



Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce

GBDe 2006 Issue Group

e-Government Issue Group
“Summaries of Previous Recommendations”

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1. Introduction

The GBDe e-Government Issue Group was founded in 2001 and has made the following recommendations:

- 2001: On the adequate conditions of e-Government from the perspective of the relationship between governments and the private sector.
- 2002: On the adequate conditions of e-Government from the perspective of the relationship between governments and citizens.
- 2004: On the development of businesses/citizen-participation systems.
- 2005: On challenges and responses for Open Source Software (OSS) utilization in order to achieve e-Government at lower cost.

After five years, the GBDe considers it timely to summarize the pertinent points of these previous recommendations with the addition of some further external comments and opinions.

Central and local governments are among the most important providers, consumers and content owners in any country. Therefore, governments' progress in moving their operations and services online will help accelerate IT infrastructure development, as well as promote and expand domestic e-commerce.

2. Summary of 2001 Recommendations

In 2001 the GBDe provided recommendations on e-Government from a private-sector perspective.

2.1. Role of Government

The GBDe stated that a government has the following six roles:

1. Provider of public services (the ‘vendor’ in business sense).
2. Purchaser of materials needed for its operations (the ‘buyer’ in business sense).
3. Supervisor of law and institution (i.e. ‘enabler’ for IT society).
4. Collector of taxes, duties and tariff needed for operation of government services.
5. Facilitator of transparency in government processes.
6. Contents holder of large information including valuable statistical information.

2. e-Government Implementation

The GBDe recommendations also listed five key points to clarify the scope of e-Government. These were:

1. Governments achieve public services of higher effectiveness, speed and quality.
Examples:
 - New type of services may be created as a result of IT utilization.
 - Increased efficiency in a current operation may lead to cost reduction, which create surplus in the original budget (tax revenue), and this surplus may be utilized for further improvement in the operation.
 - Speedier communication between the government and a company may be achieved.
2. e-Government as a showcase of good IT utilization.
Private companies can deepen their understanding on the advantages of IT utilization by looking at the successful use of IT in the government. In other words, e-Government can function as a showcase for IT utilization that private companies can refer to.
3. Governments promote measures to overcome obstacles to IT society
Through the process of e-Government construction, governments will become more aware of different problems that need to be solved for successful IT utilization. Hence governments will set out effective measures to solve such problems.
4. e-Government may facilitate IT utilization in private sector
When the government is digitized, private companies may also promote further investment to, and utilization of, IT in order to enjoy the benefits of e-Government.
5. e-Government construction may nurture IT-related industries and lead R&D
Since private companies actively join e-Government development projects, IT-related industries should flourish.

2. Conditions for e-Government

Based on above, the GBDe recommended the following 23 points as conditions for e-Government:

1. Establish institutions/systems that allow Government to process private company project requests electronically.

2. Disclose and publicize e-Government information systems except those require limitation to disclosure (e.g. national security matters).
3. Express milestones/roadmap for e-Government construction.
Governments should clearly state the objectives, substance and the roadmap of any e-Government implementation projects. Governments should incorporate the private sector's opinions when setting such milestones.
4. Establish measures/structures to appropriately evaluate governments' digitization progress. Publicize the results of this evaluation and allow private companies to join the process.
5. Specify "feedback merits" of digitization of procedures.
Governments should identify what kind of merits private companies can receive from e-Government. For instance, governments may quantify and publicize "reduction in time required for a transaction", or "lowering of commission charge", that occurred as a result of digitization.
6. Utilize private outsourcing.

Requirements to realize e-Government objectives within the public sector include measures to:

1. Enable all administrative procedures to be 100% online, and achieve one-stop service provision, with favorable law establishment.
2. Conduct administrative reform and establish the favorable law institutions to make it efficient.
Current operations within government agencies should be revised, more integrated and more simplified.
3. Standardize operational forms of central and local governments.
Enhance simultaneous digitization process in central and local governments.
4. Ensure a secure environment.
The e-Government system must be securely protected so that private companies can have appropriate access.
5. Carry out measures to facilitate SMEs' utilization of e-Government services.
6. Disclose more information on government services. Speed up the process of information disclosure. The government information should be released on the Internet as quickly as conventional publishing.
7. Create an environment to diversify the means to utilize services.
e-Government services should be accessible not only from personal computers but also from a range of network-connected devices.
8. Establish methods of speedy resolution of conflicts in transactions between business and Government.
9. Help provide and disclose any information that private companies need in formats that are easy for them to use.
10. Establish a system that assures management of high transparency in any kind of procedure.

To respond to the internationalization governments should:

1. Prepare material in as many languages as practically possible including their own language.

2. Adopt international neutral standard access methods/protocols/specifications/ technologies.
3. Promote adoption of an international (global) standards. Methods/specifications used in transactions and procedures should meet a certain international standard.
4. Collaborate with foreign governments to strive for global digitization and international networking.
5. Notify necessary qualifications/standards for bidding, as well as appropriate reasons for setting them.
6. Government operations related to international e-commerce must go online with high priority (e.g. trade/import and export operations).
7. Arrive at an agreement of conflict resolution in international e-commerce transactions.

2.4. Comments

These recommendations generated the following comments, among others, after the presentation.

1. It is important to set appropriate benchmarks for evaluation of e-Government from the point of view of private companies. For instance, the private sector can cite turn-around time for applications or registrations.
2. In some countries, e-Government has not been promoted. The GBDe needs to analyze the causes and the factors, and develop plans to overcome the obstacles from the point of view of the private companies.

3. Summary of 2002 Recommendations

In 2002 the GBDe focused on the promotion of e-Government to citizens, based on the view that the greater e-Government utilization by citizens has a beneficial flow on effect for private-sector e-commerce.

1. Enable 100% of administrative procedures online, and achieve one stop service provision.

Currently, users of administrative services often have to follow separate procedures with different agencies in order to complete one single transaction. e-Government should offer one-stop seamless services that allow users to complete these procedures (e.g. document submission and fee payments) at the same time via an integrated front office window. Partial digitization of current administrative services does not provide a big improvement in user relations with the administration. Additionally, the benefits of digitization for the private sector can be limited if business transactions with governments remain partially manual and offline.

2. Conduct administrative reforms and establish the favorable legal framework. Operations within government agencies should be integrated and simplified. Mere digitization of current administrative services without business process re-engineering may not provide sufficient results in enhancing the effectiveness of the public sector.

Furthermore, laws and institutions should be adapted to make these reforms possible and insure interoperability across the Government agencies. One of the most important issues here is the legal acceptance of the electronic signatures. Corresponding regulations are required in order to make remote delivery of services to citizens possible.

3. Ensure privacy, confidentiality and reliability for services rendered to the citizens through the Internet.

The e-Government system must be securely protected so that citizens can access, provide and exchange information (personal and transactional data) at ease. We suggest posting clear statements on security measures being taken by governments should be outlined on the web sites in order to reassure the citizens of their privacy and give them confidence in e-Government usage. This will also serve to promote e-services in general.

4. Support the development of the telecommunications infrastructures.

The telecommunications infrastructure needs to be expanded and enhanced, in particular in the “first-mile” with broadband access, and broadband connectivity between Government agencies. State-of-the art solutions should be tested. Provision of broadband and high-quality network security, should be incorporated to encourage development of media rich content.

5. Sponsor the digital literacy of the citizens.

ICT, although a potentially valuable tool, can divide those who own it and use it, and those who do not. In order to make the benefits of e-Government fully available to the citizens, governments should familiarize their citizens with the Internet.

6. Support the establishment of Internet access points.

An increase in number of public Internet access points will contribute to a corresponding increase in number of potential service requesters (“customers”) and lower the risk of the exclusion for those citizens who are not connected at home.

7. To create an environment to diversify the means to access services.

e-Government services should be accessible not only from personal computers but also from other technological platforms, e.g. mobile terminals, digital TVs, etc. This is necessary in order to expand the merits of e-Government. Additionally, the provision of network services varies in different countries. Therefore, e-Government should be accessible via various types of user devices.

8. To apply new technologies in the participation and electoral processes to promote e-Democracy.

With the help of online participation, citizens are able to express their views directly to Government. For example, electronic voting facilitates such processes as elections and referendums make it easier for citizens to exercise their democratic rights. This also allows major savings, both in time and money.

4. Summary of 2004 Recommendations

The focus on online access and participation for citizens was further developed in the GBDe's 2004 e-Government Recommendations. From the private-sector perspective increased Government dialogue and interaction with citizens through online means encourages more familiarity and confidence in the Internet. In this sense, e-participation can become an important catalyst for e-commerce in many countries.

In this respect, the GBDe recommended that the public sector:

1. Create a culture of consultation and dialogue.
Improve communication, to bridge the citizen to Government divide. e-Participation should not be viewed as a substitute for existing methods of involvement but should add value to them. The development of e-participation tools should be viewed as an evolving process linked to the confidence and assessment of citizens, representatives and governments.
2. Start with Local Government.
Local Government plays a key role in this process and is the best candidate to drive it forward, since it is really the nearest to citizens real life problems. This is the level of Government that more directly represent citizens' interests.
3. Provide a Citizen Space for consultations and a public forum for discussion,
This space must include a register of Central Government consultations. Citizens can be notified in different ways: e-mail, SMS, etc.
4. Produce e-participation guidelines.
Experiences in e-consultations show that in general, governments do not have clear guidance on making the best use of electronic media in consultations. To tackle with this, it is recommended that a toolkit and mandatory guidance be developed for departments in charge of coordinating these kinds of initiatives.
5. Bring the citizenship closer to the new technologies, through adequate training, support and guidance.
6. Drive pilots, share and analyze experiences, develop policies on the basis of best practices.
7. Pay attention to change management among public servants, since they may feel that decisions in which they were concerned previously are now taken by people who does not have the skills and experience to do so.
8. Security and confidentiality – Reliability and trust are key issues in e-participation.

4.1. Comments on the Recommendations

Following the publication of the 2004 Recommendations it was noted that the public network established for e-participation should have a high standard of security to enable it to be used by the public for private business, especially service payments.

5. Summary of the 2005 Recommendations

As shown in surveys by UN and others, realization of e-Government has been set as national policy in many countries. It is true that it is being realized on national-central level, but it is also pointed that it has not been promoted on local level. One of the causes is lack of financial resources.

In 2005, the GBDe evaluated the application of Open Source Software (OSS) as a solution for improved e-Government. The GBDe identified challenges and proposed measures to encourage further development, with research on the status GBDe-member countries.

5.1. Definition and Features of OSS

OSS is a generic term for software that is allowed to be used and distributed under license agreements which have some common features. The features of license agreements are:

- OSS is free to be distributed and redistributed.
- OSS is licensed for free.
- There is no limit to the objects and uses of OSS.
- Source code must be disclosed and distributed.
- Source code is allowed to be modified.

It is important to note that license-conditions are different for each OSS license in the same way that commercial software is sold under various agreements. In addition, OSS is NOT free software. It is licensed for free, but there are usually charges for additional services such as maintenance, technical support and distribution. Linux is the best-known OSS software.

5.2. Summary of the recommendation

The following challenges have been frequently pointed out; however, the GBDe would like also to offer some solutions:

Challenge 1: Due to the lack of precedents of OSS adoption, the effects offered by OSS have yet to be fully recognized.

Solutions:

- Develop and publish policies at central and local government level to support the adoption of OSS into information systems.
- Establish pilot OSS projects and then evaluate and publish the results of these projects.

Challenge 2: A lack of competitive growth among OSS vendors means benefits of OSS adoption have sometimes been difficult to identify.

Solution:

- Implement a software engineering development policy through industry-academia-government collaboration.

Challenge 3: A lack of investment in personnel training and education, which results from IT vendors' concerns about the negative effects on business activities such as shrinking of the market size, is hampering development of OSS.

Solution:

- Governments should apply savings gained by OSS adoption to IT vendors' services to build the advanced systems.

Challenge 4: The standards necessary to ensure interoperability between OSS systems at a global level have not yet been specified.

Solution:

- Consider the establishment of organizations and develop conferences to encourage cooperation between countries to create the appropriate standards in proper sequence.

OSS is not, of itself, a panacea which will enable the realization of e-Government. As representatives of private enterprise, the GBDe will endeavour to support the efficient and widespread adoption of OSS.

5.3. Comments on the recommendation

Simply changing to OSS will not promote its utilization without establishment of a mechanism in which middle software and application software can be used as OSS. Government must support not only the application of OSS, but also development and circulation of middle software and application software.

The following list contains useful URLs for further e-Government reference material:

United Nations

<http://www.unpan.org/egovernment4.asp>

OECD

[http://webdomino1.oecd.org/COMNET/PUM/egovproweb.nsf/viewHtml/index/\\$FILE/index.htm](http://webdomino1.oecd.org/COMNET/PUM/egovproweb.nsf/viewHtml/index/$FILE/index.htm)

Global Cities Dialogue

<http://www.globalcitiesdialogue.org/default.htm>

Brown University

http://www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/2006-07/06-007.html

Waseda University

http://www.obi.giti.waseda.ac.jp/e_gov/2nd_rankings_en.pdf

Accenture

http://www.accenture.com/NR/rdonlyres/D7206199-C3D4-4CB4-A7D8-846C94287890/0/gove_egov_value.pdf

Major presentations or statements of the GBDe e-Government Issue Group:

- Sep.2001 GCD GAM (Melbourne, Australia)
- Oct.2001 INFOS (Ljubljana, Slovenia)
- Nov.2001 e-EU e-Gov. Forum (Brussels, Belgium)
- Mar.2002 OECD e-Gov. Project Meeting (Paris, France)
- Mar.2002 APEC TEL (Hanoi, Vietnam)
- Apr.2002 DOTFORCE Global Forum (Naples, Italy)
- Jul.2002 APEC e-Gov. Forum (Seoul, South Korea)
- Aug.2002 APEC e-Gov. Forum (Acapulco, Mexico)
- Nov.2002 CICC AFIT (Vientiane, Laos)
- Apr.2004 G8 e-Gov. Forum (Palermo, Italy)
- Jun.2004 ADB e-Gov. WS (Bangkok, Thailand)
- Mar.2005 GCD Sherpa Meeting (Prague, Czech Republic)
- Sep.2005 CICC OSS Forum (Colombo, Sri Lanka)
- Mar.2006 GCD Sherpa Meeting (Milan, Italy)