e-Commission 2012-2015

COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMISSION

Communication from VP Šefčovič to the Commission

Delivering user-centric digital services
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1. CONTEXT

Information Technologies (IT) are now omnipresent in our society and are an essential element of the European Union’s initiatives to boost economic growth and engage with its citizens\(^1\). The Digital Agenda for Europe, one of the flagship initiatives of Europe 2020, contributes to the priorities for growth by delivering sustainable economic and social benefits from a digital single market based on fast and ultra-fast internet connectivity and interoperable applications.

Member States, building on previous declarations, committed in the 5\(^{th}\) Ministerial e-Government Conference in 2009 to: developing user-centric, multi-channel and inclusive services built around user needs; increasing the availability of public sector information for reuse; improving administrative processes and making them more transparent and efficient (the ‘Malmö Declaration’). The Commission with the support of Member States adopted the e-Government Action Plan in 2010\(^2\) to address the goals of the Malmö Declaration.

The Commission has decided to propose radical simplifications across the whole range of programmes in the future Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) so as to strike the right balance between policy objectives, the means of delivery and the costs of administration and control.

The drive to ‘do more with less’ and to achieve better IT-to-business alignment so as to make savings and increase efficiency in the delivery of public services encouraged the Commission to launch a major process to rationalise its IT in October 2010. The Communications from VP Šefčovič to the Commission ‘Getting the best from IT in the Commission’\(^3\) and ‘First decisions in the IT rationalisation process’\(^4\) sketch out the framework for the rationalisation exercise. This information system and infrastructure rationalisation (hereafter referred to as ‘IT rationalisation’) covers the complete spectrum of the Commission’s operations.

New IT governance structures have been created to this end with a view to establishing yearly priorities, transforming the Commission’s commitments into concrete actions and rationalising the current portfolio of IT systems. This will enable the Commission to deliver, efficiently and effectively, modern, flexible and

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1 In 2010 41% of citizens of the European Union used e-Government services compared to 76% of businesses in the same period.
4 SEC(2011) 1500.
user-centric digital services in support of its policies and will bring more value to EU citizens, businesses and administrations.

The e-Commission 2012-2015 initiative, as outlined in the present Communication, is a logical progression of e-Commission 2006-2010, describing the principles on which the Commission intends to continue implementing its commitments in the e-Government Action Plan, the Digital Agenda and the rationalisation exercise.

This initiative does not request additional funding. As such, it has no financial impact on the EU budget and complies with the budgetary process and the Financial Regulation.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

The objective of the e-Commission 2006-2010 initiative was to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the Commission for the benefit of both internal and external stakeholders by exploiting the possibilities offered by IT. The aim was to increase the Commission’s e-government maturity and reach, by 2010, the next level, ‘Integrated government’ (level 3), featuring intensified two-way digital exchanges between all stakeholders.

The e-Commission 2006-2010 initiative identified interoperability as a key area of work. Significant progress has been achieved via the Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations programme (ISA)\(^5\) as well as through the large scale pilots on e-Government (e-procurement, e-identity and the Services Directive), e-Health and e-Justice financed under the CIP ICT PSP\(^6\) programme. The proposed Connecting Europe Facility would play a major role in cross-border digital services.

2.1. Achievements

The e-Commission 2006-2010 initiative has been assessed annually and its results have been positive. Based on the reporting by the Directorates-General (DGs) owning the actions, the initiative came close to achieving level 3 by 2010, up from level 2\(^7\) in 2005, thus nearly meeting the ambitious target set in the e-Commission 2006-2010 communication (see ‘Commission Staff Working Document — 2010 e-Commission progress report’).

The internal dimension of e-Commission 2006-2010 has been instrumental in simplifying and streamlining Commission activities, targeting areas such as budget and finance, document management, human resources, decision making, procurement, communication and business continuity. The deployment of corporate information systems supporting these activities and leading to the phase-out of local systems was a first step towards the convergence and rationalisation of IT systems.

\(^6\) The CIP framework programme was established by Decision No. 1639/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.
\(^7\) In the maturity model described in C(2005)4473, level 2 corresponds to ‘Online government’ and level 3 to ‘Integrated government’.
within the Commission. For instance: SYSPER2 is the corporate human resources management system; ABAC has extended its support for accrual-based accounting in the Commission; HERMES-ARES is the corporate solution for handling official documents throughout their lifecycle (registration, filing, conservation and transfer to the Historical Archives or their destruction); e-Greffe is the corporate tool supporting the Commission's internal decision-making process; and MyIntraComm is the source of information for staff and an essential collaboration tool.

The external dimension of e-Commission 2006-2010, with the support of many policy programmes, including the ISA programme, has contributed to the development of IT systems supporting EU policies by offering a one-stop shop for a number of EU policies, enabling the streamlining of processes, and ensuring the quality of information. Good examples of this are the completion of a system for the management of European Funds shared by Member States and the Commission (the SFC2007 system8), the introduction of paperless customs, and the deployment of the Internal Market Information system to support the Services Directive.

Following work done under the IDABC9 and ISA programmes, the European Interoperability Strategy10 (EIS) and the European Interoperability Framework11 (EIF) were adopted in December 2010. The EIF is to be introduced in Member States by 201312.

Progress has been made with a number of organisational enablers, particularly IT security, the expansion of e-learning, and the establishment of methodologies for system development and project management. This involved customisation of the Rational Unified Process (RUP) for the Commission’s environment and the development of the project management methodology PM², which provides a common approach to project management.

Many actions have been completed to support the Commission’s business continuity with a reinforced IT infrastructure, including: enhancing resilience and failover facilities for the Data Centre and the telecommunications network; launching the IT Infrastructure Consolidation project to provide a common office automation service13; managing the sTESTA network that connects Member States’ public administrations; and deploying new services or architectures such as strong user authentication through ECAS, which will be an essential building block for IT systems both in the Commission and in Member States.

In addition to the reporting by DGs, the Commission conducted an external survey14 during the second half of 2010 to assess the external dimension of e-Commission 2006-2010. The results confirmed the progress made in increasing the e-government

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8 In the Commission, the system is shared by DG REGIO, DG EMPL, DG AGRI and DG MARE.
13 IT Infrastructure Consolidation (ITIC) was extended to cover the whole Commission in SEC(2011) 1500.
14 See Commission Staff Working Document II.
maturity of the Commission and highlighted simplification and user-centricity as areas for improvement.

In late 2010, the overall IT governance of the Commission was strengthened to ensure stronger business alignment of IT. A new set of governance bodies was put in place to ensure that all IT developments match business priorities and that the existing portfolio of Commission applications is streamlined to ensure maximum efficiency gains.

2.2. Challenges

Social, economic and technical landscapes have changed significantly since e-Commission 2006-2010 was adopted. In today’s digital world the political initiatives to boost growth in Europe need IT systems and communication infrastructures in order to reap the expected benefits. A new era of collaboration among public sector actors is emerging. This effort needs to be supported by a new class of flexible cross-border and cross-sector mission-critical information systems capable of evolving over time.

The availability of innovative technologies such as social networks has increased the expectations of citizens in terms of accessibility and responsiveness when using services online. There is a need to move towards a more open model for the design, production and delivery of online services, taking advantage of the possibilities offered by new technologies, open specifications, innovative architectures and interoperability frameworks. The opening up of public sector information will generate significant business opportunities. However, they will only yield results if there are corresponding efforts to ensure interoperability, facilitate access to relevant data and encourage entrepreneurship.

Internally, the challenge is to build information systems that streamline administrative procedures (e.g. convergence of solutions for cross-cutting problems), share services, cut red tape, standardise user interfaces and implement innovative delivery mechanisms. That is why many governments are starting to look towards the emerging field of cloud computing to increase the efficiency of IT resource use and why increased flexibility among different financing sources and cross-DG management of projects of common interest needs to be promoted in order to save resources. The deployment of inter-institutional corporate information systems presents an important challenge in this area.

3. E-COMMISSION 2012-2015

This initiative will run until 2015 and consists of a vision, a set of principles and an action plan.

3.1. Vision

As stated in the Digital Agenda for Europe the Commission will lead by example in delivering efficiently, effectively and transparently user-centric digital services and IT solutions to support both EU policies and the Commission’s internal administration.
This vision aims to:

– strengthen operational effectiveness and efficiency and guarantee continuity of the Commission’s IT services;

– reduce costs and create value for the Commission through innovation within the MFF\(^{15}\);

– contribute to reducing administrative burdens in the Commission and in Member States (streamlining administrative processes\(^{16}\));

– help to improve the transparency of the Commission; and

– eliminate the digital barriers between European public administrations.

This vision will be further developed by pursuing the Commission’s IT rationalisation strategy and in particular by:

– contributing to cross-border and cross-sector solutions\(^{17}\) by reinforcing the role of the ISA and CIP ICT PSP programmes and their contribution to the Digital Agenda;

– developing and operating interoperable and sustainable e-government services\(^{18}\);

– improving trust by enhancing IT security;

– enabling new collaborative working methods and knowledge sharing between services; and

– adopting innovative technologies subject to strict cost-benefit analyses and in line with the relevant EU policies and actions\(^{19}\).

Realising this vision will lead to a rationalised portfolio of information systems supported by a secure, consolidated infrastructure.

### 3.2. Principles

The principles of the e-Commission initiative guide the actions of the Commission in the provision of digital public services. These principles will be applied to the whole IT rationalisation process and to all individual actions.

\(^{15}\) Innovation will include the implementation of new means of delivery for all sector-specific programmes of the MFF.

\(^{16}\) Process streamlining will facilitate information sharing and simplify interaction with the Commission, e.g.: by promoting reuse of infrastructure, digital services and software solutions and by translating the interoperability requirements of public administrations into specifications and standards for digital services.

\(^{17}\) These e-government services will be based on common and reusable components and will lead to modernisation of the Commission’s portfolio of mission-critical information systems.

\(^{19}\) And in particular from DG INFSO, DG ENTR, DG MARKT, DG COMP and DG COMM.
3.2.1. **User-centricity**

The Commission is committed to providing services to Member States, citizens and businesses that are accessible in a user-friendly, secure and flexible manner, are delivered through multiple channels, are accessible through a single contact point, provide fast reliable access to relevant information and respect privacy.

The European Commission will use information systems and technical architectures that cater for multilingualism when establishing a European public service.

3.2.2. **Effectiveness and efficiency**

The Commission will ensure that solutions serve Member States, businesses and citizens and its own staff in the most effective and efficient way and provide the best value for the taxpayer’s money.

The Commission will take stock of the value brought by public service solutions, based on cost-benefit and risk analysis.

New IT investments will focus on corporate key priorities confirmed by the newly introduced governance bodies. The optimal use of resources should be facilitated by encouraging staff mobility from IT to policy-related positions (and vice-versa) and by pooling resources in specific areas like project, risk and contract management and business analysis.

3.2.3. **Simplification and proportionality**

The Commission has committed to an ambitious administrative burden reduction programme, and also taken action to simplify its internal processes. IT is recognised as a means to achieve such burden reduction. A proactive approach will be pursued in assessing the IT implications of new legislation (including internal decisions).

The Commission will take into account the proportionality principle when adopting IT solutions.

3.2.4. **Security and privacy**

Citizens and businesses must be assured that they interact with public administrations in an environment of trust and in full compliance with the relevant regulations, e.g. on privacy and data protection. This means that the Commission systems must guarantee the privacy of citizens and the confidentiality of information provided by businesses.

The Commission will consider the specific needs of each European public service within the context of a common security and privacy policy.

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3.2.5. **Transparency and accessibility**

Transparency helps to explain to stakeholders the inner workings of administrative processes and allows Member States, citizens, businesses and staff to give feedback about the quality of the public services provided and to contribute to their improvement and the implementation of new services.

The use of IT should create equal opportunities for all citizens and businesses through inclusive services that are publicly accessible without discrimination. Whenever relevant, the Commission will strive to ensure that public services are accessible to all citizens, including persons with disabilities and the elderly, according to e-accessibility specifications widely recognised at European or international level.

3.2.6. **Openness**

When establishing European public services, the Commission will prefer standards and/or open specifications, taking due account of the coverage of functional needs, maturity, market support and total cost of ownership.

The publishing of the Commission’s open data will enable new forms of open governance, enhance citizens’ engagement and participation, create business opportunities, and foster cooperative relationships.

3.2.7. **Reusability**

Reusing solutions means looking at what is available — within the Commission and in Member States’ or other public administrations — assessing its usefulness or relevance to the problem at hand, and adopting solutions that have proven their value elsewhere. Consequently, reuse contributes to the cost-effective development of interoperable IT systems\(^{21}\).

Reusing information means ensuring that the information is only requested once and making such information accessible and reusable by others whenever legally possible.

IT systems supporting EU initiatives should be interoperable, aligned with the EIS, the EIF and, where appropriate, the frameworks defined under the ISA programme. Moreover, they should cater for sharing and reuse in accordance with a commonly agreed service-oriented enterprise architecture while guaranteeing the continuity of IT services.

3.2.8. **Convergence**

The convergence of solutions for cross-cutting needs increases efficiency, reduces risks and facilitates compliance.

\(^{21}\) An example is the ‘join-up’ platform, whose aim is to promote and support the sharing and reuse of open source software, semantic assets and other interoperability solutions for public administrations ([http://joinup.ec.europa.eu/](http://joinup.ec.europa.eu/)).
In domains that need cross-cutting solutions, the Commission will converge towards the use of common tools and data to allow better reporting and control. In parallel, local systems that duplicate existing functionalities will be discontinued.

4. ACTION PLAN

The e-Commission 2012-2015 initiative will be implemented via an annual action plan. In order to guarantee the alignment of IT to business, a decision on priority areas will be taken every year by the IT governance structures to identify the actions to be prioritised in the two subsequent years.

Actions will be considered along two dimensions, an external dimension supporting European policies and an internal dimension supporting internal Commission processes. These dimensions are complemented by two sets of enablers, organisational and technical.

All actions listed in the action plan have to be endorsed by the IT governance structures and have to be financed under existing administrative or operational budgets of the owner DGs in compliance with the budgetary process and the Financial Regulation.

The Commission’s IT priorities and strategies will be defined within the existing IT governance framework sufficiently early in the planning cycle to dictate and influence the actual projects launched by DGs.

4.1. e-Commission 2012 — Ongoing actions

During their first year of existence, the new IT governance structures have already started to apply the vision and principles outlined above.

To illustrate the current work on the e-Commission, the present chapter provides a non-exhaustive list of key ongoing actions that have already been analysed and endorsed. The aim is to show how the 2012 action plan addresses the challenges, contributes to achieving the e-Commission vision, and is guided by the principles listed above. Each action addresses specific objectives while also contributing to the common objectives of IT rationalisation: reducing administrative burden in the Commission, simplifying administrative processes as envisaged in the MFF, and delivering secure, user-centric digital services.

The external dimension actions will build or further improve mission-critical information systems in response to legal obligations or policy challenges, and will contribute to the Digital Single Market.

Key ongoing actions in breaking down the barriers between European public administrations and bringing about the convergence of systems supporting different EU policies:

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— The Grant Management Information System will deliver corporate solutions to support FP7 and Horizon 2020 research programmes, including a one-stop shop for all front-office transactions of participants with the Commission.

— The Internal Market Information system (IMI) will be extended and reused in new policy areas, including Posting of Workers, Electronic Commerce and Intellectual Property Rights.

— The revised EIS and EIF will provide a cartography of convergent and reusable components for a new class of efficient and flexible cross-border and cross-sector information systems.

— The European Federated Interoperability Repository (EFIR) will bring together (‘federate’) a wide range of interoperability solutions (methods, guidelines, standards, specifications and software artefacts).

— eDelivery will provide a trusted information exchange platform for European public administrations.

In addition, proposals will be submitted to the IT governance structures in the coming months for rationalising the management of shared funds in EU programmes and in the areas of consumer protection, health and competition.

External dimension actions will also streamline administrative processes (involving Member State administrations, businesses and citizens) and contribute to IT rationalisation in order to achieve complete end-to-end automation of processes and to facilitate information sharing and simplification for users.

Key ongoing actions in strengthening operational effectiveness and efficiency in supporting EU policies:

— The modernisation and evolution of the Common Communication Network (CCN2) will support customs and taxation trans-European systems in sharing specifications, development, data and operations between Member States and the Commission.

— The Information Systems for Agriculture Markets Management (ISAMM) will provide a global view of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and a single entry point for all CAP-related information.

Transparency helps the Commission to connect to Member States, citizens, businesses and staff, and to improve the quality of the public services provided. The Commission will make public information available for reuse. Citizens will be empowered through the European Citizens’ Initiative and the IT systems that support it.

Key ongoing actions to improve the transparency and accessibility of information:

— The Commission’s web presence, including the Europa website, will be reshaped around user-focused content; with better support for political communication and
improved search, enhanced accessibility, access from mobile devices, and improved
governance. The number of websites will be rationalised.

— The new machine translation system will provide an automated translation service
for use by European and national public administrations and will become a building
block for new European public services.

— The Open Data portal will publish Commission and inter-institutional datasets for
reuse and will enable new forms of open governance, enhancing citizens' engagement
and participation, and fostering cooperative relationships.

Key ongoing actions in implementing e-democracy:

— The register of European Citizens’ Initiatives and the Online Collection Tool for
Statements of Support will allow citizens to participate in the EU decision-making
process using this new e-democracy instrument.

Future actions include the new EUR-Lex (EUR-Lex 2012) an integrated juridical
portal which will become the single access point to EU law.

The internal dimension actions will deliver and consolidate information systems to
create a modern, efficient and cost-effective working environment and to enable
smart and innovative working methods. All actions are concrete examples of IT
rationalisation.

Key ongoing actions to reduce administrative burden and streamline administrative
processes:

— e-PRIOR\(^{23}\) (electronic Procurement, Invoicing and Ordering) will provide a
complete end-to-end electronic procurement solution for the Commission, including
pre-awarding.

— The reviewed architecture for the financial and accounting system (ABAC) will
eliminate functional redundancies, will be more robust, flexible, sustainable, cost-
efficient and adaptable, and will interoperate with local systems.

— The convergence of the Dorsal décisionnelle will be achieved through a process-
based architecture, supported by further developing e-Greffe and improving the
interoperability of the different systems used in decision-making.

— SYSPER2 will evolve into a user-centric portal containing all the tools and
information to enable the transformation of the Commission's human resource
management, which will be the object of a forthcoming communication. It will also
include easy-to-use reporting tools providing reliable statistics, reports and insight
supporting strategic decision-making on HR policy, and will be the basis for deeper
inter-institutional collaboration on HR matters.

— ASSMAL 2 will modernise the administration of the sickness and accident insurance scheme, fully comply with the regulatory framework, ensure efficient PMO back office operations, and provide a front-office system for staff and pensioners of all EU institutions.

— ITIC (IT Infrastructure Consolidation) will be rolled out throughout the Commission and will be enhanced to accommodate the DGs’ business continuity plans.

MyIntraComm will be further developed to enable new collaborative working methods and knowledge sharing in the Commission enabling seamless information sharing and inter-DG cooperation on cross-cutting issues.

Enhancing the Commission’s IT security is a continuous process. Actions to protect the corporate infrastructure and to extend the identity and access management system will be proposed. These will be complemented by actions to implement an IT security policy framework and reinforce the business continuity management of the Commission’s critical services and systems. The corporate user authentication service will become a mandatory building block for all the Commission’s information systems.

Key ongoing actions to enhance the Commission’s IT security:

— Increased security and business continuity for Corporate Services will improve the resilience of the Commission’s critical IT services.

Actions to exploit innovative technologies in the areas of cloud computing, service-oriented architecture, mobile computing and telecommunications will offer innovative, cost-effective opportunities to deliver better services.

Key ongoing actions to exploit innovative technologies:

— The new generation of the network connecting Member State public administrations (sTESTA-NG) will provide additional telecommunications services in a cost-effective manner.

The Commission, in the context of the forthcoming European Cloud Strategy, will play an active role in the adoption of cloud computing by public administrations by participating in the European Cloud Partnership. In particular a series of cloud computing pilots will be launched in the period 2012-2015, for example interoperable electronic identification and authentication across Europe to be provided under the proposed Connecting Europe Facility.

In addition, strategic documents on a European Commission Cloud Computing strategy, fully aligned with the European Cloud Strategy, and on the implementation of a secure service-oriented architecture infrastructure will be proposed in 2012.

In order to facilitate the streamlining and modernisation of the Commission’s business domains, it is also important to take complementary action to support the rationalisation process, in particular by extending the use of the Commission
Enterprise Architecture Framework and the different project management and development methodologies.

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<th>Key ongoing actions to facilitate the convergence of IT systems:</th>
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<td>— The evolution of the Commission’s Project Management Methodology and the ‘Information Systems Development Methodology’ will support the development of a corporate architecture and contribute to greater efficiency in the development of IT solutions.</td>
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Moreover, the establishment of a centre of excellence for enterprise architecture, covering topics such as the Commission enterprise architecture framework and business process management and associated governance, will be proposed in the coming months.

4.2. Governance

The new governance structures created at the end of 2010 have, as a key objective, the convergence of IT systems with a view to rationalising the financial and human resources devoted to IT in the Commission. In March 2011, an initial set of priority domains were identified for rationalisation, primarily encompassing administrative processes, grant management and office automation. This list has been extended and now covers all business processes in the Commission. Work plans have been drawn up and convergence has already begun.

All information systems of the Commission, including offices and executive agencies, whether financed under operational or administrative budgets, are subject to the rationalisation process.

Nevertheless, unlocking the potential of IT is not just a technical endeavour: it is primarily an organisational matter that requires systematic alignment of IT with policy objectives. Furthermore e-Commission 2012-2015 can be implemented solely on the basis of a partnership between the policy, administration and IT communities.

Business process ownership is recognised as the main driver of rationalisation, so no IT investment will be made without clearly defined and/or redesigned business processes and designated business process owners.

The Commission’s IT governance structures will play the leading role in achieving the goals of the e-Commission vision, enforcing its principles and steering its Action Plan. They will establish a yearly set of priorities and, whenever necessary, a set of complementary strategies including a cost-benefit analysis. These strategies will provide, through appropriate monitoring and reporting, a holistic view of the Commission’s IT project portfolio. Each of the business domains (administrative or policy-related) identified in the IT rationalisation process is a candidate for such a strategy based on business process management.

Strategies will be also developed for key horizontal issues such as project management, enterprise architecture, reusability, IT infrastructure including next generation of network protocols and cloud computing and the end-user environment including mobility.
The cross-financing of IT projects across budgetary lines is a key to the optimization of resources. Modalities (including governance, project management and budgetary mechanisms) will be identified and analysed to allow multi-DG projects (including the possibility to combine different financial instruments) while complying with the Financial Regulation.

4.3. Monitoring and reporting

Snapshots have to be taken at frequent, appropriate intervals so that prompt corrective action can be taken if needed.

The IT governance structures will work towards the benchmarking and full transparency of the Commission’s IT investments (irrespective of the budget source). This will help in: evaluating the costs and benefits of IT projects; assessing the compliance of IT project and risk management with widely used standards; communicating the objectives of the different actions; and improving accountability. Appropriate dashboards will be developed, based on best practices.

The DGs responsible for the different actions of the action plan will report yearly through the IT Master Plan exercise. A progress report should be prepared every year by DIGIT through the IT governance structures, based on these IT Master Plans. This report will include the updated annual edition of the action plan.
5. **CONCLUSIONS**

The Commission is invited to:

– Take note of the achievements of e-Commission 2006-2010;

– Endorse the principles underpinning the new e-Commission 2012-2015;

– Require all DGs to actively contribute to the e-Commission 2012-2015 action plan; and

– Instruct DIGIT, within the IT governance framework, to coordinate the e-Commission 2012-2015 initiative.

The College will be kept regularly informed, through the IT governance structures, about ongoing work and progress achieved.
Accompanying documents


Commission Staff Working Document — Results of the e-Commission 2006-2010 External Survey