ANNEX A

OECD Country Studies on User Take-up

This annex provides a description and an analysis of user-focused e-government in selected OECD e-government country studies. The descriptions and analyses are built on excerpts from published OECD e-government country studies.

The countries represented in this annex are:

- Belgium – from OECD (2008), *OECD e-Government Studies: Belgium*, OECD, Paris.
- Denmark – from OECD (2006), *OECD e-Government Studies: Denmark*, OECD, Paris.
- Hungary – from OECD (2007), *OECD e-Government Studies: Hungary*, OECD, Paris.
- Mexico – from OECD (2005), *OECD e-Government Studies: Mexico*, OECD, Paris.
- Netherlands – from OECD (2007), *OECD e-Government Studies: Netherlands*, OECD, Paris.
- Norway – from OECD (2004), *OECD e-Government Studies: Norway*, OECD, Paris.

Belgium

The governments in Belgium have for several years focused on developing their own e-government services for citizens and businesses. In addition to services per government, emphasis was put on a number of sectors of activity with (potentially) high-volume online transactions, like social security or tax administration. To a greater extent than putting services on line, Belgium has deliberately been focusing on back-office improvements and is by consequence currently facing a number of challenges in attaining policy goals of delivering measurably better and less burdensome services around user demands and user needs. These challenges include:

- increasing take-up;
- attracting a wider range of users;
- overcoming the observable fragmentation and varied quality and sophistication of e-services (particularly at the municipality level).

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Impact assessment of e-government policy

With respect to full online availability of services for businesses and citizens, Belgium has recently made significant progress (Figure A.1). Within three years, Belgium developed from one of the laggards in an EU comparison to above average supply of e-government services (Belgium 60%, EU27 average 58% of e-government services online). This confirms the efforts of all Belgian governments to improve e-government services in terms of supply.

Figure A.1. **Development of total availability of e-government services, 2004-2007**

Belgium, OECD benchmark countries, EU27
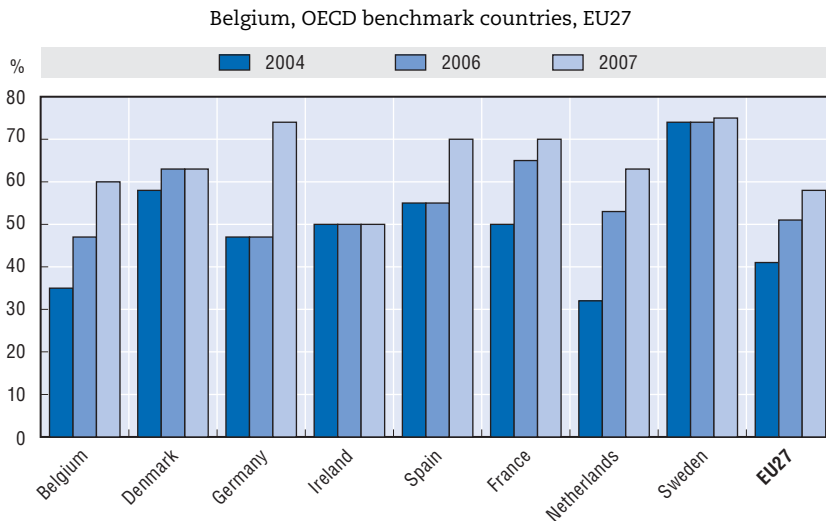
Note: Data for October 2004, April 2006 and April 2007.

Source: OECD compilation, based on CapGemini Survey, "The User Challenge: Benchmarking the Supply of Online Public Services – 7th Measurement", prepared for the European Commission, 2007, *http:// ec.europa.eu/information_society*.

For citizens, however, Belgium's **online total supply** is at 42% and therefore well below the leading EU benchmark countries such as Denmark, Sweden or the Netherlands and the EU15 average (Figure A.2). Uptake of e-government services in Belgium in 2007 has just reached 30% according to Eurostat data. This strongly suggests that all levels of the public sector should focus on the development of a better delivery strategy of e-government services towards citizens, and focus on the communication and promotion of e-government services by developing a compelling story to shift channel.

In contrast to benchmarking results for citizens' e-government services, **Belgium has been among the leaders in supply of e-government services for businesses** for a few years (Belgium has 88% of supply). The 2007 data confirms

Figure A.2. **Comparison of supply and usage of e-government services by citizens, 2007**
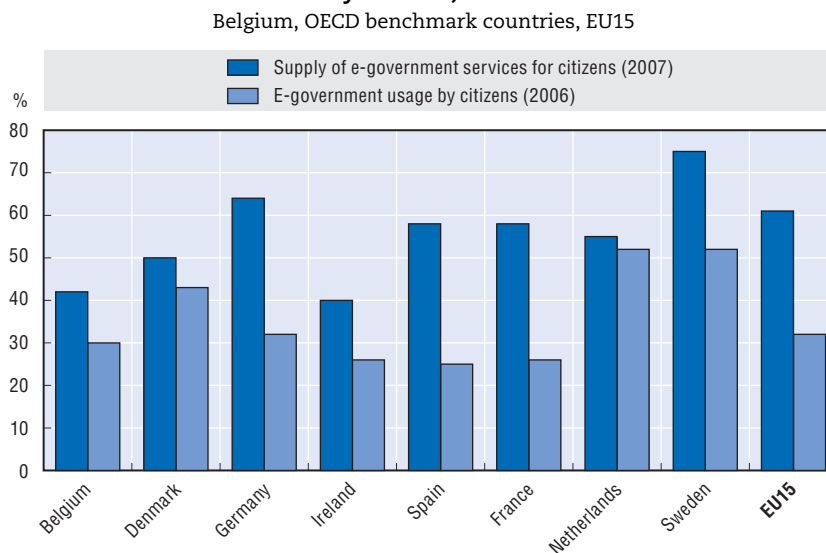
Belgium, OECD benchmark countries, EU15

Note: Data of e-government usage for Sweden is from 2005.

Source: OECD compilation, based on CapGemini Survey, "The User Challenge: Benchmarking the Supply of Online Public Services – 7th Measurement", prepared for the European Commission, 2007, *http://ec.europa.eu/information_society.*

this (Figure A.3). Uptake of e-government services by businesses has only reach 59%, however. Given the significance to growth, innovation within the economy and direct savings that can be achieved by focusing on businesses, this strongly suggests a prioritisation of the business segment.

Online sophistication of e-government services for citizens in Belgium is comparable to its EU benchmark countries (Figure A.4). As many other OECD countries Belgium is facing the challenge to achieve higher take-up of e-government services. There seems to be a positive correlation between sophistication and usage of e-government services, hence sophistication and accessibility of e-government services should be carefully monitored across Belgian governments.

Whilst **online sophistication of e-government services for businesses is high** in Belgium (Figure A.5, Belgium ranks at 94%), leading countries in online sophistication of e-government services for businesses such as Denmark, Sweden and Ireland display significantly higher uptake figures (Denmark [87/87%], Sweden [89/80%], Ireland [86/84%]). A review of the barriers to uptake for businesses and incentives for uptake should be undertaken.

While the mixed pictures revealed in such comparisons indicate clear room for improvement, it is important to consider that international

Figure A.3. **Comparison of supply and usage of e-government services by businesses, 2007**
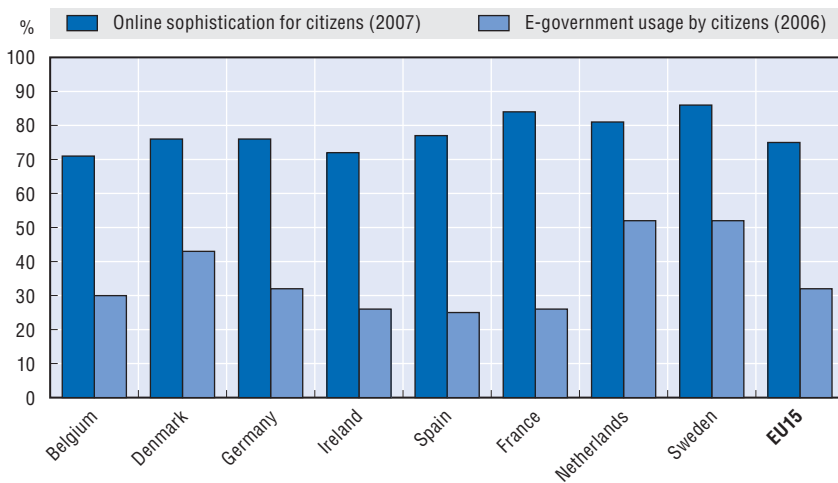
Belgium, OECD benchmark countries, EU15
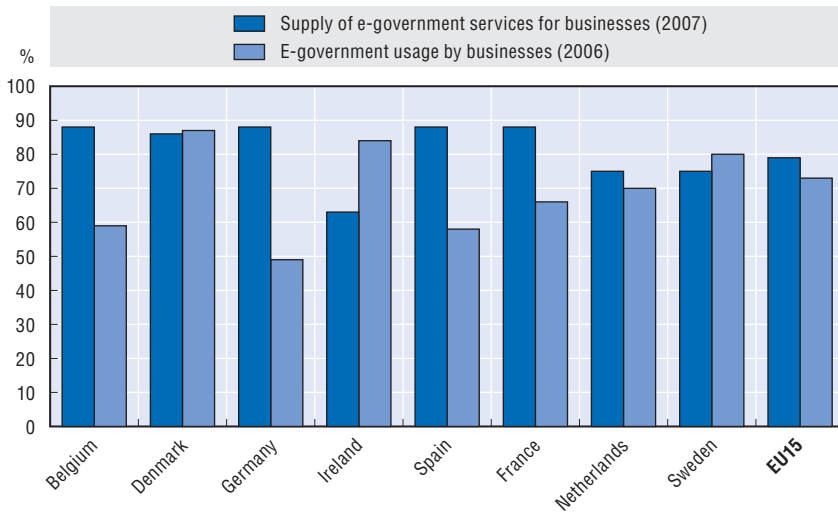
Source: OECD compilation, based on CapGemini Survey, "The User Challenge: Benchmarking the Supply of Online Public Services – 7th Measurement", prepared for the European Commission, 2007, *http:// ec.europa.eu/information_society*.

Figure A.4. **Comparison of usage and sophistication of e-government services for citizens, 2007**

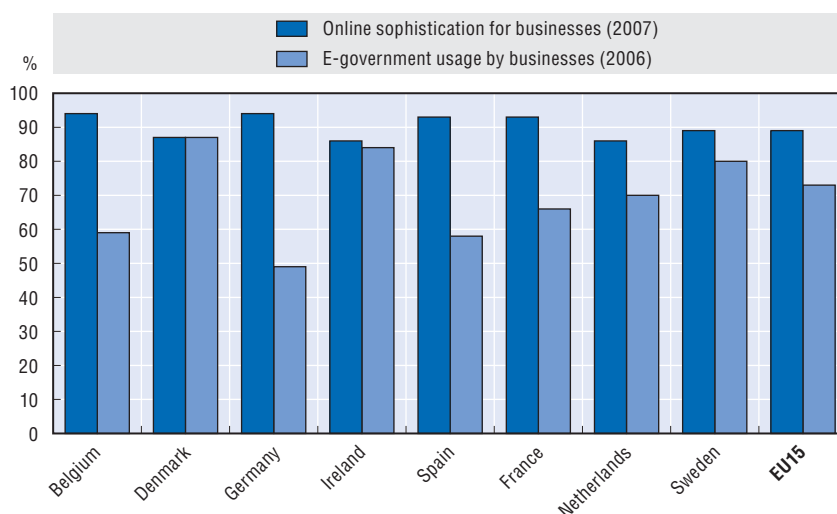Belgium, OECD benchmark countries, EU15

Note: Data of e-government usage for Sweden is from 2005.

Source: OECD compilation, based on CapGemini Survey, "The User Challenge: Benchmarking the Supply of Online Public Services – 7th Measurement", prepared for the European Commission, 2007, *http:// ec.europa.eu/information_society*.

Figure A.5. **Comparison of usage and sophistication of e-government services for businesses, 2007**

Belgium, OECD benchmark countries, EU15

Source: OECD compilation, based on CapGemini Survey, "The User Challenge: Benchmarking the Supply of Online Public Services – 7th Measurement", prepared for the European Commission, 2007, *http://ec.europa.eu/information_society*.

benchmarks cannot always appropriately take into account the particularities of a country:

- E-Government in Belgium has been a dispersed activity with significant differences in scope and speed from all Belgian governments. In international benchmarks, national indices tend to miss developments at sub-national levels. Also, weighting and compiling measures into aggregated whole-of-Belgium e-government indices that adequately reflect the overall performance of Belgium has proven difficult.

- In Belgium, e-government development has focused mainly on technical solutions and back-office re-engineering. Belgium's position therefore may vary from one international benchmarking exercise to another, depending on whether the ranking's focus is on front-office or back-office performance.

- Throughout the past years, Belgium has been among the more developed e-government players within the OECD. In international benchmarking, the relative and absolute growth potential of more developed countries can be restrained, as they have already benefited from harvesting "low-hanging fruits" and have fewer possibilities to leapfrog stages of e-government development.

User knowledge

OECD country experiences have shown that successful services should be based on a deep understanding of users' online behaviour. Adding up to the encountered difficulties in measuring often intangible features (such as user satisfaction), governments simultaneously need to gather knowledge about various user groups: citizens, businesses, and governments. Traditional metrics such as counting website hits and page impressions are not enough. Monitoring and analysing patterns of use, traffic volumes, user likes and dislikes, user satisfaction and attitudes towards data use, seasonal variation, audience breakdown, e-mails and feedback, and use of search terms are all important elements of understanding how users consume electronic services. Such analysis should feed directly into service development and delivery so that services better match user expectations.[1]

Belgian governments are increasingly willing to make attempts to create a flexible and dynamic government that is receptive to the needs of citizens; overall, however, there does not seem to be a clear and consistent approach to the qualitative and quantitative assessment of users' demands, needs, and satisfaction – despite the limited number of citizens and businesses who effectively communicate with governments online.

Monitoring and evaluating user demand, user needs, and user satisfaction are recent concerns in Belgium, especially when it comes to directly involving end-users of e-services in assessments. According to OECD interviews and the survey, governments are, however, increasingly looking into ways of determining e-government demand, and user needs and satisfaction.

With regards to determining demand for online services, most Belgian governments seem to use rather qualitative approaches such as user panels and customer surveys. Such methodologies can support Belgian governments in better identifying features of user demands which are crucial for service design: existing and future service applications need to reflect user demands to ensure take-up. Only Brussels-Capital Region is taking a more quantitative approach towards assessing user demands, mainly relying on government statistics.

Evidence of user demand

The few user studies that directly involve citizens reveal that citizens demand more and better-quality e-government services. Examples include the recent *Fed-e-View/Citizens* survey – to back up its user focus, the Federal Government has expanded its Fed-e-View survey in 2005 to include citizens.[2] The survey focused on four different domains (e-inclusion, e-government, e-society, and e-democracy), and questioned focus groups consisting of both e-government users and non-users, over a period of 15 months. The results emerging from the survey have been shared across the country with the intention to increase the

focus on user in e-government development in the Belgian governments. The sharing of results may help detect synergies in the diversity of approaches to user centricity.

According to the *Fed-e-View/Citizen* study on user needs, priorities for Belgian citizens are:

● **Rapidity and flexibility** (in terms of location and time of access). Electronic services are seen as an advantage to Belgian citizens, particularly with respect to the efficiency increases they can bring. However, the convenience of any-time, any-place access needs to be blended with the traditional channels currently available to citizens in order to increase the flexibility of the system.

● **User-friendliness** of electronic services is a key element to citizens, who are willing to use electronic services if they provide an easier alternative to traditional channels. This should also take into consideration digital literacy in general, as many citizens are unfamiliar with the way to use government electronic services.

● **Personalised services** are crucial if the digital channel is to become popular in Belgium. The Belgian citizen is more interested in accessing relevant, personalised services online than having to go through the complexities of the Belgian government to gain accesses to services. In short, they are more concerned with the service itself, as opposed to which government is responsible for it.

Although there are individual efforts taking place to determine the specific needs of users and the evolution of user demand, OECD interviewees cited a lack of shared research methods to track and incorporate user demand, needs, and satisfaction, as well as the perceived lack of marketing and promotion of existing e-services.

Citizen satisfaction findings

Findings on citizen's satisfaction with e-government services reveal the following three conclusions. Firstly, 44.1% of respondents had never used an e-government service. Secondly, a large proportion of respondents (39%) claimed that they often do not know where to look for information. Finally, less than one quarter of the total population use e-government services, but one third of the non-users would be interested in doing so.

Table A.1 shows data about problems users have encountered when using electronic services, such as filling in electronic forms, or submitting their taxes. The data shows that 44% of respondents had never used an e-government service, and 25% of respondents claimed to have had no problems using these services. This raises significant questions concerning demand for e-government services in Belgium. The high percentage of the population not interested in

Table A.1. **Barriers for using e-government services**

|		% people
Which of the following problems have you found when using electronic services (*e.g.* form-filling, declaration of taxes) from the government on the Internet?	I have not used a service	44
	No problem	25
	Have to give my data repeatedly	11
	It's hard to find the service	10
	Never find a full solution online, meaning I have to go to the office	10
	Often don't know where to search	10
	Possible to request things via Internet, but not action them	10
	Other	4

Source: Fed e-View, 2006.

e-government services is a major challenge for Belgium and the Belgian governments. It signals a need for targeted communication activities with the population on the existence of services, and the advantages of using them.

Further research confirms Belgian citizens' cultural preference for direct contact when interacting with governments: for all Belgian governments, the main reason for not being interested in e-government services is "no personal contact" (22% of all Internet users who are not interested in e-government; Figure A.6). Reasons may include the public sector structure, the high number of municipalities, cultural differences in administrations due to language and region, as well as the high number of public sector staff.

Table A.2 shows respondents thought of the information that was provided on the sites they had visited. The largest proportion of respondents

Figure A.6. **Internet users' reasons for not being interested in e-government services**
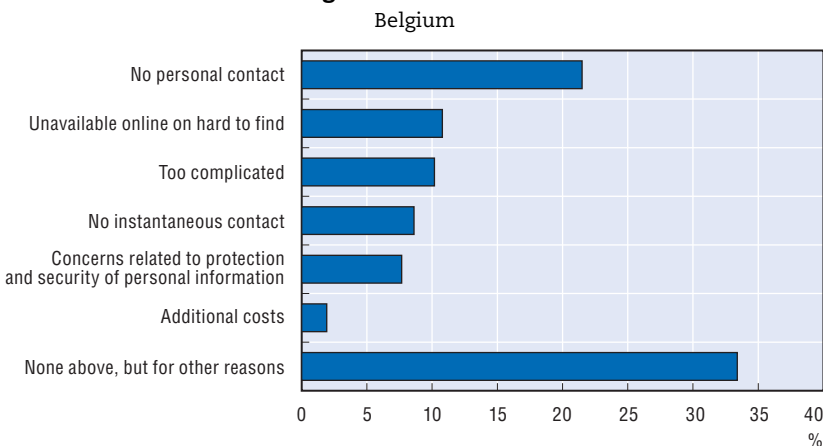
Belgium

Note: Individuals aged 16 to 74 who accessed the Internet within the three previous months.
Source: OECD compilation, based on National Belgian Statistics Institute, ICT Households Survey, 2006, *www.statbel.fgov.be.*

(39%) claimed that they often do not know where to look for information. Hence, efforts by Belgian governments in developing more user-friendly websites or organising information according to life-cycle events have not necessarily impacted user experience at this stage.

Table A.2. **Barriers to information search**

		% people
Which of the following problems have you encountered when searching for information from the government on the Internet?	Don't know where to find information	39
	No problem	32
	I never get a full response, and therefore must call or go to the government offices	23
	I find the information difficult	23
	Not personally oriented	19
	The information I require is not online	13
	Language is too difficult to understand	11
	Other	4
	The information is not trustworthy	4

Source: Fed e-View, 2006.

Figure A.7 shows that there is a high potential for increasing user interest in and usage of e-government services.

Figure A.7. **Interest in using e-government services**
Belgium, Flemish Region, Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital Region
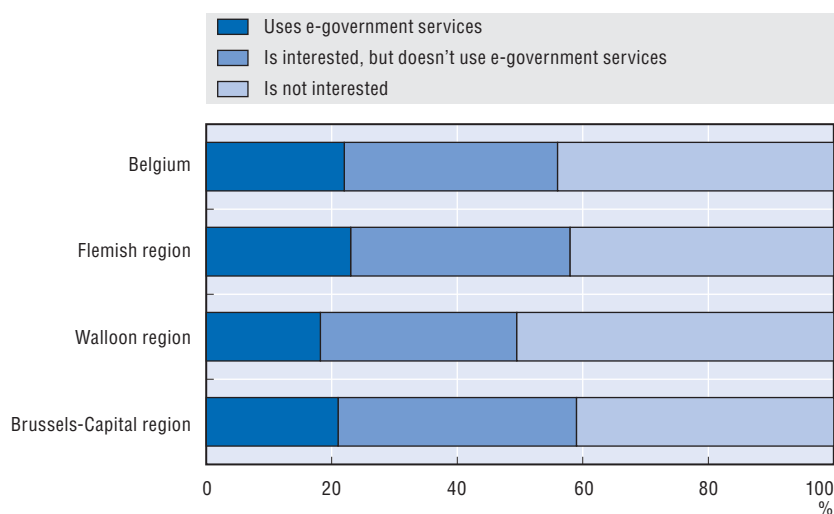
Note: Individuals aged 16 to 74 who accessed the Internet within the three previous months.

Source: OECD compilation, based on National Belgian Statistics Institute, ICT Households Survey, 2006, *www.statbel.fgov.be*.

Maximising the benefit of investment in e-government is a high priority for Belgian governments. The effective marketing of e-government services and products not only contributes to their successful development, but also helps optimise citizens' level of awareness, acceptance and usage of e-government products and services. The finding that approximately one third of citizens would be interested in using e-government services deserves attention, motivates more effective marketing of e-government services and products.

Marketing and promotion of e-government services

The marketing and promotion of e-government services are important to increase the level of visibility and knowledge of the advantages of electronic services. This aspect of e-government development is often underplayed in national e-government strategies and has not sufficiently been considered when developing policy and strategies – even less when implementing and disseminating e-services solutions. Figure A.8 shows the case for increased and consistent marketing towards users.

Marketing and promotion is often connected to a specific public organisation's wish to implement a proactive channel management to convince users – whether they are citizens, businesses, or government themselves – to make use of the electronic service channels (*e.g.* wireless

Figure A.8. **Perceived challenges to take-up of e-government services by Belgian officials**

All governments
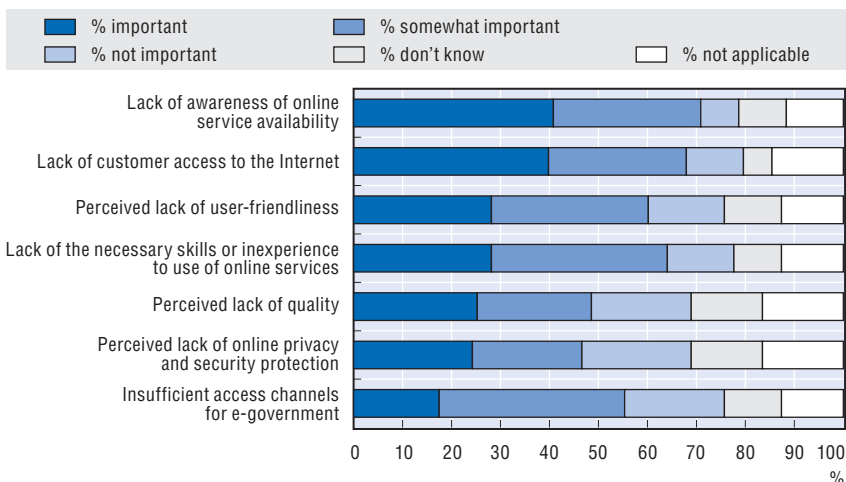
Survey Question: 6.10 a) How important are the following challenges in constraining citizen demand for the online services provided by your organisation?
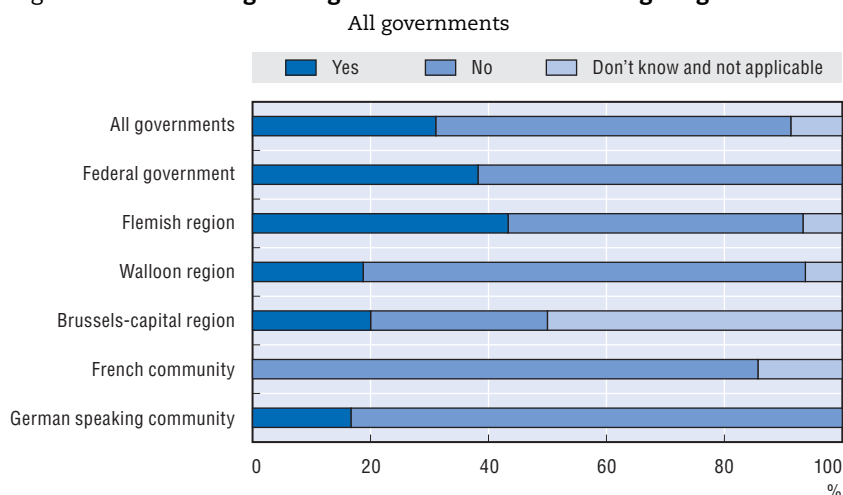
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Belgium, 2007.

access channels, telephone lines, cable, etc.) without regard to interface (mobile phones and other mobile entities, television, computer, etc.).

Belgian governments have in general made only limited efforts on marketing and promotion of e-government services. Similarly, other governments are increasingly focusing on improving marketing and communication of their e-government efforts. Benchmarks and indicators are very recent and might help raise political awareness of e-government by catching decision makers' attention, given their tight political agendas.

The OECD survey (Figure A.9) shows that the general impression among the governments is that there is a lack of marketing and promotion strategies across the public sector: 60% of respondents answered "no" and only 31% answered "yes" to questions on whether a marketing strategy exists for their own e-services. Respondents in the Federal Government and the Flemish Region seem to be more aware marketing strategies (38% and 43%, respectively, answered "yes") while the Brussels-Capital Region, the Walloon Region, the German-speaking Community, and the French Community are less aware of such a strategy (20%, 19%, 17%, and 0%, respectively, answered "yes").

OECD interviewees pointed to limited clear communication from e-government leaders about e-government benefits, stating that internal and external communications and marketing could be improved. These perceptions were confirmed by the OECD survey, illustrating that only about half of government institutions communicate their e-government goals to citizens and businesses. Also, two-thirds of survey respondents indicated that

Figure A.9. **Marketing strategies for e-services in all Belgian governments**

Survey Question: 3.4 a) Do you have a marketing strategy to market your e-services?
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Belgium, 2007.

they currently do not have a marketing strategy to promote their e-government services.

In order to raise awareness of the availability and value of e-services, Belgian governments need to further promote "good practices" and exchange experiences through events like the yearly Belgian E-Government Congress and Awards. During this event representative of different levels of government exchanged ideas and experiences.

Perceived and communicated benefits of e-government services

E-Government strategies and action plans of all Belgian governments reflect the emerging political aim of more user-focus by acknowledging the necessity to create seamless services through back-office interoperability laid out in collaboration and co-ordination efforts.

The Federal Government emphasises areas such as: cost savings to government (97%), modern services for users (97%), and increased efficiency of internal processes and across government (97%) (Figure A.10). User focus is also dominant for federal agencies (faster service for and cost savings to

Figure A.10. **Perceived benefits of e-government services to users by federal officials**
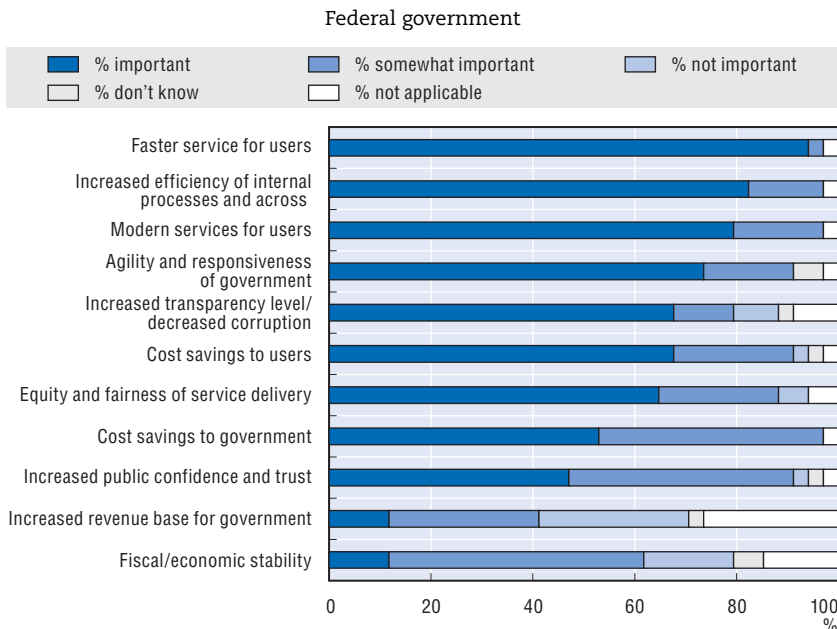
Federal government

Survey Question: 6.4 a) How important is e-government to achieve the following benefits?
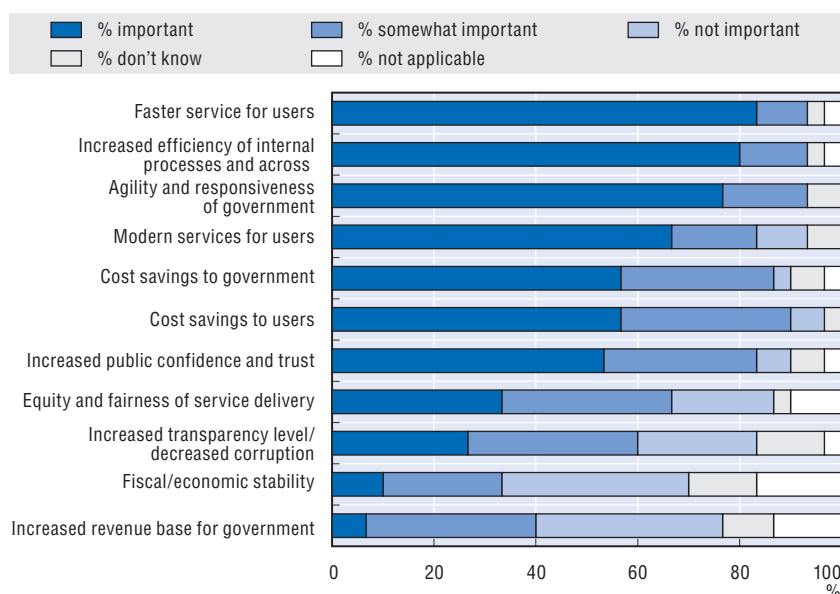*Source:* OECD E-Government Survey: Belgium, 2007.

users), with a trend towards a main focus on internal efficiency and effectiveness of government businesses.

The **Flemish Region** emphasises areas such as: faster service for users (93%), agility and responsiveness of government (93%), and increased efficiency of internal processes and across government (93%) (Figure A.11). In addition to becoming more responsive to user needs, it also aims to harvest efficiency and effectiveness gains within government.

Figure A.11. **Perceived benefits of e-government services to users by Flemish officials**
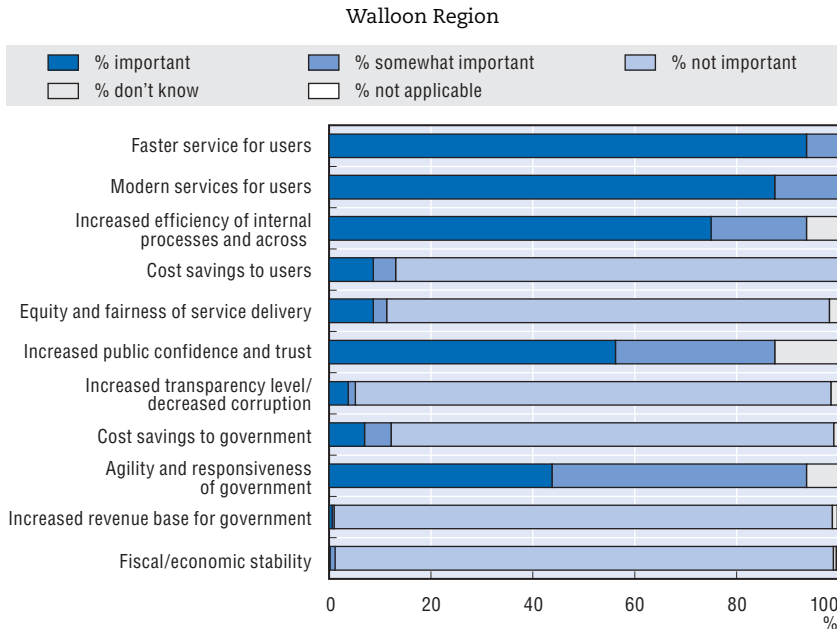
Flemish Region

Survey Question: 6.4 a) How important is e-government to achieve the following benefits?
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Belgium, 2007.

The Walloon Region emphasises areas such as: modern services for users (100%), faster service for users (100%), and increased efficiency of internal processes and across government (94%) (Figure A.12). Its emphasis on modernising public services and becoming more responsive to users is significant, while the cost savings to the government (88%) is high but comparatively lower on the priority list according to the survey.

However, OECD data does not suggest agreement among Belgian governments on the benefits e-government services can provide to users. The **Brussels-Capital Region** emphasises areas such as: efficiency of internal processes and across government (100%), increased transparency level/

Figure A.12. **Perceived benefits of e-government services to users by Walloon officials**

Walloon Region

Survey Question: 6.4 a) How important is e-government to achieve the following benefits?
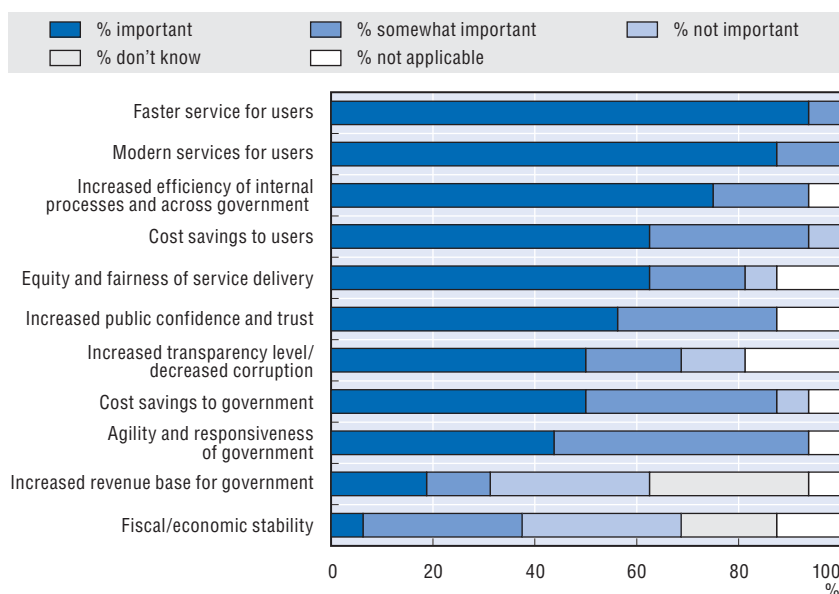*Source:* OECD E-Government Survey: Belgium, 2007.

decreased corruption (100%), and modern services for users (100%) (Figure A.13). Significantly, it prioritises user-oriented outcomes like faster services and cost savings for users, and the possibility of improving trust in government. These priorities reflect broadly the main concern among the different governments with regard to becoming more user-focused in e-government development and improving the general trust in government through openness and transparency of government actions.

ICT use by politicians

The Internet is not used as a tool for promoting democratic activity by politicians in Belgium: in fact, quite the opposite is the case, with a large majority of politicians hardly using the Internet for any form of information gathering, or communication. A study published by Indigov in February 2005,[3] publicises the results of a Belgium-wide survey of federal, regional, and provincial politicians carried out in 2004-2005 to see what relationship politicians had with the Internet. This study was the first large-scale research project concerning politicians and the Internet in Belgium to investigate their

Figure A.13. **Perceived benefits of e-government services to users by Brussels officials**

Brussels-Capital Region

Survey Question: 6.4 a) How important is e-government to achieve the following benefits?
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Belgium, 2007.

electronic communication activities with citizens. It was the result of a questionnaire sent out to all 1 251 politicians with published email addresses at the federal, regional, community, and provincial levels, of which 31% (331[4]) responded. These were the main findings:

- 15.9% of 309 respondents claimed to use e-mail for two hours or more per week, rising to 33.3% claiming to spend between one and two hours responding to or writing e-mails. Only 5.5% of those respondents left emailing to their assistants.

- **Citizens seldom use e-mail to contact politicians:** 34% of 306 respondents to the survey claim to receive between one and 10 emails per week from citizens. Only 9.5% of 306 respondents receive more than 100 e-mails per week from citizens.

- Regarding use of the Internet for information gathering or participation in online forums, only 11.1% of 305 respondents claimed to use the Internet for more than two hours per week.

In comparison, other countries where surveys have taken place show a much higher average usage of ICT by parliamentarians.[5] For example, 80% of

Danish parliamentarians spend more than two hours per week using the Internet. Closer to home, 63% of Dutch parliamentarians spend more than two hours on the Internet per week, according to the survey, which was carried out in 2001/2002. This led the authors of the Belgian study to the conclusion that: the Internet is clearly not a Greek agora' for Belgian politicians, and is therefore not used as a space for deliberation or discussion of political issues by politicians. These figures lead to questions about the current demand for e-democracy activity in Belgium, and also about why the demand is so low. At the political level, there needs to be some soul searching to see whether there is interest in moving to a democracy that incorporates some of the interactive aspects of ICT.

Denmark

Denmark has made considerable progress in the area of supply and sophistication of e-government services. In the 2003 European Commission eEurope benchmarking exercise, Denmark ranked first in terms of full availability of public services online, and second in terms of the sophistication of those services. In 2004, according to EU measures, Denmark's online public services for both citizens and businesses were, collectively, the most "sophisticated" (*i.e.* allowed the most interactivity) in Europe (Figure A.14).

Figure A.14. **Sophistication of Danish online public services**
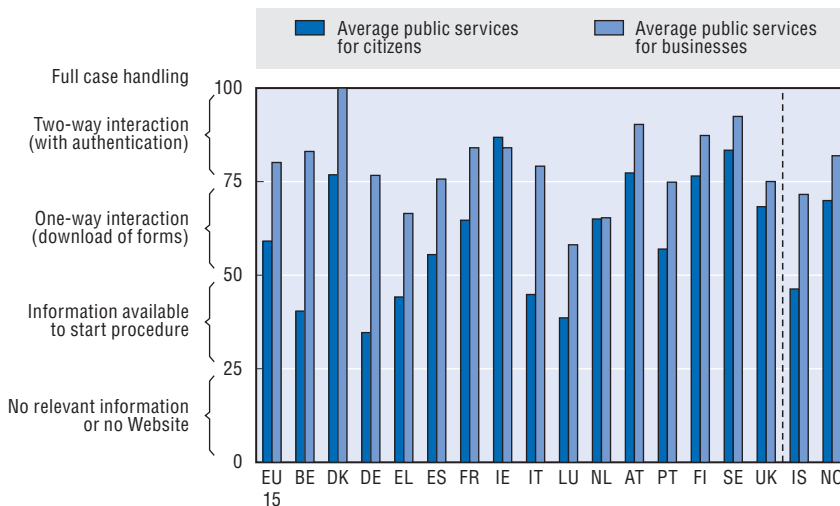
Source: Eurostat (2005), e-Government: Internet based interaction with the European businesses and citizens, *http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NP-05-009/EN/KS-NP-05-009-EN.PDF.*

### Government-wide drivers of user-focused e-government

In Denmark, at the all-of-government level, e-government is positioned as an important part of the user-focused public sector modernisation programme. The e-government strategy reinforces this by stressing the role of e-government in providing high-quality services and placing citizens and business at the centre of government. This commitment is made concrete through the various targets and measures established in the strategy.

Portal-based delivery strategy for increased take-up

In Denmark the government has neither explicitly directed nor provided guidance to organisations on how e-government delivery should be undertaken (for example, through implementing some form of government-wide "channel management").[6] The most common means of delivering government services is through organisation-level websites, which are used by 95% of all organisations that responded to the OECD survey. Following this, 61% of respondents reported using portals to deliver e-government, after which there was a significant drop to the use of voice services (*i.e.* call centres), and finally mobile-phone-based channels (WAP and SMS).

This strong tendency towards use of Internet-based delivery is consistent with the relatively high capacity of the Danish public to access and use e-government over the Internet, due to the high rates of PC and Internet access. Clearly, websites and portals are the delivery channels that present the least challenge to Danish e-government in terms of achieving equity goals, and are also viewed as the delivery medium where there is the least constraint on user demand.

The significant difference between organisations' delivery of e-government to users of home and/or business PCs (through websites and portals) *versus* users of mobile phones (via WAP and SMS) mirrors the situation in other OECD countries (Figure A.15). With Danes being among the highest users of mobile phones in the world, there is a significant opportunity for Danish e-government to become more user focused by increasing the extent to which e-government services are delivered via mobile phones (so called "m-government"). There is no data available on the channel preferences of Danish e-government users, but it can be assumed that across time more Danes will be interested in having government services accessible via their mobile phones where this is a feasible and appropriate mode of delivery. Among the wide range of issues related to adapting services to mobile delivery that organisations will have to face, one particular government-wide concern will arise from the fact that the current approach to securing e-government through the use of PKI in Denmark is a PC-centric model that may not be compatible with mobile platforms.

Figure A.15. **Use of electronic delivery channels**
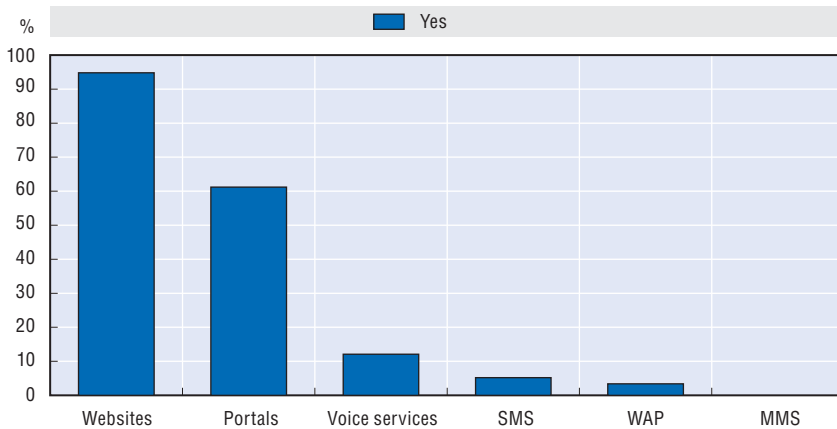
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Denmark.

The large difference in use of organisations' websites *versus* portals indicates a significant opportunity for Denmark to increase the level of user-focus it is already achieving in delivery of e-government. The number of websites in the Danish public sector is large and growing, with more than 2 000 now in service, none of which are subject to any formal or mandatory design guidelines (a recommendation made in the MVTU study of study of citizens' e-government experiences). In their absence, there is potential to present users with a bewildering and inconsistent array of options for accessing e-government, and also to fail to achieve the most efficient and effective use of the Internet as a delivery channel.

Although portals are potentially more user-focused way of delivering online information and services, most existing OECD government portals simply aggregate information and services into a more coherent and conveniently accessed bundle of e-government offerings. Overall, Danish government makes significant use of portals and survey results indicate that this will increase.

Local service delivery strategy

The majority of government service delivery occurs at the local government level in Denmark. The government is working to establish "Local Service Centres" under the authority of each municipality to increase access to these services.

This relationship between e-government and offline service delivery is highlighted in some of the following design principles, which will underpin implementation of the Service Centres:

● digital self-service solutions will be developed for all citizen-related services;

- the most important citizen services provided by regions and the state will be delivered by municipalities, enabled by Service Centres;

- existing barriers to coherent service delivery will be removed;

- a "Service Centre Act" that lays down the rules for the Service Centres' authority regarding service delivery on behalf of other public authorities, including rules for exchange of personal data, will be enacted.

The last two principles in particular will not only enable the functioning of the new Service Centres, but will also further contribute to the ability to implement user-focused services online. Interviews revealed a universally positive attitude towards the Service Centre concept, and clear identification of the relationship between this initiative and many aspects of the Danish e-government programme (and, to a lesser degree, to public sector modernisation). Given this strong support – along with concerns about the plethora of government portals currently in existence, the drive for increased government efficiency, and the strong political and administrative commitment to more user-focused offline service delivery – it is again interesting to note hat Denmark has not yet looked at development of either a multi-channel service delivery strategy or, more narrowly, a complementary government-wide policy and strategy on service delivery through Internet portals and websites.

Building trust in e-government – consulting citizens online

Participants in the OECD survey indicated low levels of user demand in areas of e-government involving consultation or participation in Denmark. This does not mean either that the Danish government has no goals in the broad area of e-engagement of its citizens, or that government organisations have been taking no steps in this direction.

The government has committed to the use of ICT to underpin "creation of a more open, user-oriented and democratic administration" where both citizens and businesses have greater access to the workings of government and are able to participate in strengthened dialogue with politicians.

Other forms of "e-engagement" are also being used in Denmark. A particularly topical example is use of the Internet to facilitate learning and dialogue over the establishment of the new Danish regions, as described below.

Hungary

For several years, Hungary has focused on delivering the 20 e-services benchmarked by the EU. This has led to the delivery of a number of e-services for citizens and businesses within specific sectors, and many services have been put online quickly. A number of EU member states and other OECD

countries have also only within recent years begun to focus on a more user-focused approach to developing e-government services. This has often led to a rethinking of strategies and goals in order to better enable the implementation of principles like "deliver data once, use many times" and "seamless services" supporting more integrated and coherent services in the public sector. Hungary, being a relatively latecomer in the field of e-government, has had the opportunity to begin the development of e-services with a user focused attitude.

Despite the maturity of e-services, Hungary (like most OECD countries) is suffering from lagging user take-up of e-services for citizens. Delivering services online is not a guarantee of user take-up, leaving governments in a dilemma concerning the increasing focus on benefits realisation of e-government investments. It is, however, significant that Hungary offers a large number of online services but has a very low user take-up rate; this implies again that focusing on putting services online is not sufficient to ensure proper take-up. Other parameters must be taken into account, including the challenge of a significant digital divide.

Prioritisation strategy of development of the EU-benchmarked 20 e-government services

Hungary's efforts to show progress in the EU-benchmarked 20 e-services has paid off. The latest benchmarking study released in June 2006 shows that Hungary has significantly improved its overall position since 2004. It has moved from the second quartile (25-50%) to the third quartile (75-100%) in online sophistication of e-services and from the first quartile (0-25%) to the second quartile (25-50%) regarding share of e-services fully available online. Hungary has managed according to these benchmarks to rise above the EU28[7] average for both benchmarks on online sophistication and on percentage of fully online available services. The improved performance in the EU benchmarks is clearly shown in Figure A.16. The figure shows a significant increase in online sophistication from 2004 to 2006. Hungary is now above the EU28 average (75%) and EU10 average (69%), with a total rating of 81% in 2006. In terms of full online availability of e-services, Figure A.16 shows a significant increase from 2004 to 2006, with a total rating of 50% – above the EU28 average (48%) and EU10 average (42%).

Government-wide drivers of user-focused e-government

Even though general user take-up of e-services is low, Hungary has recently seen significant user interest in the "Client Gate" – a transactional gateway to the Hungarian government. A rapidly growing number of citizens and businesses seem to find the "Client Gate" relevant and useful.

Figure A.16. **Country results: Full availability of online services**
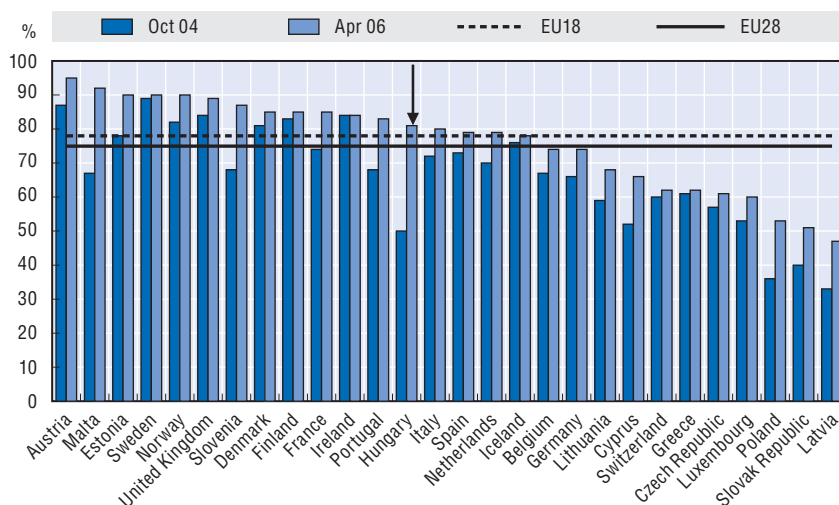
Source: *Online Availability of Public Services: How is Europe Progressing?* Report of the Fifth Measurement, June 2006, prepared by Cap Gemini for the European Commission.

Hungary has – like most OECD countries – established a government portal to make it easier for citizens and businesses to find and access government information, and find relevant e-services offered by different public authorities. All public authorities are obliged by law to put information online by 1 January 2007, so the government portal's role as the key entry point to the public sector for citizens and businesses will further increase.

Concrete examples of user take-up enhancing initiatives are The Client Gate (Box A.1) which offers users access to a secured gateway to access transactional e-government services, and the Hungarian government portal (Box A.2).


Box A.1. **User take-up: The Client Gate**

In many cases, services require personal identification before they can be offered online. Often, authentication is specific to each service, requiring users to re-enter their details for each new transaction or service. The result is often that users have several different user identification numbers or names and multiple passwords. While progress is being made in standardising the citizen enrolment process, access to personalised government services can still be complex.

<div style="border:1px solid">

Box A.1. **User take-up: The Client Gate** *(cont.)*

The transactional gateway, the Client Gate, was launched in April 2005 and is accessible via the e-government portal (*www.magyarorszag.hu*). It allows users to securely identify themselves online and gain access to transactional e-government services such as corporation taxes and VAT declaration, declaration and notification of income taxes, personal appointment requests to document offices, driving licence services, car registration services, request and delivery of certificates (birth, marriage), and change-of-address announcements for citizens. The authenticated registration can be requested personally at a documentary office or can be acquired with the help of an electronic signature.[1] It is important to note that central government institutions are obliged to link to the Client Gate authentication system, while local governments have the choice to whether or not integrate their local e-services with the Client Gate.[2]

The number of Client Gate users has increased significantly since its launch in April 2005, to reach a total of 150 147 users at the end of June 2006, as shown in the figure below.

Number of persons registered at the Client Gate (end of month), 2005-06
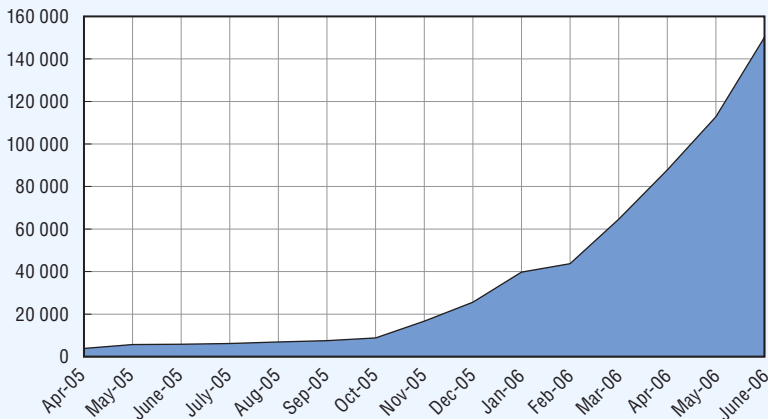
The Client Gate has in 2008 over 640 000 registered users. Over 80 different public administration proceedings can be initiated in the virtual document office, the most popular of which is making appointments to the document office, used approximately 230 000 times in 2007.

1. Electronic Government Centre of the Prime Minister's Office (EKK) (2006), *Az e-Kormányzat Stratégia jövőbeni koordinálási feladata* (Future Co-ordination tasks of e-government strategy), 31 March 2006.
2. Ministry of Informatics and Communications (IHM) (2006), *Elektronikus hatósági ügyintézés mozzanatai és szabályozásuk* (Electronic administrative case handling: elements and regulation).
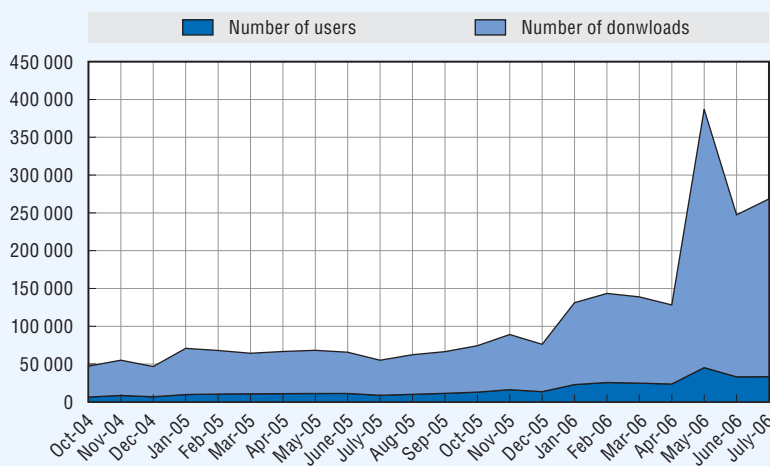
Source: Kopint-Datorg zRt, 2006. Prime Minister's Office, 2008. See also the Hungarian *e-Public Administration 2010 Strategy*, p. 21, *www.ekk.gov.hu/hu/ekk/strategia,* accessed 4 October 2008.

</div>

> ### Box A.2. **User take-up: The government portal –** *www.magyarorszag.hu*
>
> A web engine of an independent market research institute regularly assesses the number of users of the e-government portal. The numbers are sharply increasing. Since October 2004, the number of users and the number of downloads per day have increased 419% and 475%, respectively (to the end of July 2006). Throughout the year, users mostly access the e-government portal to consult the description of administrative procedures. Other services with high take-up are the news section and the law query.
>
> The Client Gate has over 640 thousand registered users. Over 80 different public administration proceedings can be initiated in the virtual document office, the most popular of which is making appointments to the document office, used approximately 230 000 times in 2007.
>
> **Government Portal Number of downloaded pages and visitors per day (monthly average)**
>
>
>
> *Source:* Kopint-Datorg zRt, 2006. Prime Minister's Office, 2008. See also the Hungarian *e-Public Administration 2010 Strategy*, p. 21, *www.ekk.gov.hu/hu/ekk/strategia*, accessed 4 October 2008.

Tackling the digital divide

A recent survey by Eurostat[8] showed that 34% of EU residents have never used a computer and 57% of them do not use regularly the Internet (see Figure A.17). According to the survey, 51.2% of Hungarian individuals aged 16-74 have never used a computer and 63% of them were not regular Internet users in 2007.[9] For computer usage among EU member states, only Greece is behind Hungary. This shows that Hungarians who have the possibility and ability to use PCs intend to use Internet as well. Hungary is significantly

Figure A.17. **Individuals not using computers or the Internet, 2005**

As percentage of the total number of individuals aged 16-74
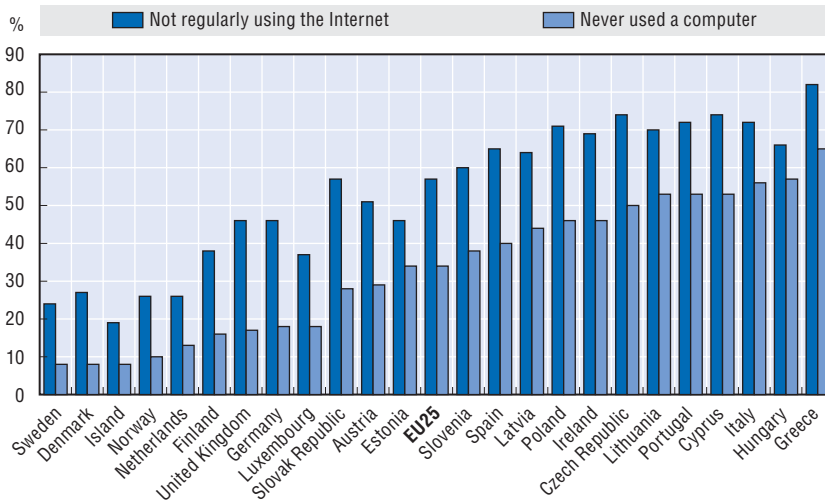
Source: Eurostat (2006), Community survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals in Eurostat 2006, Statistics in Focus, How skilled are Europeans in using computers and the Internet?, June 2006.

behind the EU-25 average regarding computer usage implying a large barrier for an increase in e-government user take-up. A recent survey of Hungarian households[10] showed that lack of interest, the lack of need, the absence of computer are the major obstacles to take-up of Internet usage in Hungary.

A recent survey of Hungarian households[11] showed that lack of interest in the Internet is the major obstacle to take-up of Internet usage in Hungary. About 60% of the respondents felt that they had no need to have Internet access.

The low use of e-commerce among the population may indicate challenges for user take-up of e-services. A large percentage of the population in Hungary does not believe in using the Internet for transactional purposes because of privacy and data protection reasons (which could also be connected to a relatively low level of penetration of credit cards). In an international comparison, the penetration of electronic payments using Internet banking and e-commerce is still low in Hungary.

Raising awareness and targeting the user with a gaming approach

One of the applications offered on the governmental portal is a participatory tool to improve public engagement in government issues: eGames – the eGovernment Assessment, Measuring and Evaluation System. eGames enables citizens to actively participate in online discussions on social, political

and economic issues, proposals for decisions etc. Implementation of eGames was a challenge – the online interaction had to be defined carefully in order to balance data protection, freedom of expression and the moderation of online contributions. High-level public sector representatives and politicians are regularly invited to chat with citizens on different topics. The responses during these online "office hours" as well as their other contributions are measured by points given by the users.

Mexico

The Good Government Agenda emphasises putting citizens at the centre of government and providing services that are more customer-focused. Most agencies surveyed by the OECD agreed that delivering more customer-focused services is a high priority, and several people interviewed by the OECD saw their role as one of helping citizens better interact with government.

However, some agencies and officials are still not clear about the extent to which the current e-government strategy is really about improving customer service as opposed to the digitalisation of existing government-centric processes. Several government officials interviewed by the OECD mentioned that perhaps the Mexican E-Government Network is pushing online services too much – to the detriment of customer focus. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the OECD that it might be more useful to also focus on how to best link new technology to traditional services and provide a range of choices for interaction with government so as to best improve the user experience – the basic idea behind a multi-channel service delivery strategy.

Specific objectives

One of the most important objectives for the implementation of e-government in Mexico is to strengthen citizen engagement and trust in government. Of the agencies surveyed by the OECD, 61% reported that this was a "very important" objective, and another 25% reported that it was an "important" objective (Figure A.18). Responding to external pressure for e-government was also considered important, in particular responding to pressure from businesses.

Elements of a customer-focused e-government strategy

The vast majority of respondents to the OECD survey include a customer focus as part of their e-government strategy. Three-quarters of respondents include "providing services that best meet expressed user needs" as part of their e-government strategy. Sixty-one per cent include providing feedback mechanisms for users and incorporating comments. Nearly half include

Figure A.18. **E-Government objectives in Mexico: Responsiveness and engagement**
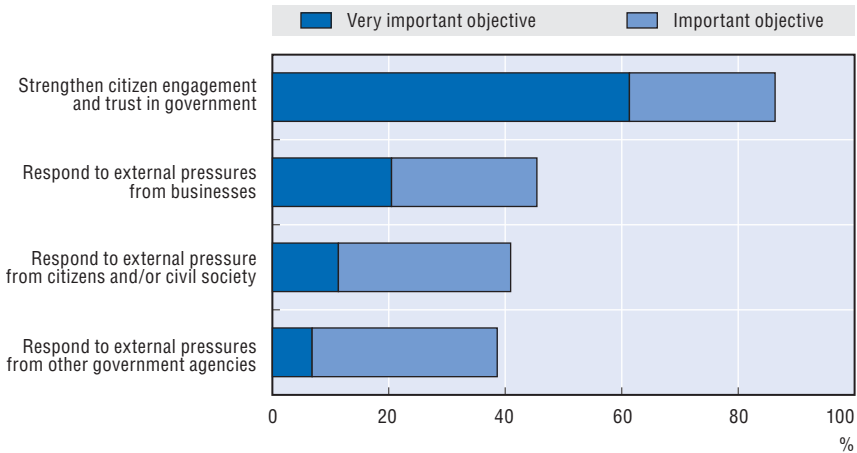
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Mexico, Question 2.1.

anticipating future customer needs and adapting to changing user preference in their e-government strategies. Only 11% of respondents did not have a documented focus on one of the areas on customer focus mentioned in the OECD survey.

Figure A.19. **Elements included in strategies for citizen-focused e-government**
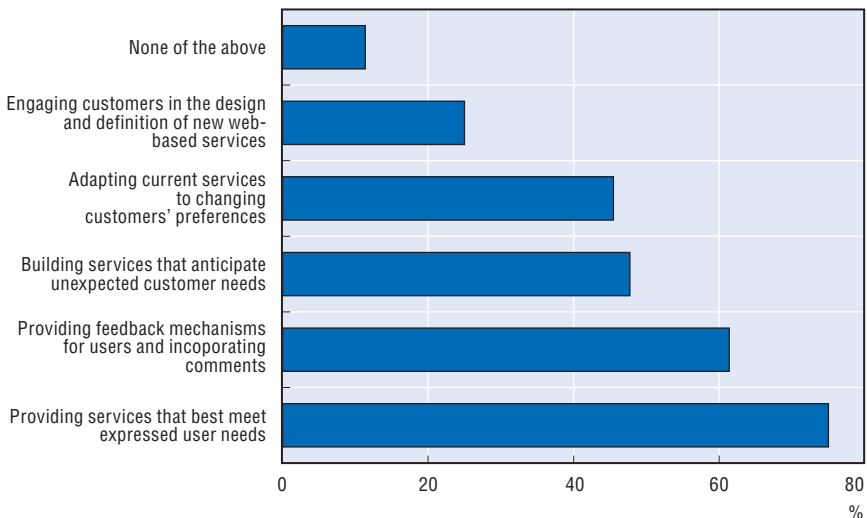
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Mexico, Question 7.2.

Impact of e-government on openness, quality, and seamless service delivery

Three recurring elements of Mexican e-government strategies with regard to customer focus are increased openness in government, better quality services and seamless service delivery.

Open and transparent government

Customer focus is strongly associated with improving openness and trust in government in the Mexican political context. The Transparency Law and the Professional Civil Service Federal Law are two elements that have contributed to provide citizens with a clearer idea of what the government does and how it does it, and to a certain extent it could also be argued that these two elements have also contributed to improve the relationship between citizens and the government.

In terms of the impact of e-government, nearly three quarters of agencies surveyed by the OECD reported that e-government had a "significant positive impact" on transparency and accountability of the administration (Figure A.20). According to the OECD Survey of E-Government in Mexico, 73% of agencies interviewed stated that e-government had a significant positive impact on transparency and accountability in their organisation.

E-Government has simplified citizens' requests for government information and has also made public information more accessible to citizens. This report has analysed some of the solutions that the Mexican government has implemented to provide a more responsive, transparent, and open

Figure A.20. **Impact of e-government on transparency and accountability in the administration**
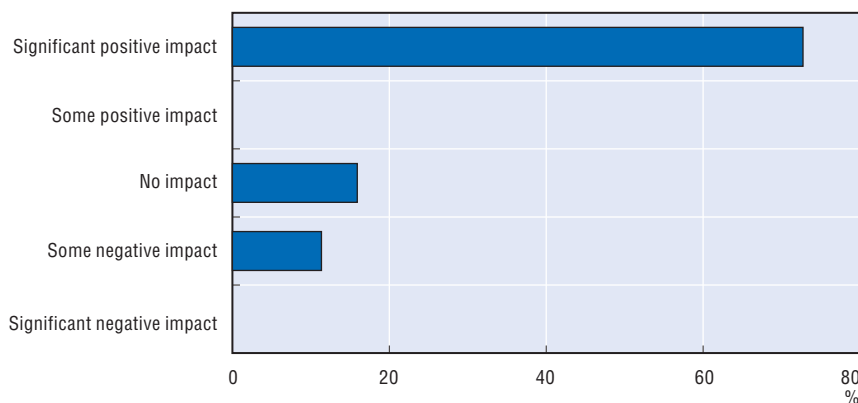
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Mexico, Question 10.1.

government that engages citizens. The SISI electronic system of the Federal Institute for Access to Public Information manages citizens' information requests on a wide array of public information, and it has been widely adopted as the most used channel for citizens to make requests for public information. E-procurement systems in the Ministry of Public Administration (*Compranet*) and the Social Security Institute (*IMSS va a comprar, IMSS compró*) have also provided examples of the positive impact of e-government on transparency in organisational change in Mexico. Finally, traditional tools for citizen engagement such as letter writing to the President – a constitutional right in Mexico – have expanded to include electronic channels to strengthen trust in government, providing and updated and convenient way for citizens to engage in a very basic type of civic involvement.

Quality services

E-Government has been one of the ways which the Mexican government has sought to improve the quality of government services. Of the agencies surveyed by the OECD, 84% reported a positive impact of e-government on quality in their organisations. E-Government can improve quality, among many ways, by making a service available at all times, by speeding processing time, and by bringing together information from multiple sources. An example of this is the Federal Government Citizen Portal (*www.gob.mx*), which offers information from many government organisations and their services in a single place. While the portal does not tailor services to specific citizens' needs, it does tailor the information provided to different groups (*e.g.* students, elders, children, businesses, etc).

Mexican government organisations commonly evaluate the quality of their services through "ISO" certifications. The International Organisation for Standardisation evaluates the quality of businesses and governments with a reference framework that certifies the level of quality of an organisation's services and processes. The framework provides a common technological language between suppliers and their customers, which facilitates trade and the transfer of technology. Similarly, the certification makes it easier to evaluate quality from one organisation to the next. In Mexico, 1 453 government centres have an ISO 9000 quality certification, which together constitute 75.5% of government centres with high impact services to citizens.[12] The Ministry of Communications and Transportation, the Federal Electricity Commission, and NAFIN are three examples of government organisations with ISO 9000 quality certification in 100% of their areas.[13]

Quality in government constitutes one of the items in the Good Government Agenda, and the Mexican government has introduced a quality policy and a quality model for the Federal Public Administration. The

President's Office for Government Innovation has developed this quality policy and model with the goal of creating a world-class government delivering quality services through honest public servants and taking into account citizens' perception of government. The INTRAGOB Quality Model (*Modelo de Calidad INTRAGOB*) is oriented to satisfy the expectations and needs of citizens and clients on the products and services delivered by the Federal Public Administration.[14] The model is based on three indicators: performance, effectiveness, and efficiency, and it is a process-oriented evaluation of agencies' quality and service-delivery goals. E-Government is tied to the INTRAGOB model in the broad horizontal goal of delivering timely and efficient responses to citizens' needs and requests. The model also outlines clear guidelines for ICT quality administration: agencies should identify technologies and experts and share innovations and lessons learned. The INTRAGOB model has evaluated the

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Box A.3. Mexico: E-Government and High-Impact Services (HIS)

High Impact Services (HIS) is a term used in Mexico to refer to the most important and demanded government transactions and services that citizens need in their daily life. The government seeks to provide assistance and personalised HIS to the majority of the Mexican population. HIS are classified by themes according to citizens' needs and selection is based on the 80/20 rule that establishes the criteria of identification: 20% of the most relevant information which is most frequently looked up by 80% of the users. HIS are then classified according to user profiles (citizens, companies, public servants, etc.) in order to increase the number and use of transactional services in a simple way. HIS are also classified to reinforce the customer relationship management and multi-channel strategy of organisations through technological convergence. This allows agencies to incorporate existing online services and generate new ones. Some examples of high-impact services are passport appointments, driver licences, job applications, health insurance, labour rights and provision of information on women's health.

Portals are also considered HIS because they organise information around citizen needs in a thematic manner, they promote access to other HIS from different government and private organisations, and they are available online at all times. The government's goal is to develop portals under a common architecture while inter-operability standards are adopted, but this goal has been achieved at a very slow pace. Users should be able to find high-impact services based on basic needs (topic dimension), functions and tools of the site and sectors participating (those who offer information and services). In some organisations, HIS have been identified as specific targets for online migration. For example, the Ministry of the Interior has 60 services in its process registry, and the 12 that were identified as high-impact services were put online.

Federal Public Administration since 2001, and in 2004, the average score for the whole administration was 350, a 320% increase since the first annual evaluation.[15] Similarly, the President's Office awards an INTRAGOB award.

In spite of these and other advances on the quality of government services, over one third of agencies surveyed by the OECD reported that e-government had a negative impact on citizen engagement. This finding could be explained by the fact that citizens are not taking up electronic services at the government's expected rate and, as a result, agencies report that e-government has had a low impact on engaging citizens in Mexico. However, no data exists on the level of citizen take-up compared to access to online services or to online service quality in Mexico. Citizen engagement is about the two-way relationship between citizens and government, and access to online information and online services would need to improve in order to have a more positive impact on citizen engagement. Nevertheless, citizen engagement also depends on a mix of delivery channels ranging from traditional channels, such as counter and telephone, to e-channels, such as the Internet, email, SMS-messaging, interactive voice response systems and digital television. Some elements of such an approach are starting to appear in Mexico, notably as a result of the HIS methodology, as part of deregulatory efforts, and as part of agency charters. Nonetheless, a multi-channel service delivery strategy in Mexico would help to spread this concept and could further strengthen the impact of e-government on citizen engagement by allowing citizens to deal with government through the channels most convenient for them, with e-government playing a complementary rather than exclusive role.

Many studies have shown that the use of ICT can raise expectations for the provision of services. For example, citizens may expect that inquiries sent by email are responded to within one week, while the expectation for responses by post may be one month. Government organisations in Mexico have also found this to be the case. For example, the Ministry of Defence told the OECD that it is a major challenge to adapt services to changing possibilities and changing customer demand. In order to adapt to this change, the Ministry believes that it needs additional capacity and training systems.

Some organisations in Mexico are responding to this changing demand head on by vastly improving their turnaround time for responses. For example, historically the President's Office took on average 200 days to respond to a letter or request from citizens. Now, through the use of ICT, the response time is 20 days. Additionally, through the implementation of a new customer relationship management system, the Office hopes to shorten response time even further. The President's Office also hopes to develop the ability for citizens to track their submissions via the Internet, and this could increase citizen ownership of the services provided by giving them more of a sense of control. However, until there are higher levels of access to the

Internet for the general population, much of this effort is geared towards the use of stand-alone kiosks.

However, citizens' expectations may also change in other ways in response to the development of e-government and the information society. In addition to faster turnaround time, expectations of the functionality of services and the way in which they are organised and presented are likely to change and it is not clear whether ministries such as Defence are employing surveys on citizen or user satisfaction to understand this changing demand from citizens and users (see next section).

Seamless (or "joined-up") services

There has been some progress in unifying service delivery within individual Ministries in Mexico. For example, the Ministry of Labour now has only one database of companies for the whole administration – while in the past each directory had its own database of companies – and there were 80 databases in total. However, very few government organisations in Mexico currently offer joined up services with other organisations. Government officials interviewed by the OECD perceived an overlap of services along organisational lines, and, in their view, much would need to be done to reinvent government from the citizen's perspective. However, this is a very ambitious goal which cannot be achieved without additional collaboration. Only 13% of agencies surveyed by the OECD currently have strategies for seamless service delivery based on the delivery of services to common customer groups, though another 29% of agencies reported that they have plans to do this in the future.

Figure A.21. **Working with other government agencies**
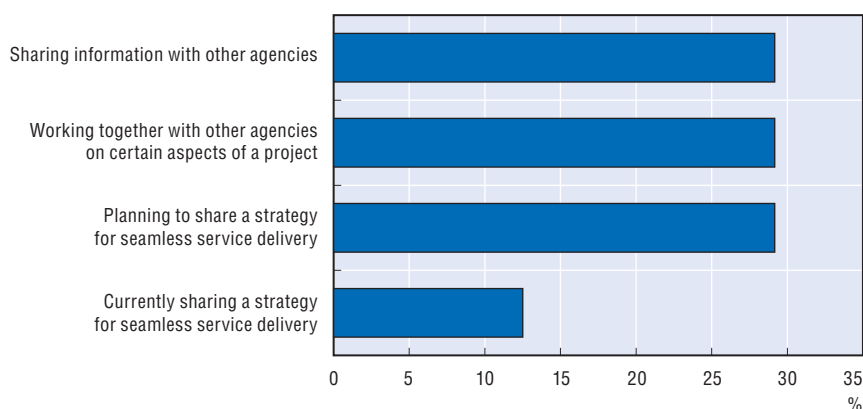
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Mexico, Question 6.1.
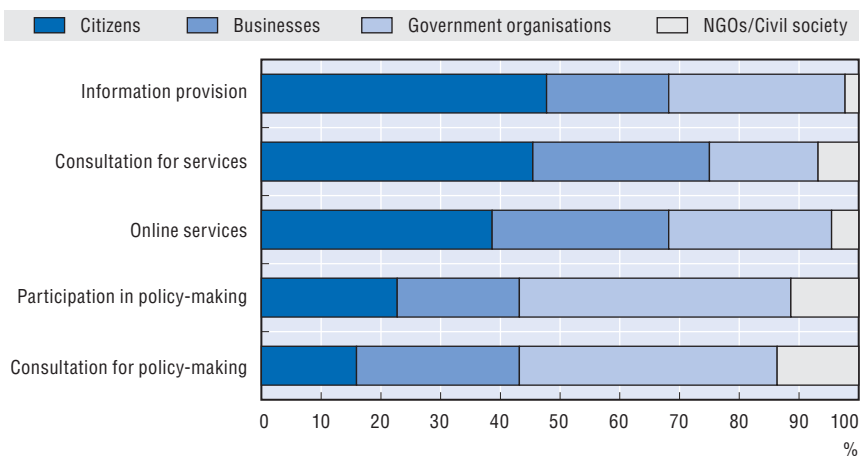
Demand for e-government

As we have seen, one of the objectives of customer-focused e-government is to meet demand from businesses, citizens and other government agencies. But what e-government services are these people and organisations demanding? What are the constraints that limit such demand? How does the government determine which services are in demand? These issues are covered in this next section.

What demand exists for e-government?

Agencies surveyed by the OECD reported that the strongest demand for e-government came from citizens and government organisations. Citizens demanded information and consultation for services, and government organisations demanded participation and consultation in policy-making, and this may reflect a desire to work more closely together on the formulation of cross-cutting policies. Nevertheless, agencies surveyed by the OECD also reported that responding to pressure from citizens was not one of the most important objectives of implementing e-government in their organisations. This does not necessarily show a lack of user focus, but it does reflect the importance given to users in the creation and provision of online services. Agencies surveyed by the OECD also reported a considerable demand for online services from businesses, and government organisations have responded accordingly (Box A.3). Finally, low demand from civil society groups may also reflect a relatively weak civil society in Mexico. E-Government demand reported by agencies surveyed by the OECD varied by service type, as depicted below.

Figure A.22. **E-Government demand in Mexico: Where is it coming from?**

Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Mexico, Question 7.3.

Certain ministries have clear sets of clients for e-government services, which means it is easier for them to tailor specific services for those groups. For example, the Ministry of the Environment often receives information requests from PhD students conducting research for their theses, and many require large amounts of information. Meeting the needs of these well educated and Internet-savvy clients in a cost-effective manner drives customer focused e-government in the Ministry.

E-Government can also help agencies serve more customers than they would otherwise be able to reach. For example, the Institute of the National Fund for Workers' Housing (*Instituto del Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores* – INFONAVIT), reported to the OECD during an interview that serving more customers was an immediate result of e-government. INFONAVIT was serving 300 000 in 2004 – compared to less than 200 000 customers annually in the past. Currently, the institute has a goal of serving 375 000 clients in 2005 with even less staff than what it uses now.

Box A.4. **Customer focus: Services to businesses**

Many of the most successful agencies with regard to achieving a customer focus are those that provide services to businesses. In part, this may be due to the fact that businesses tend to have higher rates of Internet access than individuals. Businesses also obtain a clearer benefit from online services because e-government services can impact their bottom line by reducing administrative costs and speeding up transaction times.

For example, NAFINSA –the Mexican Development Banking Institution – has handled 2 million consulting and advice cases through its online system. Similarly, SAT – the Administrative Tax System – has put some of its most important services to businesses online. One of these services is the registration of imported and exported goods in customs, which is done entirely online: brokers and importers can monitor the state of their merchandise via the system. Over one thousand (1 500) brokers use the system to monitor and register 7.5 million shipments every year, with 200 000 combinations of business processes and transactions online for the past 11 years.

These examples demonstrate that many online government services are available to businesses and that initial take-up has been good. However, there has been little evaluation of service quality or to see whether these services have been designed according to business needs.

Source: NAFINSA and SAT.

Understanding customer needs

Several techniques are used in Mexico to better understand user needs, including customer surveys, web statistics, feedback mechanisms and government-wide statistics (Figure A.23). Other techniques were considerably less popular.

Figure A.23. **Sources for understanding e-government demand**
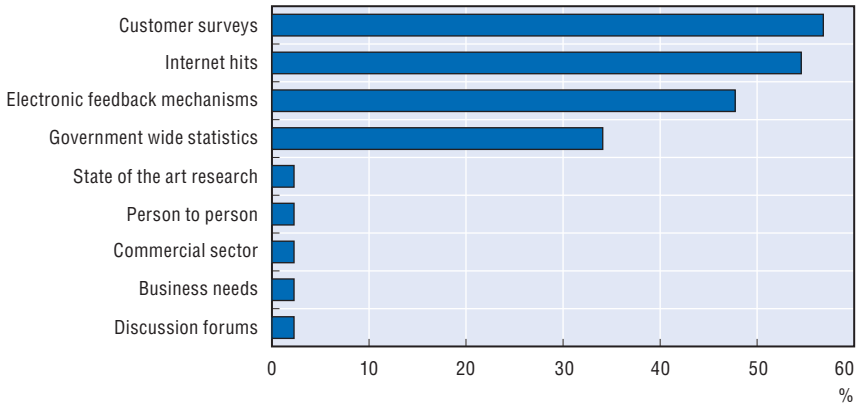
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Mexico, Question 7.5.

In the National Council for Arts and Culture (*Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* –CONACULTA), demand is estimated by the administrative unit through the use of customer surveys and evaluations. Simple web statistics are also useful to evaluate website and portal use. E-Mexico uses web statistics for its portal, and these measures show that use is growing exponentially. The e-Mexico initiative also measures traffic in its digital community centres. Feedback mechanisms, such as forms on the Internet, are used by some organisations to evaluate quality and demand for services. The Ministry of Economy uses feedback mechanisms, and has received many congratulatory emails regarding the use of e-government.

However, awareness of e-government is low among citizens, and some ministries and agencies think that additional marketing would be useful. The Ministry of the Environment told the OECD that "there is a need for greater participation of the press, and a greater emphasis on public relations". In order to improve customer's understanding of e-government, just over half of respondents have a strategy to better communicate their e-government plan to citizens, businesses, NGOs and civil society.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the most commonly used evaluation criteria for e-government projects is customer satisfaction (80%). Other criteria used that are related to customer focus include increased number of users (66%) and cost/benefit for users (55%).

Figure A.24. **Communicating the e-government implementation plan to different actors**
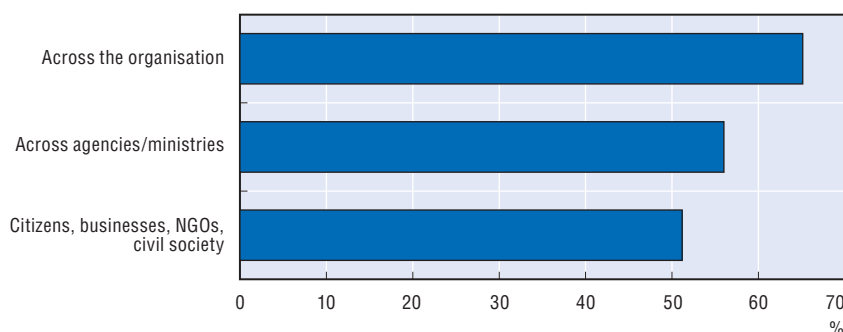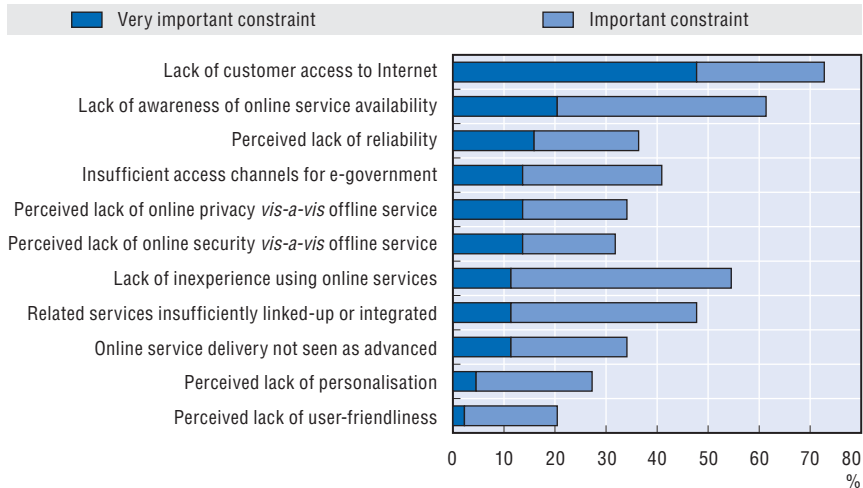

Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Mexico, Question 7.5.

Constraints on demand

Many factors constrain customer demand for e-government in Mexico, but by far the strongest constraint is the lack of customer access to the Internet. Nearly half of respondents said that the lack of access is a "very important" constraint to e-government, and another quarter said this is an "important" constraint. Some e-government officials in the Mexican government are pessimistic about the little impact that they perceive to have towards the digital divide and instead focus on the provision of online services for the early adopters of technology. Other ministries are responding to this lack of access through a focus on the back office and the use of facilitated Internet centres.

Other important constraints on demand are lack of awareness of online service availability, inexperience regarding the use of online services and/or a lack of the necessary skills and a belief that services that are insufficiently joined up.

A lack of personalisation, perceived lack of security, perceived lack of reliability and insufficient access channels were considered much less important, with many respondents considering these factors to be "not an important constraint" or "not a constraint".

Figure A.25. **Customer demand constraints in Mexico**

Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Mexico, Question 7.4.

The role of the leader

The majority of agencies surveyed by the OECD survey reported that e-government leaders have an important role to play in strengthening a customer-centred approach to e-government: 64% of respondents reported the role of the leader is "very important" and another 31% reported it as "important". However, implementing a true customer focused approach in government can be very costly, and is not always feasible in ministries and agencies that are under considerable pressure to reduce the cost of government. It can be a great challenge for government organisations to achieve customer satisfaction while reducing the cost of services, and it is up to e-government leaders to find the appropriate balance.

In order to address this challenge, agencies need to recognise that user focus means changing organisational structures and processes and reallocating resources, and this requires leadership. Additionally, agencies need to realise that all countries are behind on user focused e-government, and this would be important for leaders to take on. Finally, agencies and their leaders can better respond to user needs by taking into account geographic differences and local particularities in users' needs.

The Netherlands

For a number of years, the focus of e-government in the Netherlands has been on digitising services and putting them online. The increase in online public services has been steady and stable: Figure A.26 shows the growth of e-

services for citizens and businesses as a percentage of the total supply of services in the period 2000-04.

Figure A.26. **Supply of electronic government services, 2000-05**[1]
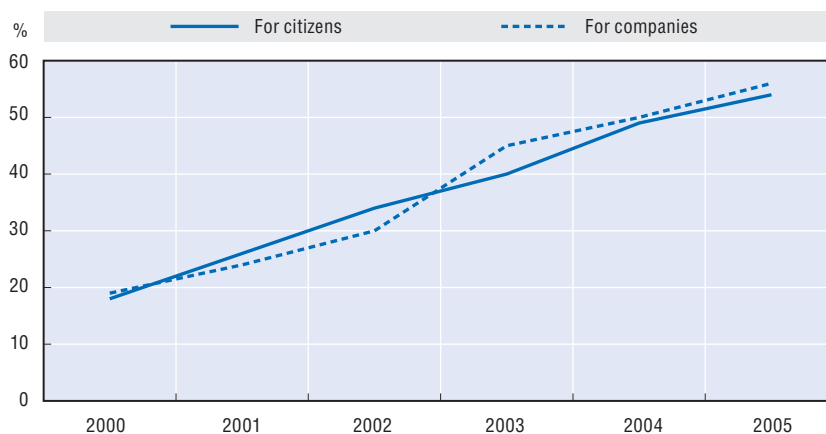
1. From 2003, the calculations have been adapted to comply with European standards. The 2003 percentages are therefore not immediately comparable with those of previous years.

Source: "The Digital Economy 2005", Statistics Netherlands, Voorburg/Heerlen, 2006, pg. 194. Advies Overheid.nl.

Government-wide drivers of user-focused e-government

The current national strategy setting out the e-government agenda in the Netherlands is the "Modernising Government" programme, in place since 2003. This programme seeks to overcome rigidities in traditional government structures and to deliver seamless services and integrate processes across organisation boundaries through public administration reform. It aims to first bring politics back to the citizens (democracy), and to reduce administrative burden on citizens and businesses by reducing the costs of bureaucracy. ICT plays an important role in this strategy, of which the major expected impacts are higher-quality service to citizens and businesses, increased administrative efficiency, lower costs of government (with cost savings for taxpayers), and higher quality of democracy through greater openness of government and enhanced opportunities for political participation.

There are four key e-government drivers for delivering improved outputs and outcomes to Dutch citizens and businesses:

1. Improved Public Sector Efficiency – Administrative burden reduction of 25% by the end of 2007.

2. Improved Electronic Services – Implementing common building blocks and key e-services with 65% of all services online by the end of 2007.

3. User-Focused Service Delivery – Better use of ICT in society.

4. International Leadership – Increase interoperability and international competitive position.

The improvement of service delivery through integration of services was prioritised on the agenda in the Netherlands as early as 1995, when a policy white paper (BIOS-3) titled "*Terug naar de toekomst*"[16] was presented to the Parliament by the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations.[17] Whereas the first and second policy white papers on "Informatization of the Public Sector" (BIOS 1 and BIOS 2) addressed ICT usage within government operations, this third paper explicitly addressed ICT usage in relations between government and society. An important aim was the reduction of fragmentation by integrating services that – from the users' perspective – are related. The term "demand pattern" was coined; this concept resembles the idea of the "life event" that came to be used around in many OECD countries, and has been further developed as a methodology to deliver e-government services in the Netherlands.

A related challenge is the issue of non-use of services. Various studies showed that many people do not use the services intended for them, such as housing benefits; this is particularly an issue among low-income groups. One solution was the establishment of one-stop shops to remove physical barriers when applying to multiple services, while increasing awareness of services on offer. Since 1999, the Netherlands has been exploring an even more active stance towards making citizens' lives easier through proactive service delivery. However, regular and consistent research into relevant target groups is not common in the Netherlands.[18]

Meeting more advanced needs of citizens may demand much more sophisticated products (they may actually be less "sophisticated" in terms of complexity with, *e.g.* 3G telephony), in the form of new services or services that deliver more added values. The development and provision of such services inevitably requires more collaboration and co-operation between public sector institutions or a "service integration" entity that can achieve the same thing, and use of new innovative concepts which are becoming increasingly possible with the advances in technology. The current strategy does not include projects with an explicit user involvement.

Multi-channel strategy to deliver services for all

OECD interviews did not provide evidence of a common government-wide strategic usage of multi-channel strategies for services. It seems that only few public organisations have established multi-channel strategies and implemented them to proactively manage user demands for services and to change user habits. Institutions' needs seem to define whether they want to engage actively in managing demands, habits and quality of service.
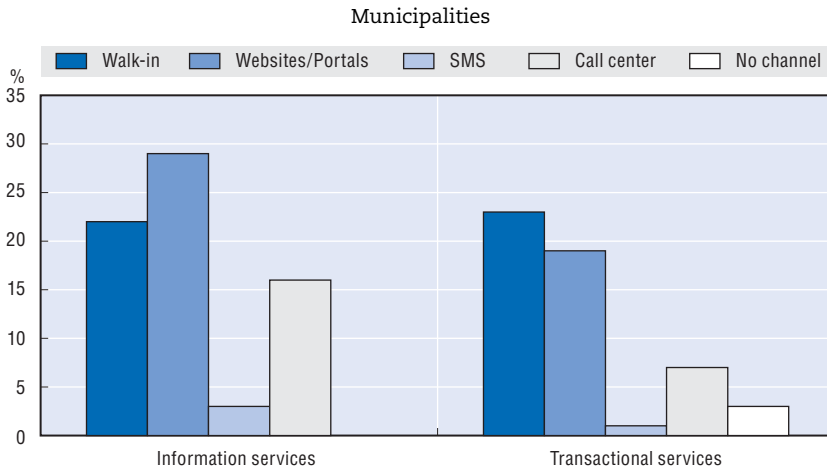
For central government, the primary channel for information provision and transactional services seems to be websites and traditional call centres (Figure A.27). It is worth noting that a relatively large number of information services (over 32%) are still conducted through call centres or by "walk-in" services (21%). It shows a great potential for further efficiency gains concerning information services. Looking at transactional services, the same picture seems to emerge, with rather large potential for user take-up of e-services; only 29% of organisations use the channel websites/portals to provide transactional services.

Figure A.27. **Channels used by organisations to provide services**
Central government
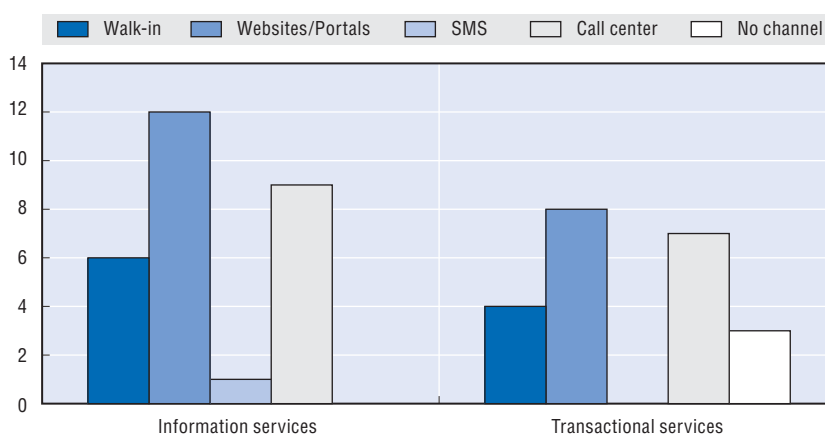
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Netherlands, 2006, Question 7.6.

In the municipalities (Figure A.28), the potential for developing information services and transactional services is larger than for central government. As municipalities typically have the most direct contact with citizens and businesses, it is not surprising that "walk-in" services for both information services and transactional services occupy a larger part of the preferred service channels offered at this level of government. There is a significant potential for making information provision more efficient by developing and marketing the usage of e-services by municipalities. For transactional services, there may be efficiency gains to harvest if a larger portion of municipal services could be provided through electronic means; this would save resources, or channel resources to more complicated cases and to groups of citizens in greater need of "face-to-face" meetings with public sector service providers.

Figure A.28. **Channels used by organisations to provide services**
Municipalities

An interesting possible service channel is service delivery through mobile phones. OECD survey results for both central and local governments indicate an underdeveloped potential channel for service delivery. As a large part of the Dutch population has mobile phones or "m-services" could be an effective tool for reaching citizens. The need for innovative m-service delivery from the public sector is illustrated by the IB-Groep, the Dutch Education Grant Administration Agency, which has customised e-government services to the target group at hand – students who almost never misplace their mobile phones (other kinds of tokens for e-authentication are frequently misplaced). Mobile phones offer a totally new type of experience to the user, and where significant investments have already been made in online channels (using desktop technologies) the disruptive effect of mobile technology may not be easy to cope with. The opportunities arise where new services are being developed (such as paying parking meter charges) rather than where old services are being upgraded online (where the processes may be largely the same in terms of data capture, workflow, etc.).

Demand-led e-government development and implementation: the e-Citizen charter

The current e-government strategy explicitly states the goal of user-focused e-government development,[19] but in recent years, priority has shifted towards a more technical goal of developing back-office functionality[20] as a pre-requisite for delivering seamless services across organisational boundaries and levels of government. This also includes an active shift towards the development of more multi-channel services, to optimise reach, and increase uptake of and user satisfaction with government services, rather

than focusing on e-government services.[21] This approach seems sensible for a transition phase during which a demand-led strategy should be implemented.

The Dutch e-government policy focus on citizens' needs, better services – and the tradition of broad consultation on the development of society as a whole – is at odds with actual implementation. The ICTU-run *Burger@Overheid.nl,* the e-Citizen programme,[22] was set up to improve and monitor these ambitions. The aim of the programme is to create a competence centre for citizen-focused e-government development that enables the programme to inform public sector officials on e-government issues.

The Netherlands has established an e-Citizen Charter to ensure that e-government development has a citizen focus. It is too early to determine whether this programme has had an impact on user take-up. *Burger@Overheid.nl* does measure citizens' experiences through an e-Citizen Panel of 2 300 people, tracking frequency of usage of government websites and problems experienced when using these websites.

Only about 30% of users experienced no problems when visiting public sector websites. Clearly, website user-friendliness needs to be improved. The monitor also found that a high percentage of the public would like to see more proactive communication from the government; for example, they would like to receive information via the Internet, or via e-newsletters. It is possible to conclude, therefore, that there appears to be a gap between the potential that ICT offers government agencies for informing the public and their actual use of ICT for this purpose.

Awareness raising

In order to raise awareness of the availability and value of e-services, the Dutch government promotes "good practices" and exchange of experiences through conferences like "Innovation Public Sector Conference" and "The Yearly Web Award".[23] The Innovation Public Sector Conference showcases a number of innovations initiated by governments (on different levels) to improve their services. During this conference, representatives of different levels of government exchange ideas and experiences. There are no users involved, but initiators can learn from others' experiences. The same applies to the Yearly Web Award. This award looks only at innovative government websites.

Norway

Most OECD countries are structuring e-government around a focus on the user. The aim is to create value for users of public services by providing efficient, easily accessible and high-quality public services that are developed and delivered to meet the real needs of users, not government agencies. This section looks at the extent to which Norway has developed a user-focused-

approach in implementing e-government. In particular it examines *i)* what central government has done to understand the demand for e-government and anticipate user needs; and *ii)* the extent to which available services are accessible, respond to high-quality standards and are organised around citizens' needs (*e.g.* around life events). The section also looks at the measures taken by government to improve online access to information and openness in government and to foster online public consultation and participation in policy making.

Demand for e-government services

Understanding the demand for e-government services is an important aspect of the user-focused approach and the first step in building up services that meet user needs and expectations. While the number and range of online services currently available – and users' experience with them – can provide an indication of the current level of demand, a clear understanding of users' profiles, needs and preferences can help in designing and developing new online services.

In common with most OECD countries, in Norway there is limited knowledge about the overall demand for e-government services, although a number of surveys have provided a general indication in terms of the population served by government online. A government-sponsored survey carried out in 2003 showed that Norwegians are very likely to be online (69%) and that those online are highly likely to use e-government (85%).[24] While this indicates that Norwegians are willing to use the Internet to interact with government, national statistics show that only 50% have done so at some time.[25] These figures point to a considerable potential demand for e-government services.

This lack of knowledge indicates that, as in most OECD countries, a real understanding of user demand has not yet become a major driver for e-government development in Norway. This is also suggested by the results of the OECD survey, which indicate that:

- Responding to external pressure from citizens and/or civil society and businesses is considered to be a less important reason for the implementation of e-government.
- Only a few respondents state that citizen (5%) and business (9%) demand represent the most important drivers for e-government in their organisations.

Main features of the demand for e-government

The OECD survey provides a mixed picture of the demand for e-government as experienced by government organisations. While respondents indicate experiencing the largest demand for online services

from businesses (*e.g.* permits applications, tax declarations), the demand for information provision is more equally spread between citizens (36%) and businesses (31%) (Figure A.29).

Figure A.29. **Demand for e-government**
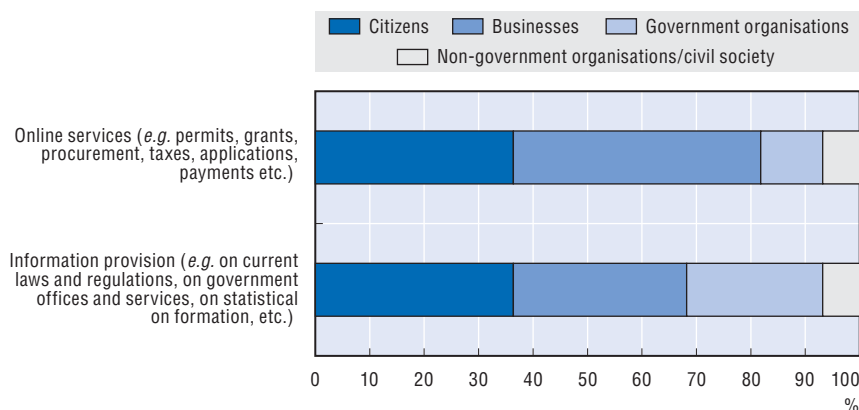
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Norway.

This may be due to the fact that, as in other OECD countries, businesses are: i) better organised to articulate demand for electronic services; ii) have in general more numerous and more frequent interactions with government than they do with citizens; iii) have greater incentives to interact with government online (i.e. through reduction of the cost of transactions); and iv) have a greater access to ICT than citizens. The numbers show that 97% of large businesses in Norway with more than 100 employees have Internet access, and 76% of small businesses (5 to 9) reported having access.[26] In contrast, as mentioned before, about 55% of households have access to the Internet.

Understanding the demand

In Norway most of the organisations use traditional techniques to understand user demand. Most respondents indicated customer surveys (66%) as a tool. Respondents also indicated using web hits and electronic feedback mechanisms as instruments for collecting information on the user. Government-wide statistics are considered less popular tools (Figure A.30). Statistics Norway has conducted a survey on ICT utilisation in public administration and in municipalities. However, these surveys do not specifically address the issue of understanding user preferences and the demand for e-government services.

Figure A.30. **Mechanism to understand user demand for e-government**
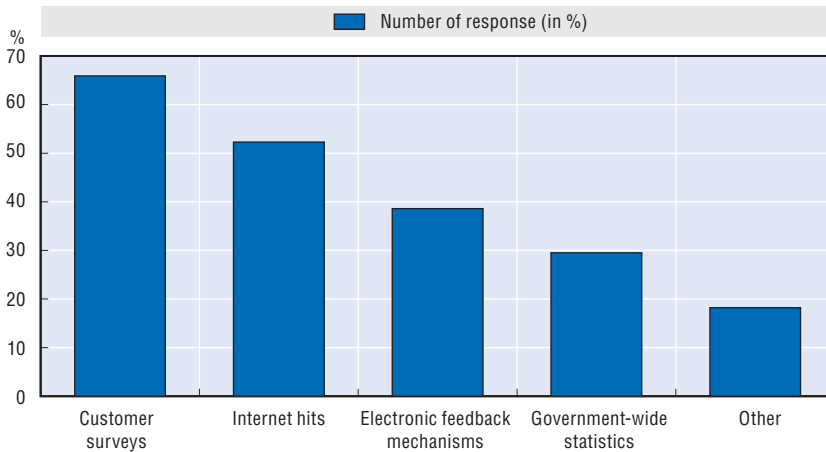
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Norway.

Constraints on demand

The biggest single constraint to customer demand (according to the OECD survey respondents) is that services are not sufficiently joined up. E-Government offers new opportunities to develop services that are organised and delivered according to user preferences. Norway has made some progress in developing joined-up services organised around service users (*e.g.* through portals). However, there are still a relatively limited number of organisations that currently provide joined-up services with other organisations.

Among other factors constraining demand, the lack of awareness of online service availability is perceived to be one of the most important, according to OECD survey respondents. All else being equal, the more those users have experience with online services, the greater the support and demand for e-government. This can have implications in terms of developing a proper policy and activities designed to increase the visibility of online services, especially to citizens that are likely to have less interaction with government.

Government has been active in this area by developing, in 2002, the public sector information portal which provides a first access point to public sector information in Norway, and guides citizens in the identification of public information and services (Box A.5). Interviews with government officials indicate, however, that the portal is not very well known by agencies and ministries, and budgets for advertising may be limited. This is confirmed by survey results showing that only about 40% of respondents are likely to have their organisations website linked to or be linked from the public sector information portal.

Box A.5. **The public sector information portal: *Norge.no***

The Norwegian public sector information portal (*Norge.no*) is a link-based portal which provides a single "electronic" front door to the public sector and help the user identify public services and information in Norway through links to public organisations' websites at all administrative levels and sectoral areas (*e.g.* health, education, central government, local government, etc.). The portal contains a search engine that facilitates the search and collection of information on public sector organisations, services, laws, regulations, duties, rights, etc. The portal does not contain original content nor downloadable documents from other organisations, but links to external websites that belong to the public sector, including: public administration agencies and enterprises, the Norwegian Royal Household, state-owned enterprises, trusts and organisations connected with the public sector or with special tasks of national importance.

The portal was launched in 2000 as part of a government initiative in co-operation with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and other public authorities (*e.g.* the County Governor, Western Norway Research Group and Statskonsult) and vendors. The portal was designed to give citizens and public sector employees a comprehensive view of public administration in Norway. Following an evaluation exercise, the project has been reorganised and transformed in a public agency under the Ministry of Modernisation beginning from January 2005 with the objectives of *i)* helping simplify the process of making use of public services and obtaining information; *ii)* inspiring more public sector organisations to appear on the Internet; *iii)* improving the quality of public services by providing a single gateway to the public sector on the Internet. The portal is run from the County Governor's Office in Sogn and Fjordane.

Norge.no also provides a help desk that assists the citizen in searching and retrieving information, gives advice on specific information (*e.g.* interpretation of a Norwegian law), and helps the user identify and get in contact with the right public agency. The help desk can be accessed by phone, e-mail, SMS, chat, fax or letter. Users of the help desk are kept anonymous. In addition Norge.no provides e-chat, SMS and e-mail services. *Norge.no* has also launched an English version of the site (*www.norway.no*).

The release of the first version of the citizen portal "Min Side" (see section on enabling joined up services), which is planned in June 2005, will use *Norge.no* as access point for public services from government and municipalities.

Another constraint on e-government demand is that online services are not seen by the public as being sufficiently advanced. The European Commission's 2004 eEurope benchmarking exercise shows that Norway ranks relatively highly (sixth position) in terms of the "sophistication" (*i.e.* degree of interactivity) of online services it provides to both citizens and businesses. While benefits for users do not necessarily increase along with rising service sophistication, the development of such services is nevertheless key to meeting the expectations of many users of e-government. Government organisations' perception that a lack of advancement of e-government services constrains demand for them may simply indicate that they are aware of increased levels of user expectations, and that they feel a need to keep up with these expectations in order to increase the take-up of online services. This is in line with the 2003 eNorway Status Report which warned that, although Norwegians are among the most active populations when it comes to using government services online, there are reasons for thinking that the services provided by the state are not developing in line with demand.[27]

Providing services to citizens and businesses

Despite the fact that the largest demand for e-government services comes from businesses, the OECD survey shows that ministries and agencies are more citizen- than business-oriented in the delivery of public services. Of the respondents, 72% reported providing services to citizens (G2C), 63% reported providing services to businesses (G2B), 64% to government organisations (G2G) and 58% to non-government organisations.

However, in terms of development of simple one-way electronic data reporting systems, Norway has made significant progress in developing user-focused solutions for serving business. One example is the ALTINN system for reporting business data (Box A.6). When it comes to the provision of interactive online services, development has been less rapid. The impact of electronic services delivery on the front office of e-government is relatively new, and few evaluations have been done so far to measure its impact and benefits.

Developing quality services

One of the key aspects of user-focused e-government is the provision of services that meet a high standard of quality. Almost 60% of survey respondents reported a positive impact of e-government on the technical quality of services (*e.g.* service reliability). Almost 60% of respondents reported including technical quality of services as a criterion of e-government evaluation.

Box A.6. **Common solutions for businesses: Altinn**

Altinn is a common Internet portal for public reporting, created in 2002 by the Norwegian Tax Administration, Statistics Norway, and the Brønnøysund Register Centre. Its aim is to ease the burden of public reporting by enabling it to be done electronically, implying improved data quality and lower costs both for the submitter and recipients of the reports.

The portal was officially launched in December 2003 and has been in full operation throughout 2004. The responsibility for administering and developing Altinn is allocated to the Brønnøysund Register Centre. At the launching of the portal 85 different public forms were available; during the first six months of 2004 more than 1.7 million forms have been submitted through Altinn and the amount of compulsory forms submitted electronically is constantly growing. As an example, nearly 200 000 Norwegian enterprises handed in their tax reports through Altinn in 2004, which represents 50% growth from the year before. The types of reports that can be sent are VAT returns, annual accounts, wage and absenteeism statistics, company and self-employed tax returns, etc. The Altinn forms all have the same design.

The users of Altinn can either fill in the forms directly on the Internet portal or use their own IT systems to transfer data, for example salary and accounting systems or a year-end accounting package. The companies' own IT systems can transfer pre-filled forms to the portal through a simple interface; the forms can subsequently be completed and signed in the portal. The user also gets an automatic note of forms when deadlines are imminent, and necessary online guidance on what forms to send to which public agency. All forms contain relevant information that already exists in the public IT systems and registers. The forms are dynamic so there is no need to answer questions that are not specifically related to the user.

Altinn is a 24/7 solution based on a .NET platform. The solution is an open standard (XML, SOAP) solution, and integration with the IT systems for the enterprises is implemented through the help of web services. Altinn is designed for any security level and the software ensures that access to and treatment of data are restricted to people and software with proper access rights. Security mechanisms are incorporated for secure storage and tracking of data.

The plan for the future is to incorporate most of existing public forms in the portal, and the number is constantly growing. Even citizens will in the future be able to use Altinn as the goal is to create a "Highway for collection of information". User feedback enables continuous improvement of the user interface.

Source: www.altinn.no.

Few quality assessment exercises have been undertaken at central government level in 2001. The government portal (*Norway.no*), in collaboration with the Western Norway Research Institute and *Statskonsult*, undertook an assessment of government websites on the basis of quality criteria. To this end, 529 government and municipal organisations were assessed and were given points ranging from one to six stars. The results show that most of the websites fell in the middle category (three stars) with few achieving either one or six stars.

Access to electronic public services

In Norway the government has adopted a "no wrong door" policy regarding access to public services. Citizens and businesses can access public services through different channels (*e.g.* Internet, telephone, in-person, etc.). The OECD survey shows that lack of customer access to the Internet is not perceived as an important constraint by 69% of respondents.

A survey conducted in 2003 indicated that Norwegians prefer to use the telephone and the Internet when contacting public authorities and are more likely to use the Internet for seeking information rather than transacting with government online (Figure A.31). Reasons could relate to users' lack of experience and skills with regards to e-commerce and e-government. The OECD survey indicates that more than 50% of ministries and agencies consider "inexperience regarding the use of online services or lack of the necessary skills" as being a constraint for consumer demand. Another reason could be lack of services of this type.

Figure A.31. **What Norwegians do when they interact with government online, 2003**
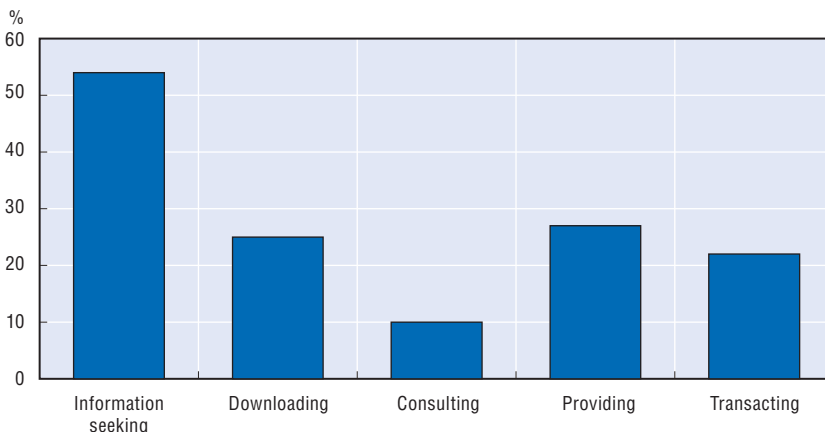
Source: TNS (2003), Government Online: An International Perspective.

In Norway, as in most OECD countries, the Internet has become the main channel for the delivery of electronic public services. From the OECD survey it emerged that government organisations provide most of their electronic services through websites (77%) and online portals (43%), while the use of voice services, SMS and WAP as service delivery channels is still relatively limited (Figure A.32). Given the high penetration of mobile phones in Norway, this result indicates that solutions could be further explored to increase the provision of electronic services through these channels. An example of use of SMS to deliver public services is the electronic submission of tax: users can choose to submit tax declaration by phone, SMS or over the Internet.

Figure A.32. **Channels for e-government in Norway**
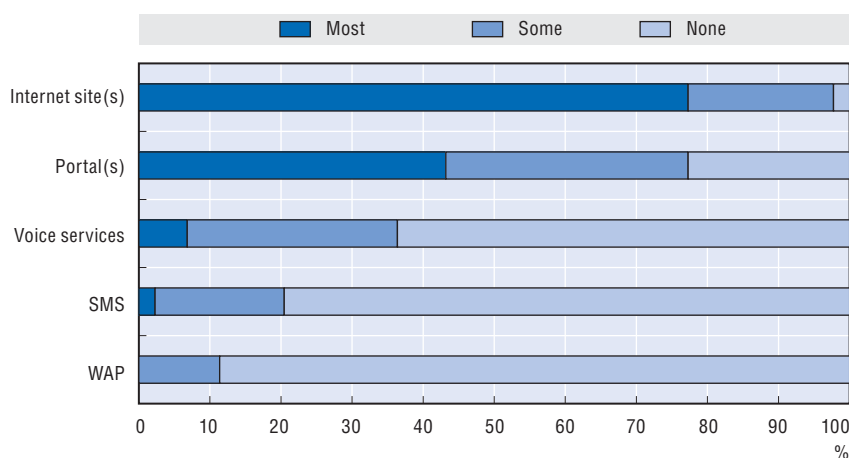
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Norway.

Traditional and electronic channels for the delivery of public services co-exist in Norway. Only 40% of the survey respondents reported providing some services exclusively via electronic channels.
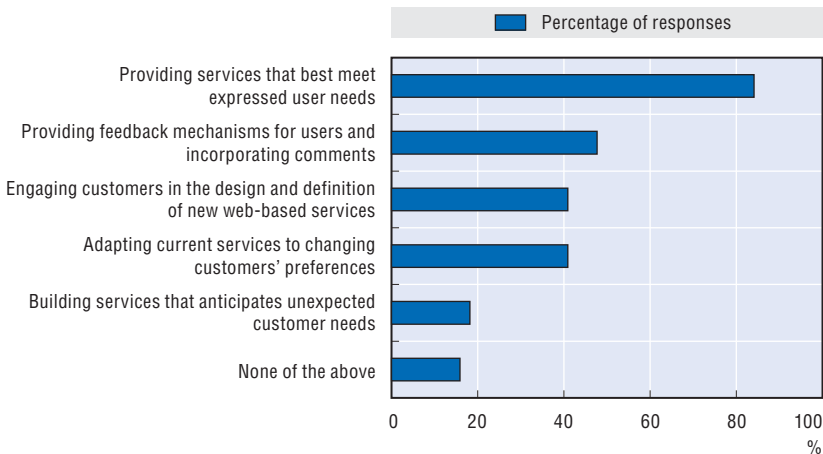
User-focused e-government strategy

User orientation of services is well integrated not only in e-government policy documents but also in the broader vision for public sector reform. Government policy documents mention the use of systematic user surveys for public agencies in order to understand user needs, and stress the importance of adjusting services to individual needs.

However, individual organisations have set limited objectives concerning the implementation of user-focused e-government. The OECD survey showed that 84% of the respondents reported that their e-government strategies

included the generic goal of providing services that best meet user needs, while less than 50% of respondents reported that their e-government strategy explicitly "provides feedback mechanism for users" or "engage[s] customers in the design and definition of new web-based services" (Figure A.33). OECD interviews with officials suggest that agencies seem to be lagging behind in terms of anticipating user needs and involving users in the definition of services. They are more likely to use instruments for understanding user demand that concentrate on the population already being served by e-government, not on potential new users. This seems to be suggested by the use of customer surveys (66% of respondents), web hits (52%) and electronic feedback (38.6%) as mechanisms to understand user demand. Gallup Norway conducts regular survey on users of the student loans and grants system developed by the State Educational Loan Fund (SELF), which also has established a user group services.

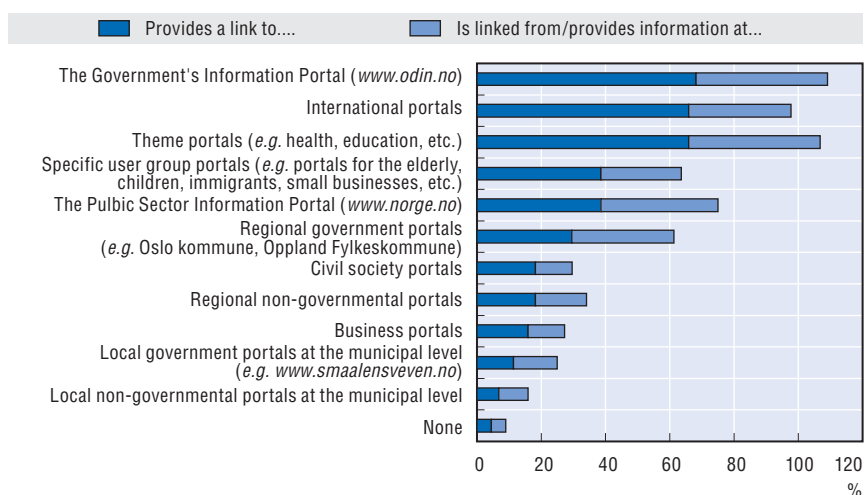Figure A.33. **User-focused e-government strategy**

Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Norway.

Enabling joined-up services

Implementing user-focused e-government requires governments to organise services around citizens needs, not around government structures. This requires government agencies to be able to work together in the provision of services. One of the solutions adopted by most government agencies is the development and implementation of service portals that link agency websites and provide single points of access to government services for citizens and businesses.

As in most OECD countries, in Norway portals have become a common tool to provide citizens and businesses with access to information on public services and government activities. The OECD survey shows that very few respondents (4.5%) reported that their organisation website is not linked to any portal, while most of the organisations reported being connected to some kind of portal. While most government organisations (68% of respondents) are likely to be connected to the government portal (*Odin.no*), a large number of ministries and agencies also reported providing links to thematic and international portals (Figure A.34). The Ministry of Agriculture is linked to and contributes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' portal (*www.norway.info*).

Figure A.34. **Portal connectivity in Norway**

Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Norway.

However, building user-focused e-government requires that agencies and ministries go beyond simply aggregating information into a single location, and organise and present information and services in a user-friendly way in accordance with citizen needs (*e.g.* by organising information of services around life events). The *norge.no* portal features this type of organisation.

Concerning initiatives at central government, the Norwegian government seems to be moving faster in implementing initiatives aimed at ensuring that public services are easily accessible, sufficiently joined up and based on user requirements. The government is currently working on setting up a service-oriented architecture around a brand new citizen portal (Min Side) that will focus on cross-government services and will be launched by the end of 2005. While in the first phase Min Side will offer a number of limited services only

from central government agencies, in the second phase local Min Side will offer services from both central government and municipalities. The government has also assigned the newly established agency *Norge.no* the responsibility of developing evaluation criteria of public websites, with the purpose of setting up shared standards for testing the user-friendliness and availability of services.

The government has also given *Norge.no* responsibility for the "Life IT" (*LivsIT*) project. LifeIT is a standard way to get information from the whole public sector through municipal portals. Municipality portals that adopt these standards receive and display information organised around different life situations (*e.g.* marriage, parents, unemployment, etc.). The standards are developed and managed by Statskonsult.

Joining up information and services through portals requires a high level of collaboration between agencies, both on technical (*e.g.* data standardisation) and non-technical (*e.g.* setting up responsibilities for updating info and links) aspects of a project. In Norway collaboration among agencies is relatively high in the area of establishing common portals. In the OECD survey, when asked about the extent to which they collaborate in selected e-government areas (*e.g.* IT infrastructure, technical standards, etc.), survey respondents indicated that "establishing common portals for the delivery of seamless services" is one of the principle areas where they are currently working together (36.4%).

E-Engagement initiatives in Norway

The use of ICTs in government has the potential to expand the scope, breadth and depth of government interaction with citizens and other key stakeholders.

In Norway there is a limited level of citizen engagement through ICTs. There are relatively few projects being undertaken by central government to improve citizens' online consultation and participation in policy-making. Most e-government initiatives that do exist are targeted to providing information to citizens, rather than engaging them in e-consultation and e-participation.

Government seems to be experiencing a low demand for this kind of activity. The OECD survey shows that while respondents experience request for information as the largest demand coming from citizens, 11% reported receiving demands for participation in policy making (*e.g.* through online discussion forums, policy advice) from citizens and less than 4% of respondents experience citizen demand for online consultation (*e.g.* comments on proposed legislation). In each of the areas of active participation agencies face more demand from civil society organisations than from individuals (Figure A.35).

Box A.7. **E-Government portals in Norway**

- **The Government information portal (*Odin.no*):** provides access to information on government activities and links to ministries' websites. The portal is intended to make information and news from the government and ministries available on the Internet in the interests of having a more open and accessible central government. *Odin.no* is a joint electronic information service for the government and ministries and is managed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Modernisation. Each ministry has its own editorial office and is responsible for providing the content.

- **The Norway portal (*Norway.info*):** provides a single point of entry to Norwegian embassies' websites by geographic area. The Portal is also organised around a common graphic interface and structure for all embassies and representatives and provides a comprehensive collection of articles and background information about Norway written by specialists in various fields.

- ***Smaalensveven.no:*** is a regional, public website for ten municipalities in inner Østfold. In addition to joint pages for the region, each municipality has its own home page. The main themes for the portal are public services, recreation, culture and business. The portal is financed by the ten municipalities taking part.

- ***Ehandel.no:*** is the portal for the e-procurement initiatives of the Ministry of Modernisation. It contains editorial material on the usage of e-procurement in public sector entities and their suppliers, gives guidance on how to start trading electronically, presents case descriptions and access to an operational e-procurement tool. The main target groups of the portal is public sector entities, suppliers to the public sector and management/technical consultants that want to offer e-procurement implementation services to both parties.

- **The Health Portal** (*Helseportalen*): provides information on health, food and food supplements. The portal also functions as a medium for organisations, suppliers and other institutions in the health food sector. Emphasis is placed on quality assurance of natural products and dissemination of information on research in this area (the portal is privately financed).

- **The Youth Portal (*Ung.no*)**: is a portal for governmental information on the rights, possibilities, and obligations of young people. The portal is a gateway to all the kinds of information that a young person might need and is especially target to youths between 14 and 20 years old.

- ***Kunnskapsnettverk:*** is a portal solution that focuses on building horizontal knowledge and learning networks across Norway's municipalities. The portal connects different networks' private and virtual workspaces and the public portal. Network members and their competences, experiences and contributions appear on the web, making human capital visible and accessible.

Figure A.35. **Demand for e-engagement activities in Norway**
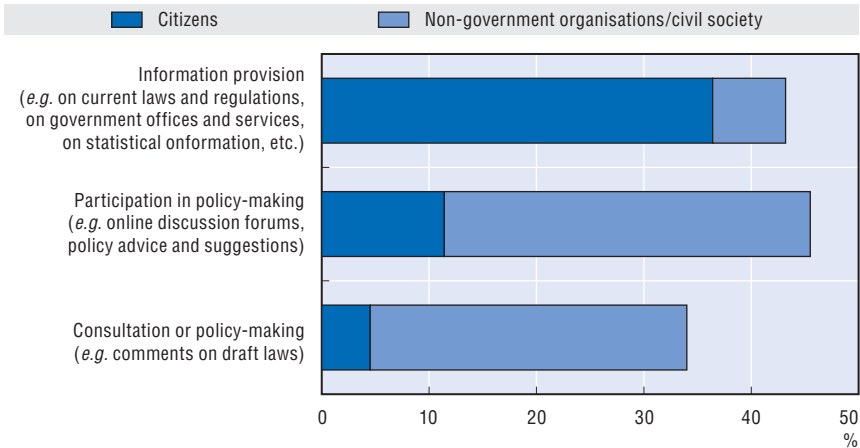
Source: OECD E-Government Survey: Norway.

E-engagement activities in Norway are more likely to support e-government at local level. A project of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is looking at how ICT can be used with local and regional authorities to get young people interested in politics and to participate in local planning. Experiments on e-voting have also taken place at the local level (Box A.8).

The low level of demand for e-engagement activities in Norway can be explained and better understood in light of the current debate on the condition of democracy in Norway. The conclusion of a recent report on Power and Democracy in Norway[28] stated that parties and non-government

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Box A.8. E-Voting in Norway

The Ministry of Local Government and Development accepted pilot projects in three municipalities at local elections in 2003. Voting in the pilots was carried out in the polling stations using voting machines with touch screens. An evaluation of the tests showed that the system was well accepted by the electorate and local election officers. However, the evaluation report, which followed the pilots, also stated that questions regarding e-voting and security needed further clarification. The Norwegian government therefore has stopped further use of the system until a working group appointed by the Ministry delivers its views on these questions. The working group will submit their report to the Ministry in December 2005.
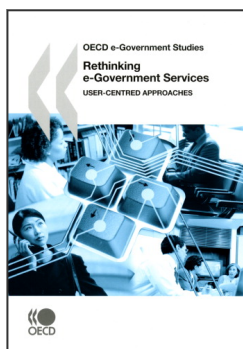
Source: The Administration and Cost of Election (ACE) Project, *http://focus.at.org/e-voting/countries.*

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organisations have weakened as channels for broad-based public movements. In this context, e-government and ICTs can be important instruments to facilitate the channelling of ideas and enhance public debate and participation in decision-making processes in government.

Notes

1. OECD (2005), *OECD e-Government Studies: e-Government for Better Government*, OECD, Paris.

2. Le Secrétaire d'État à l'Informatisation de l'État (2005), *Fed-e-View/C*, Brussels, Belgium.

3. Steyaert, J. and R. Van Gompel (2005), *Het Internet, klikt het met de Belgische politici? De resultaten van een onderzoek naar de houding tegenover en het gebruik van Internet door politici op federal, regional en provincial niveau*, Indigov, Leuven, *www.indigov.be/attachments/1176976656042/Indigov_Research_Reports_Politici_en_Internet_02_2005.pdf*, accessed 28 February 2008.

4. Research was launched on 9 December 2004, and finished on 10 January 2005. In total, 331 politicians participated in the research (64% male, 36% female; 68.6% Dutch-speaking, 31.4% Francophone). The questionnaire was delivered by e-mail to the 331 respondents.

5. Hoff, J. (2004), "Members of Parliaments' Use of ICT in a Comparative European Perspective", *Information Polity* 9(1-2), pp. 5–16.

6. Decisions have been taken after the OECD review in 2005 to make the citizens portal *borger.dk* and the business portal *virk.dk* as primary vehicles of delivery of digital services. See also Box 3.4 and 3.32.

7. The EU28 countries consist of the 25 EU member states, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

8. Demunter C. (2006), *How skilled are Europeans in using computers and the Internet?*, Statistics in focus 17/2006, Eurostat.

9. Internet penetráció 2007 II. félév, *www.nrc.hu/kutatas/piackutatasprezentaciok?page=details&oldal= 1&news_id=471&parentID=930*, accessed 4 October 2008.

10. *Eneten Közvélemény és Piackutató Központ* (2005 Residential Internet Usage Survey), *www.nhh.hu*.

11. *Eneten Közvélemény és Piackutató Központ* (2005 Residential Internet Usage Survey), *www.nhh.hu*.

12. This figure was last updated in September 2004 by the Federal Government Quality Network (*Red de Calidad del Gobierno Federal*) in *¿Dónde estamos y a dónde vamos en nuestra Agenda de Buen Gobierno?* (Where are we and where are we going with our Good Government Agenda?), at *www.innova.presidencia.gob.mx/documentos/14*, accessed 23 February 2005.

13. As reported on the President's Office for Government Innovation website at *www.innova.gob.mx/archivos/4/5/4/files/archivos/sip-1723.pdf*, accessed 23 February 2005.

14. Mexican President's Office for Government Innovation (2003), "Modelo de Calidad INTRAGOB (INTRAGOB Quality Model)", Revision 1, March, *www.innova.gob.mx,* accessed 23 February 2005.

15. Ministry of the Economy, *¿Dónde estamos y a dónde vamos en nuestra Agenda de Buen Gobierno?* (Where are we and where are we going with our Good Government Agenda?), *www.innova.presidencia.gob.mx/documentos/14*, accessed 23 February 2005.

16. Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (1995), "Terug naar de toekomst: over het gebruik van informatie en informatie – en communicatietechnologie in de openbare sector (Back to the Future: On the use of Information and Communication Technology in the Public Sector)", The Hague, June.

17. Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (1996), "Terug naar de toekomst. Eerste voortgangsrapportage aan de Staten-Generaal (Back to the Future: First Progress Report to the Parliament)", version 2.2, Gravenhage, July.

18. The Dutch government is looking at services that will have one electronic counter for citizens and one counter for companies, in a way that is familiar through various existing organisations, such as electronic banking. Building on this general service, a decision-making process will take place during 2005 about a service in which government products that are linked to citizens' and companies' life events are provided in an interrelated way. A study is presently being carried out on the way in which this type of service should be set up. See *http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=21189#search=%22life%20event%20methodology%20egovernment%20Netherlands%22*, accessed 10 October 2006. An initial version of this (the Personal Internet Page – PIP) became operational in March 2008 and now has personalised citizen data available. In future, more personalised government services will be added. There are several online services based on the life events approach, *e.g.* supplementary income, emigration, immigration (*www.newtoholland.nl*), death, and death in a foreign country (according to information received from the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 7 April 2009).

19. "Modernising Government" programme (2003) and subsequent progress reports to the Parliament: "Progress Report on the Modernising Government Programme", December 2004, *e.g.* action Line 1: "The government will improve its service to the citizen."

20. Developing and implementing common public sector e-government building blocks like key registers, the Citizens Service Number, the Businesses Service Number, eNIK – the e-ID card, etc.

21. Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (2005), "Progress Report on the Modernising Government Programme", October.

22. *www.burger.overheid.nl*, accessed 27 July 2006.

23. The eGovernment "WebWise" Awards for example are organised by the Dutch government to promote smarter, more functional web development practices within public administration, but also to improve its e-governance and services. For more information see *www.burger.overheid.nl/award*, accessed 10 October 2006.

24. Government Online Study 2003, TNS Global, 2003.

25. Statistics Norway (2003).

26. Statistics Norway (2003).

27. eNorway Status Report (2004).

28. "Power and Democracy – A General Study 1998–2003", Main findings presented at an OECD seminar in September 2004, *www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/54/33800474.pdf*, accessed 29 April 2009.