases services on citizen needs rather than organizational requirements. Many governments have embraced this concept; some have taken steps to make it a reality. Governments are taking great strides to better understand the needs of citizens and groups of citizens, and the leaders are designing service offerings that meet these needs. Many governments have developed rudimentary segmentation techniques based on demographic categories, and are providing administrative information and some services tailored to these groups. Services accessible from Web sites, for example, are grouped by life event categories, such as retirement and unemployment. While still in early stages, leading governments are putting steps in place to develop robust client segmentation strategies to define service offerings in support of overall government desired program outcomes.

2. Service policies regarding choice and access are emerging.

In leading governments, eGovernment strategies are becoming whole-of-government service transformation visions.⁴ These strategies have a much broader scope than

earlier eGovernment strategies that were focused primarily on using technology to move services online. The new visions reveal a strong policy commitment on the part of governments to take a more citizen-focused approach to service delivery. They advocate taking a government-wide approach to improve delivery, access and reach of government services, and to use technology creatively to support this vision.

Accordingly, these overarching strategies have led to the development of specific policies that articulate governments' plan of action regarding access to government services. Leading countries including the UK,⁵ Australia,⁶ the US,⁷ and Ireland⁸ are advocating the delivery of service through modern, integrated delivery channels where citizens can access government by any means. They also promote the integration of channels so that regardless of the channel of entry, citizens can get a consistent level of service across all channels. Policies are being developed that elaborate on flexibility of choice in channels for citizens, service delivery in remote communities and language of service.

⁴ The UK's *Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology 2005* and Australia's *2006 eGovernment Strategy: Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda* are the most prominent.

⁵ *Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology 2005*.

⁶ *Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda*.

⁷ Through the USA Services Initiative.

⁸ Through the Public Service Broker under development by the Reach Agency.

3. Standards for eAccessibility for persons with disabilities are growing.

While governments continue to evolve disability access policies for traditional service delivery channels, accessibility to electronic channels has become a particular priority around the world. As governments continue to bring services online, policies and legislation are being established to ensure the Web channel can be accessed by all. The international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG),⁹ which promote a high degree of usability for people with disabilities, are increasingly being adopted worldwide. In Europe, the European Commission's *i2010: A European Information Society for Growth and Employment*¹⁰ contains strategies to ensure that all citizens benefit from the information society. Specific countries are expanding on these guidelines with their own policies. In Canada, the province of Ontario has enacted specific accessibility legislation¹¹ that provides for the development of standards for accessibility in both the public and private sectors.

⁹ See www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag/php

¹⁰ See http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010

¹¹ *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*. See www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario

4. The role of service delivery professional is becoming a reality.

Organizations that are leading in service transformation recognize that citizen-centered service must be delivered by people committed to service excellence. These organizations are making strategic decisions to “professionalize” the roles of the service delivery agents in their organizations. Australia and Canada, for example, have developed internal colleges to provide professional development for service delivery professionals, and have created specific career tracks. Other countries are beginning to include training and development in their overall service improvement strategies.

5. Sharing of information across government, supported by robust legislative frameworks, is seen as vital for responsible service delivery.

Legislation and interoperability frameworks have been established by some governments to facilitate the secure sharing of information, a key factor to make proactive service delivery practices a reality. The policy direction of “provide personal data once, use many times” has been adopted by several countries, including Belgium, the Netherlands and Australia. In Belgium, the Crossroads Bank of Social Security (CBSS) was established to manage the secure sharing of information across the 2,000 social security authorities, and this interoperability approach has improved service delivery, reduced citizen wait and travel times, eliminated hundreds of paper certificates and reduced many declaration forms.¹² Countries have also adopted data protection legislation that permits

¹² Belgian Social Security (Belgium). Case 577. European, Central and Local Government eCooperation.

the processing and sharing of information as long as specific criteria are met. Governance measures adopted have included the institutionalization of data protection officers and privacy commissioners to ensure adherence to regulations. The UK's *Information Sharing Vision Statement* offers a robust directional position on how the government will maintain the privacy rights of individuals while sharing information to deliver better services.

6. Strong privacy legislation and policy underlie identity management regimes.

Various approaches are used across the world to manage individual identity for benefit and services registration and authentication purposes. Maintaining the integrity of the benefits and services delivered is crucial to ensure that the right benefits have been provided to the right person at the right time for the intended purpose, so that fraud and abuse of the system are avoided. Underlying a solid identity management regime is the need for strong privacy legislation. In Europe, the Data Protection Directive sets out a wide range of rights for individuals including access, compensation and the prevention of processing. It also gives individuals rights over their personal information. All member states are required to have legislation in place that meets the requirements of this directive. The use of identity cards is also becoming widespread, although an often contentious issue among the public.

7. Governance measures to support intergovernmental collaboration and partnerships are being established.

Governments are beginning to work across departments and across levels, as well as with the private sector, to leverage collective potential and deliver transformed integrated services. This collaborative approach provides opportunities to reduce costs, improve effectiveness and, in the process, create new value for citizens. To allow for this collaboration across organizations and jurisdictions, governments who have achieved success in this area are making use of cross-agency committees and working groups comprised of senior government officials. The UK's Delivery Council, comprised of department and agency heads, and Denmark's Steering Group for Cross-Public-Sector Cooperation are two examples of mechanisms that support putting the citizens at the center of integrated service delivery.

8. Governments are engaging citizens in policy and program development to enhance service outcomes.

The public sector is quickly learning from private sector firms that competitive benefits can be realized when

there is engagement with the public. Governments are beginning to seek citizen input and feedback into policy and program development, as well as proposed legislative changes, through online interactive portals and other accessible means. Policy direction is emphasizing the continued involvement of citizens in policy and program development. In Australia, for example, “The government will set principles for online engagement to support a consistent experience for everyone dealing with Australian governments electronically.”¹³ In the UK, the “Government will implement new processes to engage with citizens, businesses and public servants to research technology-enabled services, as well as coordinating and sharing existing customer and front-line research.”¹⁴

9. Accountability mechanisms elevate service delivery to the cabinet or executive level.

Governments who have had success in service transformation have elevated the responsibility (and thus, visibility) for service to the most senior parliamentary levels. Australia’s Department of Human Services, for example, was created in 2004 to provide direct ministerial oversight and greater accountability to the government’s citizen-centered service delivery network. Having a minister directly responsible for service has helped ensure service delivery considerations are incorporated into policy development, and has enabled more effective relationships between service delivery organizations and client departments. Many European countries also have departments dedicated to innovation, service modernization and administrative simplification.

Five recommendations for governments

From the trends that we see around the world, there are five recommendations that we would make for governments that desire to take a lead in service delivery. These recommendations are based on our observations of instrumental changes that need to be made that will heavily influence other areas of government policy and activity. While they will have variations across the world, they are the five foundations of transformed government service delivery.

1. Provide leadership from the top to bring service transformation to the forefront of government agenda.

Governments need to create a compelling vision and business case for change that can be used to influence decision makers at all levels of government. Leadership that clearly outlines the desired outcomes and long-term benefits of a citizen-centric government can provide the necessary impetus to drive action.

2. Allow citizens a clear say in how to transform service.

Governments need to make formal commitments – and communicate these commitments to citizens – that citizens have a shared responsibility with government

¹³ *Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda*

¹⁴ *Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology 2005*

for service transformation and allow citizens a way to participate in the creation of service delivery policies. By opening up to engagement, citizens will quickly embrace the concept of improved service delivery and will start self-identifying the biggest areas that impact can be made in.

3. Give service delivery a voice at the executive or cabinet level.

Governments need to establish a clear point of accountability for, and control of, service delivery that breaks down the silos of traditional departments and programmatic approaches. Giving service delivery a voice at the executive table provides one of the strongest mechanisms for change.

4. Make information sharing and the integration of services a central priority.

The complexity of government and governments mean that all too often citizen information is not used effectively across programs, even when it is clearly in their interests for it to be. Governments need to eliminate the “claim and wait” service delivery model and move to integrated services delivered when and where the citizen needs them.

5. Adopt a citizen service approach to privacy so that service is given equal weight to citizen protection.

Governments need to reinterpret their privacy protection legislation from a citizens’ service perspective, so that it is not used as a barrier for providing good service. Used correctly, privacy can be strengthened while improving service delivery.

The remainder of this paper explores these nine trends and five recommendations in more detail.

1. Citizen-Centered Service

Our definition of citizen-centered service means basing services on citizen needs rather than on organizational requirements. By better understanding the needs of citizens and groups of citizens, governments can identify the outcomes they are trying to achieve and then reorganize services to provide service offerings that achieve those outcomes.

While the steps are still in infancy stages, governments are developing robust client segmentation strategies to identify the diverse needs of citizens. Customer satisfaction is the vision of Singapore's *iGov 2010* strategy, which declares that "Greater emphasis will be placed on gaining insights into customers' needs and preferences" so that the government can "anticipate their needs and deliver proactive, responsive e-services, through their preferred electronic channels." The UK government is "Basing services on what the customer wants and needs."¹⁵ To meet this goal, it is establishing Customer Group Directors for specific customer groups to work across organization boundaries to design transformational services to meet the needs of these groups. Australia's Centrelink has also implemented community reference groups¹⁶ to improve the understanding of customer needs. In Canada, Service Canada and Service British Columbia are using client segmentation approaches to define service offerings in support of overall government

desired program outcomes. Many governments have already developed segmentation techniques based on demographic categories, and are providing administrative information and some services tailored to these groups. Online public administration portals, such as those in Australia, France and Norway, provide services and information bundled by life-event categories such as "looking for work," "retirement" or "injury/disability."

Citizen-centered service also means putting a focus on exceptional service delivery and making the receipt of services as easy as possible for the citizen. One approach to allow for this ease of access is to provide a single point of contact with government services. Many governments, particularly at the provincial, state or local level, are beginning to establish separate service integrator organizations, to connect citizens to the services they need from multiple separate agencies, and also to manage the integration of those services over time.¹⁷ For citizens, one single access point makes transacting with government simple and straightforward. Governments including Singapore, Australia, the UK, the Netherlands, Ireland and France are setting clear policy direction around this concept. In Singapore, for example, "Customers can look forward to completing their transactions with minimal interactions with government agencies. This will be achieved with comprehensive integration of processes and services across multiple public agencies, and with the private and people sectors."¹⁸

Governments have also implemented comprehensive administrative simplification programs to eliminate

¹⁵ *Transformational Government*, p.7.

¹⁶ Include the Older People's Reference Group, Australians Working Together Implementation Reference Group, Disability Customer Reference Group, National Multicultural Reference Group and multicultural advisory committees.

¹⁷ See, for example, Australia's Centrelink, Canada's Service New Brunswick, UK's Department of Work and Pensions, Utah.gov, Louisiana.gov

¹⁸ *iGov2010; From Integrating Services to Integrating Government*. Singapore eGovernment Strategy.

government touch points and to reduce burdens on citizens and businesses. The Netherlands' program for administrative simplification, for example, aims to reduce administrative burdens on companies and citizens by 25% in the period 2003-2007.¹⁹ The UK's *Transformational Government* strategy is promoting the implementation of a shared services model. France and the US have enacted legislation to reduce paper and simplify administration (France's *Legal Simplification Law* and the *US Paperwork Reduction Act* and *Paperwork Elimination Act*).

In terms of service delivery, public administrations are building the capacity to provide services to the citizen at point of contact. Having basic public sector information available online is an almost de facto practice nowadays. Some governments, such as France and Spain, have advanced to the point of having interactive online application forms, whereby citizens can complete, submit and (in some cases) receive approval for benefits online. Few governments have yet to make pervasive the capability to approve eligibility-specific services such as disability benefits at point of contact. But related practices do exist. In the private sector, auto insurance claims adjustors with the Farmer's Mutual Co. can adjudicate claims on site using mobile technology.²⁰ In Belgium, some social security benefits can be granted automatically due to the interoperability framework of the Crossroads Bank of Social Security.

¹⁹ See www.oecd.org

²⁰ 55% percent of claims are settled on initial contact, resulting in 95% customer renewal rate, substantial cost savings, and reduced paper use.

Examples of citizen-centered service practices in Australia and Canada are presented below.

1.1. Australia: Service delivery based on life events

Centrelink's service delivery model is based on a "life events" framework, and the agency is organizationally structured around a business line model.

Australia's Centrelink was established in 1997 as a statutory agency to take the complexity of government away from front-line service. The agency delivers over 140 products and services on behalf of 25 policy departments, organizations and agencies through over 1,000 access points and multiple channels. Centrelink's Outcome statement describes its commitment to bringing these services together to meet government objectives: *Access to government services effectively support: self-sufficiency through participation in employment, education, training and the community; families and people in need; and the integrity of government outlays in these areas.*²¹

A key strategy for the agency is to provide appropriate service offers for customers' life events. The life events service delivery approach, initiated in 1999, was created in response to an identified need to provide high-quality and holistic services to customers, and to reduce

²¹ Centrelink's Business Plan 2006-07.

service offer complexity and confusion for customers. It is supported by the whole of government priorities of customized citizen-centered service offerings: *A detailed understanding of customer needs and expectations should drive service delivery strategies.*²²

To manage the life-events framework, Centrelink has reorganized its service delivery practices, shifting away from a silo-approach of government programs, to a more integrated delivery where customer service officers use information provided by the customer (through tailored questions such as “Are you looking for work?” “Are you a parent or guardian?”) to identify specific assistance and payments to which they may be entitled.

²² *Australia Access and Distribution Strategy.*

Directional documents

- *2006 eGovernment strategy: Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda 2006*

Supporting legislation

- None required

Policy guidance

- *Access and Distribution Strategy* – describes the whole of government service delivery vision and provides tools to enable integrated multi-channel service delivery.

Policies adopted

- Centrelink “Life Event” framework for service delivery.

Governance measures implemented

- Customer Reference Groups – established by Centrelink to improve the understanding of customer needs. These include the Older People’s Reference Group, Australians Working Together Implementation Reference Group, Disability Customer Reference Group, National Multicultural Reference Group and multicultural advisory committees.

1.2. Canada: Putting the citizens at the center of service delivery

Canadians are able to access an array of social programs and services through a one-stop service delivery network operating across multiple delivery channels and points of service across the country.

The government of Canada has focused on modernizing management in the public sector for several years. Central to this agenda is Canada's service transformation vision, advanced through various initiatives such as Connecting Canadians, Government On-Line (GOL), and Modernizing Services for Canadians (MSC). Policy direction has focused on putting the citizen at the center of service delivery, and making government services more accessible to Canadians: *It is the government's decision to make the citizen – not the economy, not the consumer price index, not infrastructure, but the citizen – the focus of federal public policy.*²³

The GOL initiative, Canada's flagship eGovernment initiative launched in 1999, represented a major strategic effort to adopt a comprehensive citizen-centric approach

²³ Speech by Mel Cappe Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet at the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Forum Ottawa, Ontario October 27, 1999.

for online service delivery by federal departments. At its completion in 2006, it had "succeeded in making the Canadian government the world's most connected country to its citizens."²⁴ This initiative also served to highlight that improved government service delivery was broader than simply online services. The next phase of change focused on moving towards full citizen-centric service transformation, through the MSC initiative. Research conducted through the MSC project found that, despite the growing importance and convenience of online service delivery channels, many citizens still preferred choice in how they interact with government. It recognized that a multiple channel approach beyond just online was critical to ensure maximum convenience for Canadians. The MSC initiative shaped the conceptual framework and vision for Service Canada.

Service Canada was announced in the 2005 Federal Budget, and has become the citizen-facing component of Canada's service transformation agenda. It provides one-stop service for federal government programs and services, accessible through integrated service delivery channels, including telephone, Internet, mail, in-person and outreach and mobile services.

²⁴ Government Online Initiative, "Government Online Report 2006." By 2005, 130 of the most commonly used government services were available online.

Service Canada's priority since inception is to ensure choice and access for all Canadians. Accordingly, most of its services are available from more than one delivery channel. As at March 2006, over 90% of the most commonly requested programs and services were directly accessible from the Service Canada home page. There were over 400 points of presence across Canada, combining a mix of full-time offices, mobile services and outreach. Over 90% of Canadians are able to access

service within their own communities.²⁵ Furthermore, a one-stop telephone call center (1-800-O-Canada) provides information on any government service.

²⁵ Service Canada Annual Report 2005-06, Appendix 4.

Policy guidance

- *Modernizing Services for Canadians* (MSC, 2000) – A 5-year program aimed at developing better, more responsive and client-focused programs and services for Canadians.
- *Government Online* (GOL, 1999) – Canada's flagship eGovernment initiative, aimed to leverage technology for enhanced service delivery across government. By 2005, 130 of the most commonly used government services were available online.
- *Connecting Canadians* (1997) – Announced in the 1997 speech from the throne. The program's goal was to provide Canadians in all areas access to the best available communications technologies, including the Internet.

Directional documents

- Service Canada Annual Report ²⁶
- Federal Budget 2005 "*Delivering on Commitments*," which announced the creation of Service Canada.²⁷

²⁶ http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/about/reports/ar_0506/index.shtml

²⁷ <http://www.fin.gc.ca/budget05/pdf/bp2005e.pdf>

- *Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada* (2000) – strategic blueprint for results-based management, including the concept of one-stop multi-channeled service.

Governance measures implemented

- A *Cabinet Committee* was established to oversee Service Canada development.
- *Chief Information Officer Branch* (within the Treasury Board Secretariat) – sets out the government's overall service delivery strategy and infrastructure, and is responsible for advising the government on horizontal or government-wide expenditures and management in the areas of IT, service delivery and administrative services.
- *Expenditure Review Committee* – The Prime Minister established the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet in December 2003 as part of a series of initiatives designed to strengthen the government's financial management and accountability. The committee endorsed the funding for Service Canada.

1.3. British Columbia: Services organized around client segments based on needs

The province is using a sophisticated client segmentation approach to organize and deliver service offerings and service bundles to particular citizen groups through clustered outcomes.

Citizen-centered service delivery is a key cross-government initiative supporting the government's long-term strategic objectives. Several service delivery transformational activities are underway, led by the Service Delivery Initiative (SDI) under the Ministry of Labour and Citizen Services. The SDI is a province-wide initiative for making government services more accessible, easier to deal with, and more responsive to the needs of citizens, businesses and public sector organizations.

Service BC, the province's frontline service delivery arm, is developing service delivery strategies to advance the Ministry's goal of "positive service experiences for customers and clients." This includes undertaking comprehensive client segmentation that will help shift the focus from individual programs to an integrated service delivery approach to achieving coordinated citizen outcomes.

The client segmentation approach has been undertaken in two phases. A first phase identified the high-end characteristics of general client segments, such as persons

with disabilities, seniors and youth. A second phase allowed for more sophistication in the segmentation, so that services could be organized and delivered to a citizen segment through clustered outcomes. This involved developing a service profile for each client group based on specific needs. For the seniors segment, for example, these needs were identified as: sufficient income, health and wellness, adequate housing, mobility. The universe of government services and benefits was then scanned to identify and bundle appropriate service offerings into portfolios to meet the government's strategic objectives and outcomes. The services and benefits were drawn from single ministries, multiple ministries, not-for-profit groups and private sector partners.

Under this approach, clients seeking services will be able to self-identify along a matrix based on high-level segment (e.g., seniors, persons with disabilities) and then by specific life-cycle event or theme (e.g., retirement, sufficient income). Once this self-identification is complete, a client will be offered appropriate "bundles" of services (e.g., income support benefits) or can select from a full list of services.

The government is testing the approach in a pilot phase, and building a new and integrated multi-channel experience (Web, contact centers, in-person service centers) anchored with an interactive and personalized Web access solution.

Directional documents

- *A framework for Citizen-centered Service Delivery in British Columbia*. Framework to guide the implementation of citizen-centered service delivery. Sponsored by the Deputy Minister to the Premier.

Policy guidance

- *Citizens' Services Service Plan Summary 2006/07 – 2008/09*. Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services. Outlines the vision, mission and strategic goals for Citizens' Services.

Governance measures implemented

- Minister of Labour and Citizen Services – responsible for the service transformation agenda.
- Service Delivery Initiative Office – mandated to lead the cross-government implementation strategy for client-centered services.

1.4. Establishing integrated service delivery provider organizations

Centrelink, Service Canada and Service BC are all examples of a growing service delivery trend in government to establish “service integrator” organizations. These integrated service delivery providers serve multiple purposes. At face value, they connect citizens to the services they need from multiple separate agencies through one simple point of contact. They also serve to integrate those services over time to minimize overlaps, reduce duplication and fill gaps in service. This simplifies the process for citizens, so that despite there being multiple channels owned by multiple programs from different departments and levels of government, there is a single access point to simplify access to, and transacting with, government.

- Service integrator organizations have been developing at the national and sub-national levels around the world. In Canada, for example, the provinces have been actively building service organizations to integrate provincial services. Service New Brunswick (SNB) was established in the 1990s as one of the first “one-stop-shops” for government services. Structured as a corporation owned by the province, SNB provides access to over 270 government services and operates through 36 service centers and one call center.²⁸ It consolidates this access through a common catalog, and works to integrate new service offerings from municipalities and the federal government into the service catalog. The other provinces are actively following suit, with Service BC, Service Alberta and Service Ontario acting as the key service integrator and delivery arms for routine government transactions. “In the long-term, Service Ontario will be the starting point for every public-facing service offered by the Ontario government.”²⁹

²⁸ SNB processes 5.1 million transaction annually including accepting payments for utilities and 58 municipalities.

²⁹ *Creating Modern Government*. Irene Stuart. www.networkedgovernment.ca

2. Choice and Access

Citizens want government services that are easy to find, easy to access and easy to deal with. Choice in how citizens can interact with government and accessible services are fundamental to deliver service as good as, if not better than the private sector. Some governments have made clear policy statements that government services will be accessible through multiple channels, and that the channel of access will be of the citizen's choice. In Australia, "government will present a consistent and unified face regardless of whether approaches are made in person, over the telephone, using the Internet or any other form of technology."³⁰ In the UK, "Choice will come through new channels,"³¹ and the government is promoting uptake in mobile and digital home channels. In Canada, "Service Canada's goal is to provide Canadians with one-stop, personalized service they can access however they choose – by telephone, Internet, or in person."³² These strategies recognize that delivering services online is essential for competitive advantage and government efficiency, but that citizens still want the right to choose the channel they use to access government.

In the age of digitization, some countries have gone as far as legislating a citizen's right to choice in transacting with government. eGovernment legislation that makes online and e-mail transactions a citizen right has been enacted in Italy, Austria,³³ France³⁴ and Finland.³⁵ Spain has a draft

eAdministration law underway. The Dutch government has taken a less regulatory approach, drafting its "e-Citizen charter," consisting of 10 digital citizen rights the first of which is choice of channels. These moves convey a strong commitment to a citizen-focused approach on the part of these governments.

Other accessibility practices we have observed include making in-person services accessible as close to the individual as possible and making services available in multiple languages. Governments including the US and Australia have made it a priority to develop strategies to serve citizens in remote communities³⁶ and to provide services in a citizen's language of choice.

Innovative governments are also balancing choice and access with the need to control costs. In the UK and Singapore, the government is educating citizens about channel costs and encouraging them to use the lowest cost channels, where appropriate. The UK's *Transformational Government* strategy encourages government to "promote responsible channel choice by telling people how much use of more efficient channels saves." Denmark has taken a more authoritarian approach, making some online services compulsory³⁷ in efforts to increase cost-efficiency. While this eliminates choice for the citizen, it does make access simpler and easier.

³⁰ *Responsive Government*, p. 9.

³¹ *Transformational Government*, p. 3.

³² Service Canada Web site.

³³ *Federal Act on Provisions Facilitating Electronic Communications with Public Bodies*. March 2004.

³⁴ *Ordinance on electronic interactions between public services users and between administrations* (2005).

³⁵ *Act on Electronic Services and Communication in the Public Sector*. February 2003.

³⁶ In the US, the SSA has implemented its video government, vGov project (see www.vgov.org). In Australia, Centrelink has adopted a National Rural and Regional Servicing Strategy.

³⁷ In 2005, the Danish Parliament enacted legislation stipulating that all citizens and companies must receive public sector payments (such as tax refunds and social welfare payments) directly into a bank account.

Examples of citizen choice and access are presented below.

2.1. UK: Developing modern channels for citizen and business access to services

The UK government's channel management strategy is based on the principle of optimizing channels – using each channel for what it is best at – and providing services through channels that will best respond to the needs of citizens and businesses.

The government is promoting a multi-channel approach, based on the presumption that citizens and businesses want to resolve issues at the first point of contact and want that contact to be as convenient and as quick as possible. The *Transformational Government* strategy sets the direction for the delivery of public services through modern channels: *Citizens and business have the choice and personalization in their interactions with government... Develop modern channels for citizen and business access to services, and actively manage the shift in channels towards the most efficient and effective.*³⁸

The government is currently working on developing a single, detailed channel architecture. A committee of senior officials from across government,³⁹ created from the *Transformational Government* strategy, has been

promoting the optimization of service delivery channels based on principles defined in a follow-up report, *Service transformation: A better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer* (Varney Report).

These principles include:

- Understand that different citizens and businesses use different channels and channel combinations for different purposes and under different circumstances.
- Treat different citizens and businesses differently.
- Organize and measure current service and future plans around the citizen and businesses you are trying to reach.
- View channels not in distinct silos but as components of an overall contact strategy.
- Identify realizable savings in terms of both contact and cost.
- Influence channel migration through customer education and support.
- Create win-wins through new forms of interaction and channel combinations.

³⁸ *Transformational Government*, p. 9.

³⁹ The Delivery Council.

Directional documents

- *Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology* (2005 strategy paper) sets out the HM Government's vision for 21st century government.
- *Service transformation: A better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer* (Varney Report December 2005).

Supporting legislation

- None required.

Policy guidance

- *Multi-channel Transformation in the Public Sector: Principles and an Emerging Framework for Practice Use*⁴⁰ (Working Paper, 2006) provides guidance for the public sector on channel management.
- *Service design and delivery guide: Achieving high take-up of e-services, cost savings and better quality public services*⁴¹ (Guidelines: 2005) published by the eGovernment Unit for central government, local government, non-departmental public bodies and agencies.

Governance measures implemented

- Delivery Council (formerly the Service Transformation Board) – a committee of senior officials from across the public sector established in 2005 to coordinate cross-government activity to drive citizen- and business-centered services.
- Contact Council – a committee of contact directors from within each department, established in March 2007. The Contact Council has strategic and operational oversight of all public sector contact channels to ensure consistent standards of channels across public services.
- Channels Working Group – representatives from each department responsible for service delivery channels.
- Customer Insight Forum – a network of heads of insight from the public sector, which is working together to establish a culture in government that values insight.

⁴⁰ See http://www.caetoffice.gov.uk/public_service_reform/delivery_council/workplan.asp

⁴¹ See <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/bestpractice/>

2.2. Australia: Centrelink's "no wrong door" policy

In delivering its customer service charter, Centrelink has deployed a "no wrong door" approach to make citizen access to government services simple, quick and easy.

Centrelink's philosophy is that it does not matter where citizens start, they should be able to quickly and seamlessly find their way to the right support, information and payment regime to which they are eligible. This principle is driven by Centrelink's eBusiness strategy and the foundational principles laid out by the Australian government of convenient access to government services and information, responsive services, integrated services and overall efficiency: *It will be easy for people to pinpoint the service or information they need, regardless of how and where they initially approach government: every door will be the right door when approaching government.*⁴²

Centrelink's 2002-05 Business Plan defines the desired outputs of the organization: *The "no wrong door" concept puts the focus on the customer, not the process or organizational arrangements. Under this approach, a customer or citizen will be assisted by Centrelink to find the appropriate solution or solutions provider, with minimal traditional referral processes. This will be achieved through an enhanced service culture and the use of Internet technology.*⁴³

The Refresh Program is a key operational element of this philosophy, which aims to deliver future business capability through upgraded information technology systems.

Policy guidance

- *Centrelink's eBusiness Strategy* (Centrelink 2003-07).
- Centrelink's Business Plan 2002-05.
- *Managing Multiple Channels* (April 2006), a guide for the strategic assessment and development of service delivery channels.

⁴² *Responsive Government*, p. 8.

⁴³ Centrelink Business Plan 2002-05. p. 9.

2.3. Ireland: Integrated service delivery through a single common access point

Government and public services in Ireland are accessible to citizens and businesses 24/7 through a common access point, the “Public Services Broker,” using a secure single identification and authentication process.

The vision for the Public Services Broker (PSB) is to provide an integrated framework and shared services platform to facilitate high-volume, secure transactions with citizens, businesses and public sector agencies. It is being built by the Reach Agency, the agency created to improve the quality of service to customers of the Irish Public Service, through integration and eGovernment.

The impetus for the PSB stemmed from the overall Irish eGovernment Strategy *Information Society in Ireland: A Framework for Action* and the follow-up 1999 Action Plan that made several recommendations for integrated, single point of contact, citizen-centric service delivery.

The objective should be to develop a common access interface for use by citizens in availing of public services and accessing information...it would be desirable to generate databases which present public service information in a client-centered manner, organized around the event-cycle of citizens or of businesses as appropriate.

From this strategy emerged two key results. The Reach Agency was established by government in 1999, and the government endorsed the PSB as the framework for integrated delivery of public service, through multi-channels, accessible through a single point of contact.

The public face of the PSB is www.reachservices.ie, which provides a single common access point for citizens and business users to government services. While still under development, the first phase of the PSB went live in May 2005, allowing for a single identification and authentication process, a single electronic payment facility, interactive public online services, some online forms and downloadable forms.

While not all government services are currently available online or in interactive format, there are plans to continue to expand the service offerings. Ultimately, the broker will make services available through multiple access channels including online self-service, and intermediated service through both telephone contact centers and one-stop-shops. The broker will provide protected data vaults for secure storage of the personal or business information necessary, while making available to public service agencies only the information that is strictly necessary for the delivery of specific individual services.

Directional documents

- *New Connections – A Strategy to realize the potential of the Information Society*. March 2002 – current Irish eGovernment strategy.
- *Information Society in Ireland: A framework for action*. December 1998 – first Irish eGovernment Strategy, a report by Information Society Working Group.

Supporting legislation

- *Data Protection Act* (1998) was amended in 2003 to ensure full compliance with the EU Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC).
- *Electronic Commerce Act* (2000) implements the Electronic Signatures Directive (1999/93/EC) and, in part, the Electronic Commerce Directive (2000/31/EC).
- *Civil Registration Act* 2004 provides a new legislative framework for civil registration and enables modernization of the civil registration process.
- *Social Welfare Act 1998* introduced legislation defining the Personal Public Service No. (PPS No).
- *Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002* introduced legislation defining a person's Public Service Identity (PSI).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ PSI consists of a person's Personal Public Services Number (PPS No.), surname, forename, date of birth, place of birth, sex, all former surnames (if any), all former surnames (if any) of their mother, address, nationality, date of death in the case of a deceased person, and such other information as may be prescribed by the Minister (for Social & Family Affairs).

Policy guidance

- *Information Society Action Plan*. January 1999 – blueprint for implementing the Information Society in Ireland.
- Information Society Development Fund – a fund established under the 1999 Action Plan to provide funding to support eGovernment initiatives.

Governance measures implemented

- Minister of State within the Department of Taoiseach has specific responsibility for advancing the Information Society and eGovernment agenda across government.
- Minister for the Information Society is responsible for coordinating and promoting policy.
- Cabinet Committee on the Information Society defines, approves and monitors the Information Society strategy.
- eStrategy Group of Secretaries General addresses national eStrategy issues.
- Assistant Secretaries eGovernment Implementation Group ensures that Information Society policy is implemented in a coordinated manner.
- Data Protection Commissioner oversees and enforces the Data Protection Act.

2.4. Italy: Legislating citizen rights to choice in communicating with public bodies

The 2006 Italian Digital Administration Code has set into law the rights of citizens to communicate and transact with Public Administrations through electronic means.

The Digital Administration Code (Codice dell'amministrazione digitale)⁴⁵ is the result of two years of digital reform policy. It was drafted with input from institutions, academia, regions and local authorities. The Code makes innovation in government offices compulsory by giving citizens the right to interact at all times with government offices via electronic means.⁴⁶ Italy's Minister for Innovation and Technologies⁴⁷ has professed that "We have produced a single, consistent legislative framework for applying new digital technologies in Italian government. The Code focuses on the individual citizen and, among other things, will produce much greater efficiency, savings and higher quality services."⁴⁸

The Code is part of an overall governmental strategy designed to transform Italy's Public Administration and

to make the country more competitive in the world economy. eGovernment has been a priority for the Italian government for several years, and the country has typically adopted policy consistent with the overall European direction.⁴⁹ Italy's most recent eGovernment strategy, *Toward the National eGovernment System: Strategic Lines*, published in January 2007, focuses on full administrative interoperability among all levels of public administration. Its two key objectives are the computerization of public services to make them more user-centric, and the modernization of the public administration back-office processes. Furthermore, the 2007 budget focuses on expense reduction, and electronic data exchange is seen as a key means to reduce public spending. The *Financial Act 2007* calls for a reduction in public spending through the use of new information technologies.

Despite the entry into force of this legislation, the technological performance of the Italian administration, including its capacity to interact electronically with citizens and business, has continued to lag behind other countries.⁵⁰ In February 2007, the Minister for Public Administration Reform and Innovation signed a directive (ministerial order) on the interchange of data between public administration, which directs administrations to put in place practices such as the sharing of existing data before requesting additional documents from citizens and businesses, the elimination of hard-copy documents, and the use of digital signatures and certified electronic mail.

⁴⁵ See <http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/4820/5684>

⁴⁶ Specific rights of the citizen set out in the legislation include: the right to the use of ICT, the right to access of personal information through ICT channels, the right to online transactions with public administrations, the right to receive every public communication through e-mail, the right to receive high-quality services, and the right to access all required forms and modules online.

⁴⁷ Now the Ministry for Reform and Innovation in Public Administration.

⁴⁸ United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance. *The eGovernment Code: an Italian best practice on eGovernment*. See <http://www.unpan.org/>

⁴⁹ eEurope 2002 Action Plan, eEurope 2005 Action Plan, e2010 eGovernment Action Plan.

⁵⁰ Italy eGovernment Factsheet. <http://ec.europa.eu/egov>

Directional documents

- *Towards the National eGovernment System: Strategic Lines (January 2007)* 3rd eGovernment Strategy.

Supporting legislation

- *Digital Administration Code (Codice dell'amministrazione digitale)* 2006 Italy's eGovernment legislation.
- Innovation Directive: *Directive on the interchange of data between public administrations and the publication of negotiation activities*⁵¹ signed February 2007.

Policy guidance

- Guidelines for the digitalization of public administration, set the operational priorities for the coming year. The 2006 guidelines⁵² set the criteria and actions required of public administrations to implement the eGovernment Code.
- *eGovernment for an efficient federalism: a shared vision, a cooperative implementation* (April 2003) 2nd eGovernment Strategy.
- *Italian eGovernment Action Plan (2000-2002)* 1st eGovernment Strategy.

⁵¹ See <http://www.innovazionepa.it/>

⁵² See <http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/5745/254>

2.5. Enabling access to services for remote communities

Governments, particularly those of countries that are large and geographically dispersed, are developing innovative ways of servicing citizens in rural communities and remote locations and are developing policy to address these issues.

- In the US, citizens use broadband video conferencing technology to communicate with the Social Security Administration (SSA) in remote Midwestern location where offices do not exist. This video government, “vGOV,”⁵³ project was developed through a partnership between the University of North Dakota (UND), the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS). Its vision is to provide face-to-face access to all government services from local community facilities. Existing technology, available in local hospitals, allows citizens to speak face-to-face with SSA agents, apply for benefits or complete claims. SSA has been able to serve populations that might not normally be served, especially in rural areas such as the Native American Indian reservations, and to do so economically. Plans are underway to continue to grow this program to other remote locations.

⁵³ See <http://vgov.org>

- In Australia, Centrelink's National Rural and Regional Servicing Strategy was established to enhance the delivery of services to rural and regional Australia. This strategy, documented in Centrelink Business Plans, is reinforced by Australian government policy with respect to access. The *Responsive Government* strategy describes actions the government will take to improve people's satisfaction when dealing with government and accessing government services, so that by 2008-2010, there will be "Widespread access to government services through participating non-government providers."⁵⁴ Centrelink's rural strategy has allowed the agency to work collaboratively with local communities and other agencies, including strategic partnerships with state and local governments, to deliver a range of Centrelink services. Today, Centrelink has a network of over 560 agents and access points in rural, regional and remote Australia that provides customers in and around communities with access to Centrelink.

⁵⁴ *Responsive Government*, p.16.

2.6. Expanding citizen choice and access through new channel offerings

Innovative governments are actively promoting new channels as a means of increasing access to public services. The mobile channel in particular has become a popular means for communicating with government, while offering choice and personalization to citizens. This is particularly true in Europe where mobile penetration is high.

- In the UK, the *Transformational Government* strategy sets out the government's commitment to improve access via mobile channels. The government has published a guidance document⁵⁵ on how public service organizations can use the mobile phone to effectively develop their service delivery. The paper outlines the types of services that organizations could deliver via mobile (e.g., next job notification for remote workers) and a process to assess services' suitability to be accessed via mobile technology.
- In Singapore, "M-Government" is one of three key programs under the *iGov2010 strategy*. It is a three-year program to drive the delivery of services through the mobile channel. The government's goal is to "leverage our high mobile phone penetration rate of more than 100 percent to deliver more convenient

⁵⁵ See http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/delivery_council/pdf/MyMobileMaster061130.pdf

access to government services to our customers. This will be an effective way of extending e-services to the mobile users, some of whom would not have used government e-services if they were not available on the mobile channel.”⁵⁶ Many services are now available through Short Messaging Service, including pension alerts, passport renewal notices, access to individual pension information, and submission of pension plan contribution details (for small employers).

- In Australia, “Government agencies continue to add new channels – such as short messaging service, interactive voice response and speech recognition options – to their channel portfolios in order to provide customers with a wider variety of ways to engage with government.”⁵⁷ Centrelink’s Short Messaging Service (SMS)⁵⁸ is a free service that sends personalized reminder text messages to a mobile phone. These messages cover topics such as appointment reminders, reminders to provide documents or updated information, possible future payment alerts and notification of online letters.

⁵⁶ See http://www.igov.gov.sg/Strategic_Plans/iGov_2010/

⁵⁷ *Australia Access and Distribution Strategy*.

⁵⁸ See http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/online_services/electronic_reminders.htm

2.7. Providing services in multiple languages

- In Australia, multilingual service is an integral part of Centrelink’s strategy to deliver quality services accessible to people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Through the Multilingual Call Centre, clients can speak to a Centrelink agent in their preferred language. (The agency provides service in over 200 different languages, working with contracted interpreters.) Other services include translated versions of publications, multilingual Web site information, and provision of interpreters at no cost to the client. This commitment is supported by a broader Australian government policy framework for the delivery of culturally responsive government services. The cornerstone of this framework is the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society* (1998), which summarizes seven principles central to quality government services in a culturally and linguistically diverse society, including access and responsiveness. In 1998, Commonwealth ministers endorsed that government-funded organizations should meet the language needs of their clients by incorporating translating and interpreting assistance as an integral component of services they provide. The Ministry of Citizen and Multicultural Affairs has also published guidance for agencies for delivering effective language services: *Language Services Guidelines: A toolkit for Commonwealth Agencies*.

- In New York City, the 311 automated non-emergency call center is able to answer calls in more than 170 languages through immediate access to translation services. Several legislative vehicles protect the access rights of persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) in the US Federal laws particularly with regard to language access. These include the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* (Title VI prohibits discrimination based on national origin), and the *LEP Executive Order 13166*, issued in 2000, which states that people who are LEP should have meaningful access to federally conducted and federally funded programs and activities. The city itself has adopted *Local Law 73*, the “Equal Access to Human Services Law” (2003). This law strengthens language access services for LEP individuals seeking vital health and human services.
- In the UK, the Department of Work and Pensions’ JobCentre Plus has service standards that are available and are published in several languages including Arabic, Bengali, Classical Chinese, English, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu and Welsh. Clients can also receive information in large print, in Braille or on audio tape. Service standards define the organization’s commitment to contacting a language interpreter within one working day (or sooner in the case of urgency), should a client need these services.

2.8. One-stop integrated access portals

France’s one-stop portal for online forms: Allows citizens to inform government once of a specific event, such as change of address.

The “Administration 24h/24” portal provides a citizen-centered approach for citizens and businesses to access most government administrative services through a secure, paperless, 24/7, real-time approach. Launched in 2007 by the French Ministry for the Budget and for State Reform, the site makes it possible to complete online and in real time approximately 600 basic administrative tasks 24 hours a day. It is estimated that some two-thirds of administrative procedures are now online, including the majority of those most frequently used. These include, for example, requesting copies of birth certificates, informing government of a change of address, applying for many social services, calculating a pension and calculating taxes owed. Small businesses can take care of salary and social security declarations. The portal, organized according to life events of citizens and professionals, includes nine categories from “My Family” to “My Taxes.”

The online portal is a key objective of France’s eGovernment strategy *Programme gouvernemental ADELE 2004-2007: Plan Stratégique de l’administration électronique*, and related commitments made by the Minister for the Budget and State Reform in January 2006. The strategy is part of an overall vision for government modernization in France. It sets out several objectives for the use of technology to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of public services.

Les nouveaux services offerts à l'utilisateur par le développement de l'administration électronique...des services centrés sur les besoins des usages...des services personnalisés...des services accessibles à tous...des services faciles d'emploi...des démarches simplifiées.⁵⁹

Making services paperless from end to end is the vision for the French administration, with plans to have 100% of administrative forms online by 2008. A next generation of forms will allow users not only to “eFill” and “eSend” their forms, but also to follow up the progress on their requests. By the end of 2007, the government plans to launch the “mon.service-public.fr” portal that will provide a unified, simplified and personalized access to all eGovernment services. The portal will allow users to store all their personal information, forms and administrative documents on a personalized secure site. From this “eStrongbox,” citizens will electronically communicate to the administration all certificates and documents required for government services.

⁵⁹ ADELE, p.7.

Directional documents

- eGovernment strategy *Programme gouvernemental ADELE 2004-2007: Plan Stratégique de l'administration électronique.*

Supporting Legislation

- France's eGovernment legislation (2005): *Ordinance on electronic interactions between public services users and administrative authorities and between administrations*, aims to establish an “electronic administration” by 2008.

Policies adopted

- Version 2 of the French eSignature and security framework policy (PRIS V.2) (July 2005), provides a framework for the use of electronic signatures and electronic certification.

Governance measures implemented

- General Directorate for the Modernization of the State (DGME), an inter-ministerial Directorate resulting from the merging of previous Directorates in charge of State Reform. It is responsible for supporting the development of eGovernment and the ADELE program.

Norway's citizen-centered customized public service portal: Every Norwegian citizen over the age of 13 has his/her own customized MyPage.

In Norway, public service offerings from agencies and authorities at all levels of public administration are integrated under one Web portal. The information is structured thematically, and the services are grouped and sorted according to specific needs, making it easy for citizens to find the services required without any previous knowledge of who is responsible. Citizens can access services from six government agencies and 23 municipalities.

The Citizen Web Portal was launched by Minister of Government Administration and Reform, as part of the Government's efforts to make public services more user-oriented and responsive to the citizens' needs and interests. The portal was initiated under the overall Norway eGovernment strategy *E-Norway 2009 – the digital leap*, and the government's goal is that by 2009, all relevant interactive services, will be available through MyPage.

Use of MyPage as a channel of communication will provide individual members of the public with the opportunity to agree to receive information and decisions electronically. This will be an important step towards the completely digital interface with the public sector.⁶⁰

MyPage represents an opportunity for a simple and effective dialogue with the public sector. It allows citizens to complete both registration services and transactional services with government. "Register" services show what information various agencies have on citizens in their registers. Examples of such information include My Address, My Properties or My Family Doctor. "Transaction" services allow citizens to carry out services, such submitting an application or changing the personal information held by an agency.

⁶⁰ *eNorway 2009*, p. 12.

3. Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

Easy access to service delivery channels is essential to those with disabilities or persons who are disadvantaged. While this remains applicable to traditional channels, countries are also placing particular focus on making electronic channels accessible to all.

Most countries have legislation prohibiting the discrimination of citizens for reasons of disability. This legislation, as well as basic human rights legislation, underpins the activities of governments with respect to making service centers, call centers, and the Internet accessible to all citizens. In Ontario, the province has taken the bold step of enacted specific accessibility legislation. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*⁶¹ provides for the development of standards for accessibility that will apply to the public and private sectors.

eAccessibility is becoming a priority around the world, as governments continue to bring services online. The European Commission has provided strong policy guidance with respect to accessibility. The June 2000 *eEurope Action Plan* included specific targets to improve Web access for people with disabilities. The most recent policy framework, *i2010: A European Information Society for Growth and Employment* contains strategies to ensure that the benefits of the information society can be enjoyed by everyone. It includes an EC Communication

on eAccessibility, which calls on member states to support voluntary positive actions to make accessible ICT products and services more widely available. Spain has drafted a royal decree establishing the basic conditions of eAccessibility. Ireland has a *Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information Provided by Public Bodies*.

Specific examples of accessibility practices in Belgium, the UK and Australia are presented below.

3.1. Belgium: AnySurfer accessibility standard

All public government Web sites must adhere to defined standards for accessibility. The AnySurfer label indicates that a site has met quality accessibility standards for people who are visually impaired or disabled.

In 2001, a Flemish non-profit organization⁶² proposed to public authorities the need to adopt the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) within Belgium. The predecessor BlindSurfer label was thus created. In 2006, the label was renamed AnySurfer to include not only sight-impaired individuals, but all people with disabilities. AnySurfer guidelines address navigation procedures, content of Web sites, page layout, and interactivity.

⁶¹ See <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/>

⁶² Blindenzorg Licht en Liefde – joined in 2003 by Walloon counterpart Oeuvre Nationale des Aveugles.

The label is now considered a reference for eAccessibility of governmental Web sites. The federal government portal and over 52 federal and regional Web sites now have the label. The plan is to have all publicly accessible governmental Web sites accredited by end of 2007.

Supporting legislation

- *Belgian Anti-discrimination Law* of 2003 included obligation to produce accessible Web sites.

Policy guidance

- European Commission Web Accessibility Policy.
- EC Communication on eAccessibility.
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
 - Guidelines to promote a high degree of usability for people with disabilities.

Policies adopted

- In 2003, both federal and regional government decisions to make Web sites of public interest comply with eAccessibility standards. Directives have been developed on the necessary standards and requirements to achieve the AnySurfer label.

Governance measures implemented

- A cooperative agreement was signed by all federal and regional governments accepting the label as a standard for eAccessibility.

3.2. Australia: Eliminating barriers for persons with disabilities

In Australia, each commonwealth organization must prepare a disability action plan in response to Australia's *Disability Discrimination Act and the Commonwealth Disability Strategy*.⁶³ The main objective of this strategy is to ensure equity of access to all mainstream Australian government policies, programs and services for people with disabilities. Accessibility for persons with disability is also a policy priority in the Australia Responsive Government strategy: *The government will continue to ensure that people with a disability can access government information and services with ease*.⁶⁴

As a provider of service, Centrelink has committed to several performance outcomes in its Disability Action Plan:⁶⁵

- A service charter that specifies the roles of the provider and consumer and adequately reflects the needs of people with disabilities

⁶³ See <http://www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/index.htm>

⁶⁴ *Responsive Government*, p. 8.

⁶⁵ See http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/about_us/dap.htm

- Internal and external mechanisms accessible to people with disabilities to lodge complaints and grievances about service
- Consideration of people with disabilities when developing practices and implementing policies that directly impact on the lives of people with disabilities
- Information available to people with disabilities in accessible formats
- Equal access for people with disabilities to new information technology products developed by Centrelink for the use of customers
- Equal access for people with disabilities to Centrelink's Web site
- Equal access for people with disabilities to Centrelink offices

The plan also includes measurable performance indicators, and commits the agency to measure and report on this performance annually.

Supporting Legislation

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Section 23 of the Act states that it is unlawful to discriminate against a person with a disability in providing access to, or use of, premises that other members of the public can enter or use. The Act also provides for the preparation of disability action plans.

Policy guidance

- *Commonwealth Disability Strategy (2000)*.⁶⁶
- Disability access guidance material: Better information and communication practices, better physical access, inclusive consultation: a practical guide to involving with disabilities.⁶⁷

Governance measures implemented

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission provides guidance on preparation and implementation of Disability Action Plans.
- Disability and Carers Branch in the Department of Family and Community Services is the principal coordinator of Commonwealth government policy on disability issues.

⁶⁶ An evaluation of this CDS was conducted in 2005-06, and found that there has been increased accessibility of government information, increased physical access to government buildings, and more widespread availability of adaptive technology in workplaces. However, people with disabilities still face challenges in employment.

⁶⁷ See http://www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/pubs/pubs_index.htm

3.3. UK: Customer service accessibility standards

The Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) is developing a set of corporate mandatory, minimum customer service accessibility standards for all citizens accessing DWP services.

In the UK, departments are governed by a strong legislative and policy framework to ensure the rights of disabled people. The *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)*, originally enacted in 1995 and updated in 2005, makes it unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favorably than other people for a reason related to their disability. Service providers have to make “reasonable adjustments”⁶⁸ to the way they deliver their services so that disabled people can use them. The 2005 updates to the Act strengthen public sector authorities’ duties to promote disability equality. All proposed policies that are to be introduced or reviewed by public bodies now have

⁶⁸ Examples of reasonable adjustments include: installing an induction loop for people who are hearing impaired; giving the option to book tickets by e-mail as well as by phone; providing disability awareness training for staff who have contact with the public; providing larger, well-defined signage for people with impaired vision; putting in a ramp at the entrance to a building.

to be screened for relevance to *Disability Equality Duty*, and authorities are required to demonstrate that disabled customers can access their services without difficulty.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has made a formal commitment to disability equality in its *Disability Equality Scheme*, also a new requirement under the Act. This scheme presents the policy direction and corresponding actions the department is taking – including accessibility to services provided. The department has set an objective “to ensure all disabled customers are able to access our services in a way that meets their needs.”

DWP requires its service delivery agencies (e.g., JobCentre Plus, The Pension Service, Disability and Carers Service) to meet the new accessibility standards. These organizations have already taken steps to do so. The Pension Service, for example, has set the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) “Louder than Words” charter as the quality service standard to which all pension centers must adhere. Several centers have already met the standard, and all twelve are expected to be certified in 2007. The Disability and Careers Service (DCS) launched a “You Can Benefit” DVD in British Sign Language, which gives details about benefit entitlement.

Directional documents

- *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* (January 2005) – sets out HM government’s strategy for disabled people (By 2025, disabled people should have the same opportunities and choices as non-disabled people, and be respected and included as equal members of society). Published by the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit.

Supporting legislation

- *Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA)*.
- Disability Equality Duty – introduced under DDA, a statutory duty on the public sector to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

Policy guidance

- *Disability equality: a priority for all* – Guidance document for civil servants on the duties imposed by the DDA.

Governance measures implemented

- Office for Disability Issues (ODI) – established in 2005 to develop cross-government strategies to delivery equality for disabled people. The focal point within government to coordinate disability policy across all departments and implement recommendations made in the *Life Chances* report.
- Equality 2025 – the United Kingdom Advisory Network on Disability Equality. Officially launched in December 2006, with members who are all disabled people and do not represent any particular impairment or organization.
- Disability Rights Commission – established in 1999 to promote the elimination of discrimination against disabled people and the equalization of opportunities. Responsible for keeping Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) under review and to undertake formal investigations of misconduct.
- Minister for Disabled People.

4. Service Delivery Professionals

Organizations that are leading in service transformation recognize that citizen-centered service must be delivered by people committed to service excellence. These organizations are making strategic decisions to “professionalize” the roles of the service delivery professionals in their organizations. Australia’s Centrelink and Service Canada have developed their own training organizations to provide professional development for service delivery professionals. Other countries are beginning to include training and development in their overall service improvement strategies. Part of Spain’s *Plan Moderniza* is re-engineering civil servants’ jobs based on the creation of new channels, and providing appropriate training to meet new requirements. In Singapore, customer service representatives are sent for work placements at private sector “best-in-class” call centers. France, as part of its *Plan Strategique de l’Administration Electronique*, has embarked on an extensive training program for service delivery agents that focuses on process improvements, administration simplification, information security and new service channels.

The practices in place at Centrelink and Service Canada are presented below.

4.1. Australia: A training framework for service delivery professionals

Centrelink’s Virtual College provides all Centrelink staff with career pathways within the organization by linking job roles with nationally recognized and accredited qualifications.

Centrelink recognizes that service quality affects customer, business and community satisfaction and, ultimately, the level of trust in government. The Agency has set a clear goal in its strategic plan to ensure it has a skilled workforce able to deliver services to the community in an “empathetic, knowledgeable, professional, courteous and consistent manner.”⁶⁹

Through the Centrelink Virtual College (CVC), the Agency has developed a program of accredited learning and technical training that allows employees to progress to nationally recognized qualifications while simultaneously developing customer service-specific job skills. It also incorporates an Expectations Statement, which sets out how staff should interact with customers, client departments and co-workers, into a mandatory induction program for new hires.

The CVC is a Registered Training Organization (RTO) – a nationally recognized organization in Australia’s national training framework. The CVC was established in 2001, when government policy was encouraging the formation of enterprise RTOs: “Australia’s workforce will have a global outlook, a learning culture and strong technical and employability skills.”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Centrelink Future Directions 2004-07.

⁷⁰ *Shaping our future: Australia’s national strategy for vocational education and training*. 2004-2010.

At the CVC, training is delivered through an interactive distance-learning environment, supported by a team of experienced learning specialists. Almost 6,000 employees receive between 10 and 12 hours learning and development per month, developing competencies in areas such as customer service, management, business, call center skills, and fraud prevention and detection.

Directional documents

- *Shaping our future: Australia's national strategy for vocational education and training, 2004-2010.*

Supporting legislation

- *Public Service Act 1999* – the principal act governing the establishment and operation of, and employment in, the Australian Public Service. It provides for awards, certified agreements and Australian Workplace Agreements.

Governance measures implemented

- Centrelink Education Network – an interactive distance-learning environment that fully integrates video, voice and data, giving all Centrelink employees access to live, real-time training, regardless of their location.

Policy guidance

- Centrelink Development Agreement – a certified agreement between Centrelink and its unions, requirement of the Workplace Relations Act 1996. It sets out matters such as classification, job roles and training commitments.
- Australian Quality Training Framework – a set of nationally agreed standards that ensures high-quality vocational and education and training (VET) services throughout Australia.

4.2. Canada: Professionalizing the role of service delivery

Service Canada College aims to become the national learning center for all service delivery professionals within Service Canada.

One of Service Canada's top priorities is to build service culture excellence within its ranks, and the organization has placed a strong emphasis on professionalizing the role of service and service provider. It has created a comprehensive career development program for service delivery agents, including ensuring that all client-facing staff are classified in a professional category.

The Service Canada College was established in September 2006 in conjunction with the Canada School of Public Service, and will act as the national learning center for all service delivery professionals. The new college is modeled on the "corporate university" concept adopted by a growing number of corporations and government agencies in Canada and around the world. The College delivers a uniform curriculum of courses and programs across Canada, weaving principles of service excellence throughout all courses. The backbone is a service delivery certification program designed to enhance the professional development of frontline employees. By establishing the college and its associated curriculum, the government has formally recognized the role of service provider as a profession and a career in the federal public service.

5. Integrated Citizen Information

The new service imperative for the public sector is to provide service as good as, if not better than, the private sector. Part of this enhanced service delivery means reducing unnecessary paperwork for citizens and businesses, particularly if this information has already been provided to government for other purposes. Leading citizen-centered organizations are collecting information once, and integrating this information so that it does not have to be collected every time a citizen or business transacts with government. In doing so, the costs of collecting and processing information can be reduced, and the integrity of programs is also improved.

The UK, Australia, Belgium and the Netherlands are all moving in this direction. Integrating citizen information is a strategic thrust in many directional documents. Australia has declared through its *Responsive Government* strategy that “All users who need to interact with the Australian government will only need to update details once, with the option for the update to be made automatically across other government agencies.” The Netherlands’ eCitizen Charter states that “As a citizen, I can choose to provide personal data once and to be served in a proactive way. Government makes clear what records it keeps about me and does not use data without consent.” The UK’s *Information Sharing Vision Statement* identifies that “Information will be shared to expand opportunities for the most disadvantaged, fight crime and provide better public services for citizens and business, and in other instances where it is in the public interest.”

Belgium’s Crossroads Bank is arguably the most extensive example of a government that has effectively integrated information for the benefit of the citizen (see example below). In Singapore, the Government Webservices Exchange (GWS-X) allows agencies to access real-time information from each other, eliminating the need for customers to input some data when transacting online. Ireland’s Reach Agency has developed two applications allowing transmission of data among three key agencies: a centralized messaging hub⁷¹ for electronic transmission of life events data among registered agencies, and a death notification service.⁷²

Integrating information also allows governments to truly transform transaction processing by pre-populating benefit forms with information that exists in government systems. Several European countries including Finland, Norway, Spain and the UK have already begun to issue pre-filled tax forms. The practice has not yet become pervasive with social security benefits.

Many European governments have adopted comprehensive privacy protection legislation to ensure that the rights of citizens are respected when data is shared across organizations. Governments are also allowing citizens access to, and ownership of, their personal information. This concept has been endorsed in many eGovernment strategies, including those of Australia, UK and France. Centrelink’s Customer Account, for example, allows customers easy access to their personal data.

⁷¹ Inter-Agency Messaging Service (IAMS).

⁷² Death Event Publication Services (DEPS).

5.1. Belgium: Providing information once, using it many times

The Crossroads Bank legislates the basic principles of administrative practice in Belgium, that citizens need to give information only once to the public administration.

In 1989, an analysis of the workings of social security was undertaken by the Belgian government, supported by the Minister of Social Affairs. Based on results, senior policy-makers established a long-term vision for eGovernment that included the principles of a single virtual public administration, intention-based services, unique data collection, back-office integration, cooperation between all public administrations and protection of personal data.

The Crossroads Bank was created in 1990 to launch the Belgian eGovernment strategy and service delivery improvement. Its mission is to organize and manage data transmission about social insured people within the social security system. There is no central data storage. It is characterized by two key principles: Institutions are legally bound to request all information available in network from each other electronically; and citizens can refuse to provide the information without losing right to benefits.

The transformation has improved service delivery through reduced costs, reduced wait and travel times, higher quality standards, and more transparent and comprehensive service delivery. All 2,000 social security authorities are networked, and over 180 paper certificates have been replaced by direct electronic data exchanges. About 50 declaration forms (application forms) have been eliminated; in the remaining, data items have been reduced by two thirds. Contradictory declarations and illegal accumulation of benefits are no longer possible. The interoperability framework allows for some social benefits to be granted automatically without the need for an application.

Supporting legislation

- Law establishing the institution and organization of the CBSS (15 January 1990).
- EU directive on data protection (Directive 95/46/EC) was converted to national Belgian law in 1998.
- EU directive on use of ICT for data processing in public administration converted to Belgian law.
- National legislation adopted on ICT crime and administration publicity.

Governance measures implemented

- Interoperability among all social security institutions making commitments to use of same standards, identification infrastructure and eSignatures.
- Several independent oversight committees on data authorization and data exchange established: Independent Control Committee created within Commission for the Protection of Privacy, Committee for Information Security.

Policies adopted

- National eGovernment Strategy (2000) defines the principles of eGovernment and service delivery.
 - Integrated service that covers all governmental service departments and governmental levels
 - Service offers organized according to customer life events
 - Customer-oriented re-engineering of the service delivery processes
 - Information provided once
 - Automated granting of all related services
 - Multi-channel approach
 - Interoperable services based on open standards
 - Appropriate measures preventing a digital gap

5.2. Europe: Information sharing across governments

In Europe, there are many examples of information being shared across departments and programs to deliver service and benefits of value to citizens. Underlying these activities is a harmonized legislative structure and commitment to data protection across the European Union. All member states are required to have national legislation in line with the EU's Directive on data protection.

- In the UK, the government has made a formal policy commitment to information sharing. The 2006 *Information Sharing Vision Statement* endorses more information sharing between public sector organizations and service providers, in order to expand opportunities for the most disadvantaged, to fight crime and to provide better public services for citizens and business.
- Since October 2001, the Pension Service in the UK has produced a Combined Pension Forecast (CPF) for individuals, which presents an amalgamated view of total pension information from their personal or occupational pension and their State Pension forecast.
- In the Netherlands, application for housing subsidy forms is completed by the Ministry of Housing with electronic transfer of data from third parties.
- In Germany, citizens who want to change their address need only provide this information to their employer. The information is then transmitted across government organizations.

Supporting legislation

- The EU's *Directive on data protection* (Directive 95/46/EC) harmonizes national provisions, removes obstacles to data sharing while protecting personal information.
- EU *Directive on privacy and electronic communications* (Directive 2002/58/EC) and *Regulation 45/2001*. The legislation requires member states to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens and in particular their right to privacy with respect to the processing of personal data. It establishes the rights of the data subject⁷³ and the obligations of the controller.

Governance measures implemented

- Data Protection Officer of the EU.
- Independent data protection authorities within each of the 27 member states oversee data protection principles.
- Data protection officers within each institution or body that processes personal data. These officers are responsible for ensuring the consistent application of the legislation within that institution, and must also keep a register of all the processing operations on personal data carried out by the institution. The register must be accessible to any interested person.

⁷³ Right to be informed of any data processing; right of access to data; right to correct, block or erase data that is inaccurate; access to the logic on which automated decisions are based.

6. Identity Management

Various approaches are used across the world to manage individual identity for benefit and services registration and authentication purposes. Maintaining the integrity of the benefits and services delivered is crucial to ensure that the right benefits have been provided to the right person at the right time for the intended purpose, so that fraud and abuse of the system are avoided.

As seen in the previous chapter, the need to share information across government organizations is becoming important to deliver citizen-centered services that are not overly burdensome on citizens. Administrations around the world have adopted different models for how this information is stored, maintained and accessed. The Belgium government has implemented a decentralized model of data storage, through the Crossroads Bank model. In the UK, plans are under way to maintain a national registry of personal information, stored across three data systems.

Underlying a solid identity management regime is the need for strong privacy legislation. In Europe the Data Protection Directive sets out a wide range of rights for individuals including access, compensation and the prevention of processing. It also gives individuals rights over their personal information. All member states are required to have legislation in place that meets the requirements of this directive.

Examples of leading identity management practices are described below.

6.1. Belgium: Electronic identity cards for identity management

Belgium was the first European country to issue electronic identification (ID) cards to citizens.⁷⁴ ID cards have been used in this country since 1919 as a form of identification. In 2003, the government passed new legislation authorizing the use of electronic ID cards. The legal framework for the use of electronic identity cards is set in a series of Royal and Ministerial Decrees.⁷⁵ The use of the card was agreed by the Belgian Commission for Privacy protection, as well as having to meet standards including the European directive on digital signature 1999/93/CE. There are currently nearly five million cards in circulation, with a plan to issue to all citizens over the age of 12 by 2009. The cards are embedded with a digital certificate which allows citizens to communicate online with government. Aside from being a means of identification, the card is used as an electronic signature and authentication for accessing eGovernment applications, social security and some private services.

⁷⁴ Most countries in Europe have some form of ID card. There are wide variations as to the nature and use of these cards. All are either not compulsory, not biometric or not linked to a national database and unique identifier.

⁷⁵ Royal Decree of 25 March 2003 on the legal framework of electronic ID cards, Ministerial Decree of 26 March 2003 on the format of electronic ID cards, Royal Decree of 1 September 2004 on the generalization of electronic ID cards and Royal Decree of 18 October 2006 on the eID document for Belgian children under 12.

6.2. UK: Adopting a National Identity Scheme

A National Identity Scheme is being phased in over several years to provide a comprehensive and secure system of personal identification for British citizens and foreign nationals.

The scheme is a long-term program, being phased in over several years. In 2008, biometrics will be introduced for non-Europe Economic Area foreign nationals. In 2009, the first ID cards for British citizens will be issued. By 2010, anyone renewing or applying for a passport will receive an ID card. Registration will eventually be compulsory for all those residents in the UK over the age of 16.

A National Identity Register (NIR) will store identity data in three separate systems,⁷⁶ with links with other government systems. The *Identity Cards Act* specifies 50 categories of information that the NIR can hold on each citizen, including up to 10 fingerprints, digitized facial scan and iris scan, current and past UK and overseas places of residence of all residents of the UK throughout their lives, and indexes to other government databases.

⁷⁶ One for biometric data, one for biographical data, and one for administrative data.

The legislation leaves room for the government to add additional data at a later date.

The government is implementing the scheme with the expectation of delivering benefits in the areas of improved customer service, prevention of identity fraud and illegal immigration, safeguarding the vulnerable, and defense in fight against crime and terrorism, by reducing the use of false identities.

The scheme has been met with some public resistance. Several opposition groups⁷⁷ have voiced concerns for the massive accumulation of data and the threat of “lifelong surveillance.” With these conflicts, and the recent change in the UK government, it will remain to be seen if this program will continue to receive the political priority it has in the past.

⁷⁷ See <http://www.no2id.net/index.php>

Supporting legislation

- *Identity Cards Act* received Royal Assent on 30 March 2006, which establishes in statute the framework for the National Identity Scheme and the National Identity Register.
- Further primary legislation and supporting regulations are expected. For example, legislation that will provide the powers to issue ID cards to all UK population, not just those applying for official documents, and regulations to set fees to be charged and the requirements for applying for ID cards.
- *Data Protection Act 1998* sets out a wide range of rights for individuals including access, compensation and the prevention of processing. It also gives individuals rights over their personal information. The NIR must adhere to the strict data storage requirements laid out in the Act.

Policy guidance

- *Strategic Action Plan for the National Identity Scheme*,⁷⁸ December 2006. This document describes the scope of the scheme, how the NIR is proposed to be created, how the scheme will

be managed, security issues, and a time line for implementation.

- *HMG's Minimum Requirements for the Verification of the Identity of Individuals*. eGovernment Strategy Framework Policy and Guidelines January 2003. This describes minimum requirements for verifying and validating the identity of an individual registering for credentials for use with government services.

Governance measures implemented

- Identity and Passport Service (IPS) – A new agency was created 1 April 2006 to run the scheme (builds on the former UK Passport Service).
- National Identity Scheme Commissioner will oversee the NIR and the wider scheme integrity and security.
- Cabinet Committee on Identity Management, responsible for co-coordinating the government's policy and strategy on identity management in the public and private sectors.

⁷⁸ See <http://www.identitycards.gov.uk/index.asp>

7. Collaboration and Partnership

Governments are making collaboration – both within departments and across the public service – a political priority. They are doing so not only for better service and improved outcomes for citizens, but also for stronger international competitiveness. As has been previously noted, the UK and Australia’s whole-of-government transformational strategies commit their governments to collaborate on several levels. France’s Administration Electronique (ADAE) serves as the conduit for collaboration and consultation between all levels of the government and the private sector. Ireland’s New Connections strategy promotes that “More inter-agency cooperation and sharing will create synergies and enhance the government’s capacity.”

Examples of “joined-up” services taking place around the world include a pilot in Australia involving Centrelink, Medicare and the Tax Office, whereby eTax users can pre-populate information from Centrelink and Medicare directly to their tax returns, the UK’s Pension Service and local authority “joint teams,” which allow an individual’s support and benefit needs to be assessed in a single visit, and Singapore’s Vital.org shared services center that delivers selected human resources and finance processing activities to government agencies.

Governments are also investing in external partnerships as tools to enhance their ability to deliver citizen-centered service. These partnerships enable access to best practices in the private sector and other parts of government and enhance their ability to deliver service.

Examples of collaboration and partnership are presented below.

7.1. Australia: Collaboration across departments for better service delivery

A 2006 National Service Improvement Framework has been developed to facilitate projects requiring collaboration within and between governments at all levels.

The Australian government has committed to working across departments: *Agencies will operate in a collaborative, connected manner, rather than in isolation from each other.*⁷⁹

The National Service Improvement Framework (NSIF) is a suite of re-usable documents and tools that aims to deliver enhanced collaborative service delivery arrangements across government departments and agencies. The framework aims to increase citizen satisfaction in dealing with government, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government, and to build the capacity for cross-jurisdictional collaboration.

The NSIF was developed as a result of strategic direction from the Online Council of Ministers, which set a priority for improved service delivery across all jurisdictions of

⁷⁹ *Responsive Government*, p. 10.

government. In 2002, the Council created the Integrated Transactions Reference Group (ITRG) to develop a strategy for delivering integrated services across jurisdictions. The ITRG determined that a “framework” for collaboration was urgently needed, and established the National Service Improvement Program (NSIP) and the NSIF to help to identify and facilitate collaborative service projects.

Directional documents

- *2006 eGovernment strategy: Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda 2006.*
- *Connecting Government: Whole-of-government responses to Australia's priority challenges.* Management Advisory Committee Report, April 2004. Reports on how the Australian Public Service can better work together on issues that cross traditional agency boundaries.

Policy guidance

- *Working together: Principles and practices to guide the Australian Public Service.* Management Advisory Committee Report, April 2005.

Governance measures implemented

- Cross-jurisdictional committees have been established to promote cooperation and collaborative service delivery. These include
 - A ministerial Online and Communications Council (est. 1997)
 - A Secretaries' Committee on ICT (est. 2006)
 - A 14-member Chief Information Officer Committee
 - A Business Transformation Committee to oversees the reform of government business processes in line with eGovernment strategy

7.2. Service Canada: Whole-of-government approach to service delivery excellence

Over 50 different programs and services on behalf of 15 federal departments and agencies are available to Canadians through a one-stop focal point.

At its launch, Service Canada was described as one of the biggest single reforms ever in federal operations: a whole-of-government transformational approach to how the government services its citizens. Service Canada was made possible by several years of transformational change initiatives aimed at providing a more citizen-centered approach to government services, and an overall government citizen-based policy direction: *The citizen-based agenda means that policy initiatives and new program delivery systems must be firmly anchored in the common concerns of Canadians from coast to coast. This requires a long-term focus and a willingness to look beyond the specific parameters of any one government or any department's jurisdiction to ensure that policies and programs complement each other in improving the daily lives of citizens.*⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Speech by Mel Cappe Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet at the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Forum Ottawa, Ontario, October 27, 1999.

Service delivery across government now operates as “one business,” cutting across the multiple boundaries of programs, departments and jurisdictions.⁸¹ Under this whole-of-government approach, Service Canada is able to deliver over 50 different programs and services on behalf of 15 federal departments and agencies, with the potential to expand to 200 services in the future.⁸² In its first year of operation, Service Canada realized savings of \$292 million by integrating this delivery. The federal government continues to work to expand its network of partnerships with other levels of government and private sector players.

⁸¹ Service Canada: A New Paradigm in Government Service Delivery. Harvard Case Study.

⁸² Key programs include Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, the Canada Student Loans Program, the national phone service 1-800-O-Canada, passport issuance, and pleasure craft licensing.

Policy guidance

- *Modernizing Services for Canadians (MSC, 2000)* – A five-year program aimed at developing better, more responsive and client-focused programs and services for Canadians.

Directional documents

- *Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada (2000)* – strategic blueprint for results-based management, including the one-stop multi-channeled service.

Governance measures implemented

- *Service Transformation Advisory Committee (STAC)*, deputy ministers with lead responsibility for the Service Transformation Agenda and advising the Secretary of the Treasury Board on policies, legislation and strategies.
- *Inter-Jurisdictional Joint Councils* – forum to advance inter-jurisdictional agendas, with representation from federal, provincial and territorial, and municipal governments.

7.3. Singapore: Partnering with the private sector to integrate service offerings

Citizens of Singapore can access both public and private sector services through a single access point, the MyeCitizen portal.

The MyeCitizen portal was first launched by the government in 2002, providing interactive online access to government services. In 2006, government online services were integrated with private sector services, through an agreement with a private sector firm. This firm is now responsible for the management and operation of the portal.

The government's overall policy direction for private sector partnership is detailed in Singapore's eGovernment strategy *iGov2010: From Integrating Services to Integrating Government*. The government's vision is to be a fully integrated government through the use of infocomm technology. *Customers can look forward to completing their transactions with minimal interactions with government agencies. This will be achieved with comprehensive integration of processes and services across multiple public sector agencies, and with the private and people sectors.*

The MyeCitizen portal now lists services from both government and private organizations, offering a one-stop shop for online services. For example, new services include:

- MovingHouse – an online service to notify organizations of a change in mailing address, as well as to apply and terminate services when a citizen moves
- TravelBuddy – a portal into all services an individual may need when traveling: booking transportation, accommodation arrangements, application for travel insurance, application for a passport, checking flight schedules, etc.

Directional documents

- *iGov2010 From Integrating Services to Integrating Government* (May 2006) – Strategic thrusts of the strategy: Increasing Reach and Richness of eServices; Increasing Citizens Mindshare in eEngagement; Enhancing the Capacity and Synergy in Government; and Enhancing the National Competitive Advantage.

Governance measures implemented

- The portal management agreement is cared for by the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore, the government department responsible for cultivating a vibrant and competitive infocomm industry in Singapore.

Policy guidance

- *eGovernment Action Plan II* (2003-2006) – Focus of this strategy was to deliver accessible, integrated and value-adding public services; and to bring citizens closer together.
- *eGovernment Action Plan I* (2000-2003) – Conceived to fulfill the vision of making Singapore one of the leading eGovernments in the world. Six strategic programmes were defined: Electronic Services Delivery; Knowledge-based Workplace; Technology Experimentation; Operational Efficiency Improvement; Adaptive and Robust Infocomm Infrastructure; and Infocomm Education.
- *3P Integrate (Public-Private-People) initiative* – launched in 2004 to support the government goal to have totally integrated service delivery for citizens, and to create new business opportunities for the private sector.

8. Citizen Engagement

Governments around the world are learning from the private sector that competitive benefit that can be gained from engaging with the public. Procter & Gamble actively seeks collaboration from the public to enhance profitability and service delivery.⁸³ Goldcorp Inc., a Toronto-based gold-mining firm, transformed itself from a \$100 million company to a \$9 billion company by seeking input from the public.⁸⁴ For the public sector, engaging with citizens can not only enhance service outcomes, but can increase citizens' level of trust in government. Leading governments have made policy commitments to actively engage citizens in policy and program development. In Australia, "The government will set principles for online engagement to support a consistent experience for everyone dealing with Australian governments electronically." In the UK, the "Government will implement new processes to engage with citizens, businesses and public servants to research technology enabled services, as well as coordinating and sharing existing customer and front-line research." The Netherlands eCitizen charter promotes the citizen right that "As a citizen, I am invited to participate in decision-making and to promote my interest."

⁸³ P&G's "connect and develop" business model calls for 50% of new products to come from outside the company.

⁸⁴ The firm posted all its geological data on Web and challenged anyone to help the company find new gold deposits. Since the challenge, 8 million ounces of gold has been found, tripling the size of what existed before it embarked on the challenge.

Governments are using advanced Web technology to reach out to citizens. Several countries use online portals to solicit feedback on legislative change, and administrative and service delivery improvements. Estonia has trailblazed into the arena of electronic voting, by becoming the first country in the world to offer citizens the option to vote electronically. In this country, the world's first national general elections where citizens could "eVote" were held in March 2007.⁸⁵ Citizens were permitted to vote over the Internet using a secure eID card. This innovation not only permitted citizens to exercise their political right electronically, but will likely increase the engagement of citizens in the democratic process.

⁸⁵ Modifications to Estonian election legislation in 2002, and a 2005 pilot at the local level, enabled this to happen.

Three examples of how governments are engaging citizens in policy and program development are presented below.

8.1. Singapore: An interactive portal for citizen involvement in national issues

Reaching Everyone for Active Citizenry@ Home (REACH) is a one-stop, interactive portal for national issues and policy proposals. The portal was established in October 2006 as part of a restructuring of the government Feedback Unit – a mechanism created in 1985 by the prime minister as a forum for citizens to give their views on their concerns and on government policies. The goal of REACH is to move beyond gathering public feedback to become the lead agency for engaging and connecting with citizens. *In 2010, we envision a government that intelligently addresses customers' needs and delivers quality services that delight them. We aim to engage citizens in policy formulation and provide information that is interesting, relevant and useful.*⁸⁶

The REACH Panel, comprised of members of parliament (MPs) and representatives from the private sector, sets the direction for REACH's roles and activities.

The portal uses various approaches to engage citizens – from publishing eConsultation papers to conducting online discussion forums and ePolls. There are online consultation spaces for business, youth and overseas Singaporeans. Citizens can provide feedback to government on national issues, provide suggestions on cutting waste in government, and provide suggestions on cutting red tape.

⁸⁶ Singapore iGov2010 strategy.

8.2. Belgium: Engaging citizens in administrative simplification

Belgium's Kafka Program engages citizens, businesses, organizations and civil servants to suggest projects and ideas for cutting red tape. The program is supported by an online portal where citizens can post suggestions to alleviate governmental administrative burdens and red tape.

The government's administrative simplification policy was established in 2003 as a results-oriented global simplification plan. This policy committed government to implement specific improvement projects, such as unique data collection for citizens and enterprises and elimination of the unemployed periodic reporting procedure. Known as the "Kafka Plan," it is administered by the Administrative Simplification Agency (ASA), a federal institution created to reduce red tape. The Secretary of State for Administrative Simplification is in charge of policy direction.

Originally put in place as a temporary measure, the program was made permanent due to its overwhelming success. Suggestions of citizens are made public on the Kafka Web site. The site even lists the "absurdity of the month" – an example of a highly burdensome administrative practice, and a potential candidate for simplification. The ASA reports back to the public annually on activities of Kafka, and to date the program has resulted in nearly 200 laws and regulations abolished, and 185 additional simplifications.

This program has gained widespread attention across Europe. The French Minister for the Budget and State Reform announced in 2006 that he would be borrowing some ideas from the Belgian initiative. At that time, he planned to introduce a "Kafka" index to assess the bureaucratic complexity of new laws or administrative procedures. The European Commission was also looking at creating a "kafka.eu" citizen portal.

Supporting legislation

- Draft transposition law on EC Directive 2003/98/EC Directive on reuse of information.

Policy guidance

- Kafka Plan.
- *Note de Politique Générale simplification administration 26 novembre 2003.*
- Administration Simplification Agency Strategy Plan.
- ASA has published several guidance documents for departments wishing to undertake improvement activities.

Governance measures implemented

- A 16-member public-private Steering Committee establishes the annual program and approves ASA's simplification proposals.
- A 35-member network of simplification agents (one official representative from each public body) to relay the administrative simplification policy to their institutions.
- Ministerial Task Force, chaired by the Prime Minister, was created to accelerate policy implementation and to discuss solutions for bottlenecks.

8.3. US: Allowing the public to participate in the regulatory process

Regulations.gov is a government-wide portal allowing the public to find, view and comment on federal regulatory actions.

The Regulations.gov portal is the public face of the US government's eRulemaking Initiative (2003),⁸⁷ launched in response to government policy promoting the growth of electronic government. The 2001 *President's Management Agenda* and the 2002 *President's eGovernment Strategy* both promote improving the management and performance of the federal government through the use of technology. The PMA commits to supporting projects that offer performance gains across agency boundaries, such as eProcurement, eGrants, eRegulation, and eSignatures.⁸⁸ The *eGovernment Strategy* defines 24 high-payoff, government-wide initiatives aimed at eliminating redundant systems and significantly improving the government's quality of customer service for citizens and businesses.

The first generation of Regulations.gov was launched in January 2003 to provide citizens with one-stop Web access to all proposed federal regulations and to give citizens the ability to submit comments on all federal agencies' rulemakings. It is the first one-stop Internet

site for the public to search and comment on all federal rulemakings. A new version was introduced in September 2005, greatly expanding public access to rulemaking information. The new system serves as a secure, robust electronic rulemaking repository, enabling departments and agencies to post all rulemaking documents for public access and comment. More than 35 partner departments and agencies participate in the eRulemaking Initiative.

Directional documents

- *President's Management Agenda* (2001).
- *President's eGovernment Strategy* (2002).

Supporting legislation

- eGovernment Act of 2002 (H.R. 2458/S. 803) Endorses and requires agencies to support electronic initiatives, including eRulemaking governance measures implemented.
- eRulemaking Project Management Office – leads the initiative, collaborates input from across government agencies spanning the executive and legislative branches in addition to public and private organizations.

⁸⁷ See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/c-3-1-er.html>

⁸⁸ *President's Management Agenda*.

9. Accountability and Governance

Citizen-centered government requires new governance and accountability models. Accountability and transparency become much more important and complex in a horizontal, cross-agency service delivery model.

Governments who have had success in service transformation have had the service delivery agenda highly visible at the parliamentary and executive levels. In Australia, a separate agency has been created to provide direct ministerial oversight and greater accountability to the government's citizen-centered service delivery network. Other countries have departments dedicated to innovation, service improvement and administrative simplification. In France, the General Directorate for the Modernization of the State (DGME) is an inter-ministerial directorate with broad representation from every ministry, the private sector and abroad, charged with supporting administrations to modernize and improve the quality of public services. The Swedish Administrative Development Agency was established in January 2006 to work for a connected and more efficient public administration.

Leading governments also make effective use of senior-level committees and working groups that allow for collaboration across organizational boundaries and jurisdictions where appropriate. The UK's Delivery Council is responsible for coordinating cross-government activity to drive citizen and business-centered services. Denmark's Steering Group for cross-public-sector cooperation (STS) includes representatives at the highest

levels of public service. Strong governance structures are also in place to provide oversight in areas of information sharing and information protection. These include data protection officers and privacy commissioners in most EU countries, and privacy task forces.

In the era of increased public sector accountability for results, many governments have formalized reporting requirements in legislation or central policy. In the UK, departments develop a three-year Public Service Agreement (PSA) that set out their priority objectives, and negotiate targets annually with the treasury department.⁸⁹ Many service-focused organizations have also developed written and public commitments to service, or service charters, and formalized service standards. Service standards underpin the organization's commitment to service and communicate to citizens that service matters.

Three examples of accountability practices in Australia, the US and Canada are provided on the following pages.

⁸⁹ The Department of Works and Pensions, for example, has set an objective "to ensure customers receive a high-quality service, including levels of accuracy." There are measurable targets set against this objective to reduce the number of days to process a claim.

9.1. Australia: Transparency in accountability and results

New reporting requirements (2006) are helping to clarify expectations between parliament and statutory authorities. The Statements of Expectations (SOE) define the government's expectation of numerous bodies. The entities are expected to respond by way of written Statements of Intent (SOI).

New reporting requirements have evolved from a robust reporting regime in Australia. In 2000, the Department of Finance introduced an Outcome and Outputs Framework, which requires all Australian government agencies who receive appropriations from parliament to report on the basis of this framework. The objective is to improve agencies' corporate governance and enhance public accountability.

Centrelink's 2006-07 outcomes and outputs statements:

- *Access to government services that effectively support: Self-sufficiency through participation in employment, education, training and the community; families and people in need; and the integrity of government outlays in these areas.*
- *Effective and efficient delivery of government services.*

In 2001, the Prime Minister announced a commitment to improving the structures and governance practices of statutory authorities across government. As part of this commitment, the government commissioned a review of governance arrangements. The Review of the Corporate Governance of Statutory Authorities and Office Holders (Uhrig Report) was released in 2003 and made recommendations with respect to governance principles, including the appropriate use of boards. Several changes were made to the governance structures of Australian Agencies as a result.⁹⁰

The report also concluded that statutory authorities would benefit from greater clarity in the definition of their purposes, direction and objectives. The government's expectations for most statutory authorities have now been clarified by means of written Statements of Expectations, with a corresponding Statement of Intent response. These statements must be made public.

The Australian government has also committed to more transparent reporting of citizen satisfaction with service delivery, in its Responsive Government strategy: *The government will develop a consistent and coordinated approach for agencies to measure the use of and satisfaction with their services....The government will develop service delivery metrics based on the strategic priorities: user satisfaction levels, level of connected government, value for money, improvements in public sector capability.*

⁹⁰ Centrelink was moved from a board governance structure to executive management to be better aligned with the functions and characteristics of the service delivery agency.

Centrelink example:

Statement of Expectations of Minister of Human Services :

“Make it easier for the Australian public to access services through such initiatives as improvement to forms and letters, online capability and reduced queue wait times.”

Statement of Intent, Centrelink CEO:

“...This financial year we will increase the number of customers using self-service to make update transactions form 2 million to 2.3 million...Centrelink will reduce wait times for customers contacting us by phone and face to face.”

Directional documents

- *2003 Governance Review: Review of The Corporate Governance of Statutory Authorities and Office Holders (Uhrig Report).*

Supporting legislation

- *Human Services Legislation Amendment Act 2005* made changes to the governance arrangements for Centrelink and the Health Insurance Commission (HIC) resulting from the Uhrig Report.⁹¹

Policy guidance

- *Outcome and Output framework*⁹²
- *Governance Arrangements for Australian Government Bodies*⁹³ was released by the Department of Finance and Administration (Finance) in August 2005. Promotes consistency in the governance arrangements of Australian government bodies.

Governance measures implemented

- New governance arrangements for Centrelink and Medicare Australia were introduced on October 1, 2005. Centrelink’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) became responsible to the Minister of Human Services for all aspects of Centrelink’s management and performance. Both agencies are now subject to the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997.

⁹¹ The Act abolishes the governance boards of Centrelink and HIC, replaces HIC with Medicare Australia and creates the offices of Chief Executive Officer of Centrelink and of Medicare Australia.

⁹² See <http://www.finance.gov.au>

⁹³ <http://www.finance.gov.au/finframework/governance.html>

9.2. US: Standards of performance for customer service delivery

US government agencies are mandated to report on their service delivery performance annually.

The US federal government has a well-established performance reporting regime to ensure transparency of performance and outcome-based results of federal agencies. This includes guidance provided by the *President's Management Agenda (PMA)* and activities mandated through the *Government Performance Results Act 1993 (GPRA)*. The PMA calls for agencies to improve their responsiveness to citizens and to become more market-based, citizen-centric, and customer-focused. The GPRA legislates the reporting of performance, and mandates agencies to develop five-year strategic plans and corresponding annual performance plans that include measurable goals and performance indicators for each program activity set forth in the budget.

The Office of Management and Budget provides oversight to the performance reporting process. Performance of every federal program is assessed and annual results are publicly available online. Performance data is used to inform budget decisions.

There are also government-wide guidelines to ensure that citizens receive accurate, timely and consistent service from the government. These have been developed through the Citizen Service Levels Interagency Committee, which has conducted research into existing practices and service delivery methods, and has developed guidelines that could be used across government. These guidelines include service delivery metrics and best practices across all service delivery channels: telephone, e-mail, mail/fax, walk-in and Web.

Directional documents

- *President's Management Agenda (PMA)*, the 2002 strategy for improving the management and performance of the federal government. The vision for government reform is guided by three principles for government: citizen-centered, results-oriented and market-based.

Supporting legislation

- *Government Performance Results Act (GPRA 1993)*. Annual performance reports must review the success of achieving the performance goals in each fiscal year. For goals that were not met, rationale for why they were not achieved must be explained, with a corresponding action plan for improvement.

Policy guidance

- Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), a common methodology used to assess performance in a consistent, transparent manner for all government agencies. It is also used in OMB budgeting and resource allocation decisions. There is an online system, PARTWeb, which departments and agencies can use to submit performance results and follow-up actions online.

Governance measures implemented

- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reviews agency performance plans within the context of agency budget requests.
- Online reporting Web sites make performance results available to public:
 - Results.gov – publishes examples of outcome-based results taking place across government.
 - ExpectMore.gov – rates performance of federal programs against a standard list of 25 questions, and makes recommendations for improvement. This is a joint initiative of the US OMB and federal agencies.
- USA Services, one of the eGovernment initiatives managed by the General Services Administration (GSA), is a resource center to help agencies offer quality citizen-centered services, and to develop citizen-centric solutions for citizen interaction with government.
- Citizen Service Levels Interagency Committee – chartered in 2005 and managed under the USA Services eGovernment initiative. Comprised of 58 contact service representatives from across all executive branch agencies. Five subcommittees established for various channels: telephone, e-mail, traditional (in-person), cross-channel issues (foreign languages, customer complaints), future methods (video, Instant messaging, Web chats, bots).

9.3. Canada: Ensuring transparency, accountability and service

Canada's service delivery arm, Service Canada, has adopted and published a set of nine service standards that describe the services offered and the commitment to citizens. Performance against these measures is reported annually.

As the government of Canada's service delivery network, Service Canada is publicly accountable to Canadians for the quality of service provided. In fact, one of its key strategic objectives is to: *Demonstrate accountable and responsible government by delivering results for Canadians and government, savings for taxpayers and transparency in reporting.*

In April 2006, the federal government introduced the Federal Accountability Act. The Act brings forward specific measures to help strengthen accountability and to increase transparency and oversight in government operations. While there are no specific requirements for general reporting to the public, the Act has initiated a trend in the federal government toward disclosure and transparency. The Management, Resources and Results Structure Policy, implemented in April 2005, provides a standard basis for reporting to citizens and Parliament on the alignment of resources, program activities and results. The policy reinforces the government's commitment to strengthen public sector management and accountability.

Service Canada has implemented several reporting mechanisms to communicate its service commitments to Canadians, and to report back to Canadians and Parliament in a manner that is transparent:

- A Service Charter that explains what Canadians can expect from Service Canada and how they can provide feedback on the quality of service. The Service Charter is publicly displayed and clearly visible in all offices and the Service Canada Web site.
- Service standards that define the level of service Canadians can expect from all delivery channels. Performance against these service standards is published in an annual performance scorecard.
- An Office of Client Satisfaction that is responsible for maintaining a neutral and autonomous body to receive, review and act on citizen feedback.
- Feedback surveys that are conducted periodically to assess client expectations and satisfaction. A Public Awareness Baseline Study examining the service delivery expectations of Canadians and a Client Satisfaction Survey assessing the clients' level of satisfaction.

Directional documents

- *Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada (2000)* – strategic blueprint for results-based management, including the concept of one-stop multi-channeled service.

Supporting legislation

- *Federal Accountability Act (2006)*.

Policy guidance

- *Management, Resources and Results Structure Policy (MRRS 2005)*.
- *Service Improvement Initiative (2000)* established a target of a minimum 10% improvement in Canadian's satisfaction with delivery of key government services by 2005.

Governance measures implemented

- Office of Client Satisfaction – a neutral organization mandated to accept and respond to citizen feedback about Service Canada, and recommend ways the organization can improve.

9.4. Iowa: Legislating the flexibility to be more autonomous

Six state agencies have been granted “Charter Agency” status, whereby they volunteer to be accountable for measurable customer benefits and contribute savings/revenues in exchange for greater authority and flexibility.

The Charter Agency Program is part of a larger Iowa government transformation, one of several ideas proposed to help reduce the 2003/04 budget deficit. Six agencies were designated as Charter Agencies by executive order in July 2003, including the Department of Human Services.

Each individual agency volunteers to be accountable for measurable customer benefits and to contribute savings in the form of increased revenues or reduced costs. In return, the state exempts them from many bureaucratic requirements. All commitments are documented in the Charter Agency legislation, Iowa Code Chapter 7J, including statutory enactment of many of the flexibilities listed above.

In the two years since their creation, Charter Agencies have successfully reached their target of producing \$15 million in expenditure savings or additional revenues annually. The Agencies have also produced a myriad of concrete results that have improved the life of the citizens of Iowa. Among some of the most notable results are improved rates of income tax returns filed electronically, reduced rate of failure of probationers, increased inmate work opportunities, and increased number of veterans served at the Iowa Veterans Home.

Legislative changes required

- *Charter Agency Legislation* was enacted in 2003, granting the authorities and flexibilities in exchange for specific dollar savings targets. The Agency is also exempt from statutory budget cuts, can retain 50% of unspent year-end appropriations, and has access to a \$3M grant fund to foster innovation.

Policies required

- As per the legislation and annual agreements, each individual agency has flexibilities that can be undertaken and adopted into policy as the agency sees fit. For example, the Dept. of Human Services has exercised flexibilities in staffing, classification, contracting and other areas.

Governance measures implemented

- Annual performance agreements are negotiated and signed by the agency director, governor, and Lt. governor. Agreements and annual targets are made public, and results must be reported annually.

Implications for Public Services around the World

Governments are making significant advancements in service transformation. We have seen numerous examples of technological and process innovations implemented to deliver public services in a more citizen-focused and integrated way. We have seen early development of whole-of-government transformational visions to drive service delivery change. For most governments, the hope is that these changes will lead to greater citizen engagement, more efficient service, lower costs and, ultimately, better public sector value.

But most countries have not yet achieved these outcomes. Much more needs to be done. Many of the service transformation advances have been made to front-end service delivery. This is understandably so. But as countries' service delivery agendas evolve, governments must continue to develop back-end infrastructure, to create the supporting policy frameworks and to inculcate desired cultural change in order to deliver on government visions. This will create the environment for true transformational change where service delivery effectively supports broader government priorities and policy outcomes.

If we look at international trends and practices, there are five recommendations that we would make for governments that desire to take a lead in service delivery.

1. Provide leadership from the top to bring service transformation to the forefront of government agenda.

The UK's Transformational Government vision, for example, has been the driving force behind the country's ambitious program to transform the business of government. This program of action has been successful in part because of its full endorsement by the prime minister: "Government has to keep up with the hopes and aspirations of citizens and business, to remain efficient and trustworthy. That is why I asked for a strategy on how we can use technology to transform government services."⁹⁴

Governments need to create a compelling vision and business case for change that can be used to influence decision makers at all levels of government. Leadership that clearly outlines the desired outcomes and long-term benefits of a citizen-centric government can provide the necessary impetus to drive action.

⁹⁴ Rt Hon Tony Blair's foreword to the Transformational Strategy document.

2. Allow citizens a clear say in how to transform service.

Citizens need to have a clear understanding of the government's service vision, and to understand their role in service transformation. This understanding will facilitate the engagement of citizens in policy and program development, which, in turn, will build citizens' level of trust in government. Implementing a policy instrument that clarifies citizens' rights and responsibilities with respect to service delivery, such as the Netherlands' e-Citizen Charter, would demonstrate to citizens that government is truly interested in developing policy and programs from the citizen's perspective.

Governments need to make formal commitments - and communicate these commitments to citizens - that citizens have a shared responsibility with government for service transformation and allow citizens a way to participate in the creation of service delivery policies. By opening up to engagement, citizens will quickly embrace the concept of improved service delivery and will start self-identifying the biggest areas in which impact can be made.

3. Give service delivery a voice at the executive or cabinet level.

Governments must recognize that service delivery excellence is just as important as getting government policy right. Having a presence at the executive level to balance the objectives of policy departments with the objectives of the service delivery network could prove to be quite beneficial, helping to ensure service delivery considerations are incorporated into policy development. Australia's Department of Human Services, for example, is seen as a clear evolution towards a more whole-of-government governance of citizen-centered service delivery. The installation of a minister dedicated to service delivery has been viewed as a positive development in that country and has enabled more effective relationships between service delivery organizations and policy departments.

Governments need to establish a clear point of accountability for, and control of, service delivery that breaks down the silos of traditional departments and programmatic approaches. Giving service delivery a voice at the executive table provides one of the strongest mechanisms for change.

4. Make information sharing and the integration of services a central priority.

Our research examples show the powerful impact on citizen-centered service when information is shared across government to enable integrated service delivery. Back-office integration of information allows services to be authorized and delivered to citizens at the point of contact – eliminating paper forms, reducing wait times, fraud and processing costs. Various successful interoperability approaches have been used to share data while maintaining the integrity and privacy of this information. The Belgian Crossroads Bank of Social Security (CBSS) model, for example, has enabled Belgium to deliver services in a proactive manner, reducing the number of required forms and the amount of touch points required in the service process, and, increasingly, allowing for the automatic granting of benefits to citizens.

The complexity of government and governments means that all too often citizen information is not used effectively across programs, even when it is clearly in their interests for it to be. Governments need to eliminate the “claim and wait” service delivery model and move to integrated services delivered when and where the citizen needs them.

5. Adopt a citizen service approach to privacy so that service is given equal weight to citizen protection.

Research in Canada has found that citizens will consent to the sharing of information in a secure environment if it is more convenient to transact with government.⁹⁵ Leading governments subscribe to the principle that privacy protection does not mean withholding information at all costs. Instead, they have worked within the boundaries of established privacy legislation to share personal information in a secure fashion while providing added value to the citizen. This has supported policy and governance oversight mechanisms that protect the integrity of personal information as it is shared for authorized purposes.

Governments need to reinterpret their privacy protection legislation from a citizens’ service perspective, so that it is not used as a barrier for providing good service. Used correctly, privacy can be strengthened while improving service delivery.

⁹⁵ Citizen First.

For More Information

IBM is committed to supporting governments in service delivery transformation. We are able to assist in conducting research, policy impact analysis and implementing changes to the way service is delivered to citizens and business.

IBM offers a full range of consulting solutions to support government service delivery transformation based on our work at organizations from around the world. We also undertake extensive research on government trends and directions which is published at:

IBM Global Social Segment:

ibm.com/solutions/government/socialsegment

IBM Center for the Business of Government:

<http://www.businessofgovernment.org/>

IBM Institute for Business Value:

ibm.com/services/us/gbs/bus/html/bcs_whatwethink.html

For further information, please contact your local IBM representative.

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