**Disclaimer:**

This document is not intended to be exhaustive. Its purpose is to give an overview of the general eGovernment situation in the United Kingdom. Even though every care has been taken to ensure accuracy, the information herein should be treated as indicative and no responsibility for errors can be taken. Neither the European Commission, nor any person acting on its behalf is responsible for the use that could be made of the information provided.

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Country Profile

Basic data and indicators

Basic Data

Population (1 000): 61 634.6 inhabitants (2009)
GDP at market prices: 1 818 523.6 million Euros (2008)
GDP growth rate: 0.6 % (2008)
Inflation rate: 3.6 % (2008)
Unemployment rate: 5.6 % (2008)
Government debt/GDP: 52.0 % (2008)
Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): - 5.0 % (2008)

Source: Eurostat

Area: 244 820 Km²
Capital city: London
Official EU language: English
Currency: Pound Sterling

Source: Europa Website

Political Structure

The United Kingdom is the oldest constitutional monarchy in Europe.

Legislative power is held by the Parliament, made up of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The House of Commons has 659 members, who are elected by pure majority vote and remain in office for a maximum of 5 years. The House of Lords consists of around 740 members of three different types: life Peers, bishops and elected hereditary Peers. Laws are approved by a double reading mechanism. The procedure foresees that the House of Lords cannot block approval of the laws indefinitely, but only delay it.

The Head of State is the hereditary Monarch, who has a mostly ceremonial role. Executive power is exercised by the Government, headed by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. The Government is answerable and accountable to the House of Commons. By constitutional convention, Ministers are largely chosen from among the Members of Parliament (members of the Commons). The Prime Minister is usually the leader of the largest party in the House of Commons and is commissioned by the monarch to form a government based on his or her ability to command the support of the Commons.
Devolution in the United Kingdom

The current Government, elected in May 1997 (re-elected in June 2001 and in May 2005), came to power committed to a wide-ranging constitutional reform. Its programme included a substantial decentralisation of power by the establishment of a Parliament and Executive in Scotland, an Assembly in Wales, and over a longer timescale, the devolution of power to regional level in England. The Belfast Agreement reached in Northern Ireland in April 1998, approved in a referendum the following month, also opened the way for constitutional development in the region.

Scotland

Following the Scotland Act 1998, the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament officially convened on 1 July 1999 - a date, which marks the transfer of powers in devolved matters to the Scottish Ministers, previously exercised by UK Ministers. The Scottish Parliament operates on the basis of collective responsibility. This means that all decisions reached by Ministers, individually or collectively, are binding on all members.

The Scottish Executive is the devolved administration for Scotland, dealing with all devolved issues independently of the UK Government. Devolved powers include health, education, local government, police, fire, and transport. Some areas remain reserved to the UK Parliament such as Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security, and Social Security.

The Scottish Executive is led by a First Minister who heads the Cabinet, which currently comprises 5 Cabinet Secretaries, each representing a portfolio. There are also currently 10 Scottish Ministers (Junior Ministers in terms of the Scotland Act) each reporting to a Cabinet Secretary and 2 Law Officers who do not form part of the Cabinet but have Ministerial responsibility for the provision of legal advice to Scottish Ministers on all matters relating to the law of Scotland.

The Scottish Executive has aligned all of government behind its Purpose – "to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth", central to the delivery of which is its new Economic Strategy, supported by a set of 5 Strategic Objectives and 15 National Outcomes. The annual Scottish budget - £31 billion (approx. €40 billion) in 2008-2009 - is aligned to the Government’s policies and approaches; delivery of which is underpinned by a new National Performance Framework. Details of the strategic approach and focus on outcomes can be found on its Scotland Performs website where it also reports on how well the nation is progressing.

The Scottish Parliament is a separate organisation from the Scottish Executive. However, the Cabinet Secretaries and the Ministers of the Scottish Executive are chosen from the political party or parties holding a majority of seats in the Parliament. The Scottish Parliament passes laws on devolved issues and also scrutinises the work of the Scottish Government. Scotland is represented in the UK Parliament by 59 Members of Parliament from Scotland.

Wales

The Government of Wales Act 1998 established the National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) as a single corporate body, with secondary legislative powers and 60 Assembly members of whom 20 are elected by the Additional Member System of proportional representation. However since May 2007, as a result of the Government of Wales Act 2006, there is a formal legal separation between the National Assembly for Wales, as the legislature comprising the 60 Assembly members, and the Welsh Assembly Government, the executive, which comprises the First Minister, Welsh Ministers, Deputy Welsh Ministers and Counsel General. The executive functions of the Assembly transferred to the Welsh Assembly Government on separation. These functions cover essential public services including health, education, economic development, local government, planning, transport and agriculture, but do not include policing, prisons, criminal justice or the courts.

In addition and as a result of the 2006 Act, the Assembly has acquired powers to legislate by Assembly Measure on certain matters in areas of policy where the Welsh Ministers have functions. An Assembly Measure has the same value as an Act of Parliament, in Wales. The list of matters on which the Assembly can pass Measures is being progressively
added by Orders in Council and by Acts of Parliament, and is available on the website of the Welsh Assembly Government.

The staff of the Welsh Assembly Government are civil servants. The Assembly itself is supported by a Commission, whose staff are not civil servants.

**Northern Ireland**

Power was devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly in December 1999. At the same time the North/South Ministerial Council, North/South Implementation Bodies, the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference became fully functioning institutions.

The Assembly has 108 members from eight different political parties elected by proportional representation. It has full legislative authority for a wide range of socio-economic functions including environment, agriculture, regional development, health, education, trade and investment. Elections are normally held every four years.

The Assembly has a Committee for the main executive functions of each Minister in the Northern Ireland Executive. The membership and chair of each committee is allocated in proportion to party strengths. These Committees have scrutiny, policy development and consultative functions.

The Executive is made up of a First Minister and deputy First Minister who act jointly, and 10 Ministers each in charge of a Department (effectively Northern Ireland’s Cabinet). The Executive provides a forum for the discussion of issues which cut across the responsibilities of two or more Ministers, prioritising executive and legislative proposals and recommending a common position, where necessary in dealing with external relationships.

The Executive agrees on an annual programme for Government, based upon an agreed budget. The Programme for Government, which covers all aspects of the Executive’s responsibilities, is subject to the approval of the Assembly.

The Northern Ireland Act lists those matters which are "reserved" (matters that can only be legislated by the Assembly with the Secretary of State’s consent) and "excepted" matters. For further information see Devolution Guidance Note 11, or refer to the legislation involved.

**England**

Regional policy in England is the responsibility of the Department for Communities and Local Government. Further information on devolution to the English regions is available on the department’s website.

The United Kingdom became a member of the European Union on 1 January 1973.

**Head of State:** Queen Elizabeth II (since 1952).

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Gordon Brown (since 27 June 2007).
Information Society Indicators

Percentage of households with Internet access: 77 % (2009)
Percentage of enterprises with Internet access: 95 % (2009)
Percentage of individuals using the Internet at least once a week: 76 % (2009)
Percentage of households with a broadband connection: 69 % (2009)
Percentage of enterprises with a broadband connection: 88 % (2009)
Percentage of individuals having purchased/ordered online in the last three months: 58 % (2009)
Percentage of enterprises having received orders online within the previous year: 16 % (2009)
Percentage of individuals using the Internet for interacting with public authorities: obtaining information 29.7 %, downloading forms 18.9 %, returning filled forms 16.7 % (2009)
Percentage of enterprises using the Internet for interacting with public authorities: obtaining information 65 %, downloading forms 61 %, returning filled forms 57 % (2009)

Source: Eurostat

Editorial notice:
Statistical indicators referenced in this section reflect those of Eurostat at the time the Edition is being prepared.
eGovernment History

Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: ePractice news for eGovernment

Recent News

November 2009

- Using the latest technology, the United Kingdom’s Land Registry has combined its data with the Environment Agency’s flood data to produce a new Flood Risk Indicator. The tool has been made available online in the ‘Find-a-Property’ section of the Land Registry website. Those using Flood Risk Indicator can access clear and reliable information about the possible risk of flooding. Because the Environment Agency continually improves its flood data, the Flood Risk Indicator will be as up-to-date as the latest Environment Agency information.

British students can deliver their views on climate change directly to the government in the light of the international climate conference in Copenhagen, by using an online writing platform. Students from across Britain are being asked to co-write a shared vision of how to combat climate change for the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC). Students can contribute their ideas, mix and match their copy with that of others and vote on entries, to arrive at their final, democratically-produced text of a shared vision for a deal at Copenhagen. Britain’s National Union of Students (NUS), in collaboration with DECC, encourage students to get actively involved and make their voices heard.

- The UK Border Agency introduces a mobile service for migrants in the United Kingdom. When a migrant applies for an identity card for foreign nationals as part of their immigration application, their biometric details must be taken face to face in order for their identity card to be prepared and for the applicant to be checked against existing records. This normally takes place at a Home Office biometric enrolment centre. In case some of the applicants cannot attend these centres for medical reasons, the new Mobile Enrolment Team (MET) will assist them.

October 2009

- A new interactive national map gives access to local crime statistics and neighbourhood policing details. The website was developed by the National Policing Improvement Agency and police forces across England and Wales, on behalf of the Home Office. The online map allows residents to view figures for all crimes as well as burglary, robbery, violence, vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour in their area, at the touch of a button. The public will be able, for the first time, to compare one police area with another, compare figures over a three-month period against the same period of the previous year, and see annual crime rates.

- In October 2009 a new map was presented to OECD Secretary-General, Angel Gurría, by the British Ambassador to the OECD, Dominic Martin. The map aims to illustrate graphically the
devastating effects of the climate change. It was produced by UK government’s Meteorological Office ahead of the crucial UN climate change talks in Copenhagen in December.

- Patients in England can now rate and compare their family doctor (GPs) practices on a new online comparison service launched on 14 October 2009 by the British Minister for Health Services, Mike O’Brien. The Government recently announced that it is opening up more choice for patients as they will soon be able to register with a GP practice of their choice.

September 2009

- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) makes it a priority to clamp down on tax cheats. An online email form can be used to report suspects for tax evasion. The new facility builds on HMRC’s cross tax approach to compliance, helping identify and tackle high-risk cases early on. The report form, available here, is simple and there is no need to fully complete it apart from the essential fields marked with a red asterisk.

- On 22 September 2009 Directgov, the nation’s official website, announced major improvements to their Blue Badge map to help disabled people travel across the UK more easily. The Blue Badge scheme provides a national range of parking concessions for disabled people with severe mobility problems who have difficulty using public transport.

- The United Kingdom’s eGovernment portal Directgov provides traffic and transport updates, which are accessible online and from one’s mobile phone.

August 2009

The British Computer Society announced that every small business in the UK will now have free access to thousands of lower value government contracts on the Government’s website www.supply2.gov.uk. For three years, Supply2.gov.uk has advertised thousands of public sector procurement opportunities, worth up to £100 000 (approx. €115 000), making the website ideally suited to small and medium sized businesses.

July 2009

- The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) launched on 17 July 2009 a free online cancer research portal - the ONcology Information eXchange (ONIX) – in an effort to support research and hence accelerate knowledge generation in this field.

- The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Action website, launched in July 2009 through Directgov, allows users to check actions taken in order to combat anti-social behaviour in their local area and to contact persons in charge of tackling such behaviour locally.

June 2009

- A new portal for government procurement professionals has been recently launched by the Government Procurement Service (GPS) based in the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) aiming to raise professional skills and capability across the central government procurement community.

- The UK Cabinet Office launched a new Digital Engagement Blog – an interactive tool that encourages and empowers citizens’ engagement in the work of public services. The new online tool allows better use of published information, stimulating a more transparent and effective government. This initiative enhances the work of the Power of Information Taskforce and, based on its Report, starts a conversation on Recommendation 14 ensuring that public information data sets are easy to find and use. For this purpose government data will be made accessible through a single access point at www.data.gov.uk, which will go live from January 2010 with over 1 100 central government datasets free for reuse, ranging from lists of schools to traffic volumes on the trunk road network.
The Digital Engagement Blog has also taken the Power of Information Taskforce Report a step further, publishing the Digital Engagement: Update on Power of Information – Report, updating the previous report and breaking up the recommendations into themes.

March 2009........................................

In June 2008, the Cabinet Office published the Excellence and fairness: achieving world class public services document setting out the Government's overall approach to improving public services over the next few years. This document was structured around the following three main axes: driving improvements through giving greater power to the citizen; fostering professionalism across services; and providing greater strategic leadership from the centre of government. On 10 March 2009, the Government published the document “Working Together - Public Services on your side”, setting out how this delivery of this approach will be accelerated over the coming years. Comprehensive information is available on a dedicated website.

February 2009.................................

On 24 February 2009, the Government published a new policy on Open Source software that will ensure maximum value for money for taxpayers. The policy includes 10 actions that will actively help make sure the best possible, best value for money software solutions are put forward for tenders, be they Open Source or propriety products. Moreover, the policy contains an explicit reference to Open Standards, ensuring systems are inter-operable and avoiding getting locked into a particular product where possible. In addition, the Government will look to reuse what it has already bought, with successful solutions being made available across Government.

January 2009....................................

- On 29 January 2009, the British Government published the Digital Britain: the Interim Report, aimed at securing Britain’s place at the forefront of the global digital economy. The interim report contains more than 20 recommendations, including specific proposals on:
  - next generation networks;
  - universal access to broadband;
  - the creation of a second public service provider of scale;
  - the modernisation of wireless radio spectrum holdings;
  - a digital future for radio;
  - a new deal for digital content rights;
  - enhancing the digital delivery of public services.

The Digital Britain Report underlines the importance of the communications sector, its crucial contribution to the economy and its role in building Britain’s industrial future.

- The winners-list of the eGovernment National Awards was announced on 21 January 2009. The 11 winners have received the UK’s highest level commendation for the best eGovernment and technology-driven services. Important key themes in this year’s Awards were the effective implementation of Green IT and the use of innovative technology to deliver services that will contribute to a fairer society. The charitable beneficiary of the fifth annual eGovernment National Awards dinner was the Information Technologists Company - with funds raised aiming at assisting the lives of the disadvantaged. The eGovernment National Awards 2008 were supported by the Government Chief Information Officer (Cabinet Office), the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) which represents ICT management in the public sector, and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE).

- The UK Environment Agency has launched its new website which provides more reliable services for its customers and is easier to use for millions of people at risk of flooding.
In November 2008, patients looking for information on the choices available for their healthcare will now be able to find it all on one National Health Service (NHS) website. UK’s Department of Health informs in a recent press release that ‘NHS Choices’ and ‘NHS Direct’, two of the country’s leading health websites, are joining forces to provide the public with all the health information they need in one place.

eHealthNews.eu reports that the UK’s Department of Health (DH) launched on 7 November 2008 a new database to help identify the incidence and causes of sudden cardiac death. Designed by pathologists and cardiologists, and funded by the Department of Health, the database will be a key instrument for understanding the incidence and causes of inheritable conditions that can cause sudden cardiac death.

The UK government endorses recommendations made by the Parliament’s Procedure Committee to accept ePetitions through the parliamentary website. The endorsement came in a statement released on 22 July 2008 by Harriet Harman, the leader of the House of Commons, the British Parliament’s lower chamber. According to the proposal, electronic petitions will be hosted on the Parliament’s website for a limited time to enable interested individuals to add their names. Signatories could also choose to receive updates on a petition’s progress.

In July 2008 the Cabinet Office published the Transformational Government Annual Report 2007, covering the period from January 2007 to January 2008. The report describes the latest developments towards designing and delivering public services around the needs of citizens. According to the report, website rationalisation, an important part of UK’s eGovernment strategy, is well in progress.

The General Registry Office (GRO) in Northern Ireland developed in July 2008 a new service through the Government Gateway, where citizens can pay online for GRO services, e.g. births, deaths and marriages.

The National Assembly for Wales in the UK launches a new range of eDemocracy services aimed at encouraging greater dialogue between the Assembly and Welsh citizens. The new services were officially launched in the Welsh Parliament or Senedd on 15 April 2008. They include a new ePetition system, senedd.tv (an improved webcasting service), eForums and a quick vote facility for online consultations for committee inquiries. The ePetition system is a permanent version of a pilot ePetition service introduced the previous year.

In that same month, a new electronic patient-record system, the NI Emergency Care Record (NIECR), is launched by the Northern Ireland Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey. The system is intended to improve emergency care for patients attending accident and emergency (A&E) departments and ‘out-of-hours’ doctors’ services.

In April, Northern Ireland’s JobCentreOnline allows citizens to search for jobs by wage band or region. The latest enhancement to JobCentreOnline includes the option for users to receive free text message alerts about new job vacancies.

A new procurement system for the Scottish public sector has already saved Scottish taxpayers over £1 million (approx. €1.3 million) before even being launched. Even though ‘Procurement Scotland’ was only officially unveiled on 6 March 2008, an on-line auction of IT hardware held for the public sector in December, run by the body, saved over £1.2 million in comparison to a similar auction in early 2007. A central part of the system is eProcurement Scotland (ePS) – a fully hosted and managed eProcurement service, which supports the full purchase-to-pay cycle providing a range of services.

The UK National Health Service (NHS) introduces in February 2008 a new text-messaging search facility to help people locate the health services nearest to them. By simply sending a text message with the name of the service required (i.e. pharmacy) and their postcode to the NHS Direct number, users will receive an instant reply with the details of the
requested service, including address, telephone number and distance from the postcode area.

The UK Home Office announces in January 2008 that it has completed its **global system for checking the fingerprints of visa applicants**, ahead of both time and budget. Home Office Minister, Liam Byrne, announced that biometric checks are already being carried out on UK visa applications.

A **new on-line service**, providing businesses with information on and access to the many business opportunities linked to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, was launched on 17 January 2008. CompeteFor was developed by the London Development Agency (LDA) in close collaboration with the London Business Network and London 2012. Its aim is to improve access to London 2012 business opportunities for enterprises of all sizes, and to increase the transparency and ease of the procurement process.

2007................................................

- In **December 2007**, the Account NI website was launched, providing a modern fit for purpose accounting system, which encompasses significant technical and system improvements. It involved the setting up of a Shared Service Centre (SSC) dedicated to the delivery of high quality services, on a centralised basis, particularly on payments and transaction processing. Account NI is currently processing all expenses, procurement and monthly management reports for four of the eleven government departments in Northern Ireland.

- In **October 2007**, an ambitious pilot project to test the compatibility of several different electronic ID systems is to be undertaken in the UK. The pilot, which it is worth over €20 million, is part of the EU’s **eID STORK project**, aims to establish EU-wide interoperability for eIDs by 2010. The STORK project is expected to help bridge the gap between the different eID systems currently in use, leading to a de facto standard for interoperability in eIDs. The deadline for this is 2010, when the EU’s European eID Management Framework comes into force. The UK’s Identity and Passport Service (IPS) is leading the pilot project, in close co-operation with the Government Gateway.

- In **July 2007**, a report by the National Audit Office shows that UK government websites have improved only slightly since 2002. Government organisations spend around £208 million (approx. €310 million) on websites each year. The Government now plans to move information into two main ‘supersites’ – Directgov and businesslink.gov.uk, to give the public and businesses a simple pathway to information and services. Directgov content and presentation have been tested and approved by sample groups. The report also shows that information on the cost of providing on-line data needs improvement, with a third of departments and agencies having very little knowledge about users or costs of on-line services.

- In **June 2007**, the Power of Information Review is published, in order to assess how the Government can harness the phenomenon of internet advice sharing sites and empower people with information that could help improve their lives. The Review looks at how non-personal public sector information can be reused and reinvigorated outside of government to generate public and economic value.

- In **March 2007**, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA) and Intelligent Addressing, a company specialised into address and data management publish a new booklet which celebrates the **success of two British Government IT projects**; the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NPLG) and the National Street Gazetteer (NSG).

In that **same month**, LocalGov.TV, UK’s online TV service for local government modernisation is launching ‘eGovEurope.TV’, a new free-to-view online channel focusing on European public service modernisation. Online registration is necessary to access its contents.

Moreover, in **March 2007**, the UK Land Registry opens up all its services to electronic customers. Previously, only Land Registry registration fees could be paid by direct debit, but this now applies to all Land Registry services, enabling customers to pay electronically for land charge applications,
preliminary services and any application lodged by post, telephone or through 'Land Registry Direct'.

In January 2007, the Transformational Government Annual Report 2006 is published. This first annual report covers the progress across the three main themes of UK’s eGovernment strategy: customer-centric services; shared services; and professionalism.

In that same month, according to a cabinet office press release, the number of central government websites will be drastically reduced, in a move that will benefit tens of millions of users. Only 26 of the government websites examined so far are certain to be retained, while 551 will go. Information of continuing relevance from closed sites will transfer to the portals www.direct.gov.uk and www.businesslink.gov.uk.

2006..................................................

In December 2006, Directgov, the UK Government portal which provides a single point of access to all on-line public services, starts offering its services via mobile phone. The services offered include: searching for local legal advice and solicitors; contacting local authorities; locating internet-access points; careers and learning advice from the learndirect advice line; ordering driving licence forms; accessing a whole range of help guides; and checking public announcements. Access to the service is free, apart from the usual internet connection costs of the local mobile phone operator.

In September 2006, UK’s Centre for Excellence for Local eDemocracy is transformed into the International Centre for Excellence for Local eDemocracy (ICELE). The new centre aims to support and promote local eDemocracy across the world. To this end, ICELE will help local authorities improve two-way engagement with communities by providing best practice advice, support and practical solutions, focusing on the use of technology.

In April 2006, important new measures, which enable data sharing, become law in the UK. Having received Royal Assent, the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act will strengthen borders by allowing data sharing between the Immigration Service, police and customs, as part of the e-Borders programme.

In March 2006, the UK Government launched the new National Planning Application Register service, allowing interested citizens and firms to access the vast majority of planning applications made in England and Wales.

In that same month, a scheme for verifying the personal details of passport applicants, which is intended to provide the basis for an ID cards checking system, goes live. The UK Passport Service (UKPS) confirms that the Personal Identity Process (PIP) has begun to check information provided by first time applicants against data held by credit reference agency Equifax. PIP is now live and is being rolled out to UKPS regional offices in stages.

Moreover, in a bid to cut back on public procurement costs, the UK Government launches Zanzibar, a web-based purchase-to-pay (P2P) and electronic marketplace solution, being heralded as the market place for single-point government shopping. Based on XML technology Zanzibar includes a data warehouse and electronic hub that will allow potential suppliers to search available contracts, bid, submit invoices, and receive payments. The Zanzibar hub is aimed at making public procurement more efficient, opening the public procurement market to smaller suppliers, and generating considerable savings for government by facilitating the uptake of lower-cost eProcurement practices among public bodies.

2005..................................................

In November 2005, UK’s new eGovernment strategy entitled as ‘Transformational Government - Enabled by Technology’ is presented. Developed and agreed by the Chief Information Officer Council (CIO Council), the document sets the UK Government’s strategy for transforming public
services using information and communication technology. It outlines how effective use of technology designed around citizens’ and businesses’ needs can make a real difference to people’s daily lives.

- **July 2005**: The UK Government launches the procurement process for the establishment of a Shared Service Centre for the provision of human resources (HR) services to several government departments. In addition, a Corporate Services Transformation Programme is set up to foster cross-department shared services initiatives. These developments signal a wider shift towards **shared services** across the public sector aimed at achieving efficiency gains.

In that **same month**, an **agreement** is established between the e-Government Unit (eGU) and the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), which sets the details of their collaboration to drive the development and effective use of IT across Government. The eGU leads on strategic, architectural, technical and operational delivery as well as performance issues, while the OGC will lead the definition of commercial, financial and contractual delivery processes.

- **April 2005**: The UK Government launches a new national Digital Strategy, aimed at tackling the persistent digital divide and low uptake of eGovernment services by citizens. The document sets a number of goals and a set of actions to reach them: making the UK a world leader in digital excellence, constructing a robust strategy to achieve the digital vision, and tackling social exclusion and bridging the digital divide.

- **March 2005**: The UK Government launches ‘Government Connect’, a new service aimed at helping local authorities improve their efficiency and connect more effectively with their customers, with each other and with central government. The ultimate aim is that all local authorities will use the system by the end of 2007, achieving efficiencies in service delivery and costs.

- **January 2005**: A ‘CIO Council’ is created. Composed of 30 Chief Information Officers (CIOs) drawn from central government, local authorities and other public agencies, the CIO Council is aimed at promoting the role of CIOs in the public sector and at increasing the success rate of Government IT projects.

In that same month, the **UK Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000** comes fully into force, requiring public sector bodies to make information more readily available to the general public.

**2004.........................................................**

- **September 2004**: The Office of the e-Envoy is replaced by an **e-Government Unit** in the Cabinet Office. The Unit is led by a **Head of e-Government**.

- **July 2004**: The Independent Review of Public Sector Efficiency is published. Identifying potential for efficiency gains in government operations with a view to releasing resources for frontline service delivery, the review outlines the role of eGovernment as key to the UK Government’s efficiency drive. Building on the results of this review, the Government announces the launch of an **Efficiency Programme** aimed at cutting administration costs in real terms by significantly reducing the number of civil servants investing massively in modern IT systems and management processes.

- **June 2004**: The Home Office announces the rollout of a **biometric border control system** in a number of key airports across the country, with a view to improve immigration control. Dubbed IRIS (for Iris Recognition Immigration System), the system uses iris recognition technology to increase security while speeding up immigration control procedures.

- **April 2004**: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (now known as Communities and Local Government) publishes the Priority Outcomes for Local e-Government. The guidance is aimed at focusing local eGovernment implementation – and use of central government capital grant money for local eGovernment implementation – on a series of key priority outcomes, with a view to help all local...
councils reach the 2005 target for full electronic service delivery capability.

- In March 2004, the first phase of Directgov is launched. Directgov is UK Government’s new portal bringing together a wide range of public services for citizens.

- In February 2004, an upgraded version of the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) goes live, providing over 280,000 users in central and local government with restricted-level access to better services and functionalities. Its main purpose is to enable connected organisations to communicate securely, electronically.

2003

- In November 2003, the eGovernment portal for businesses BusinessLink.gov.uk is launched, providing access to government information and services for businesses, business owners and managers.

  In this month, the Home Office announces the introduction of an ID card scheme over several years to tackle issues like illegal working, immigration abuse, fraud, terrorism and organised crime. ID cards will be linked to a new and secure national identity database.

2002

- In November 2002, the National Strategy for Local e-Government is launched. This strategy provides a framework to transform local council services, joining them up with other public services and offering greater choice, convenience and accessibility for customers - and greater cost-effectiveness for councils.

  In June 2002, the document ‘Delivering 21st century IT support for the NHS’ is published, setting a national strategic programme for IT in the National Health Service. The programme will deliver: an Electronic Care Records Service to ensure clinicians and health care professionals can access patient information, whenever and wherever it is needed; an Electronic Booking Service to make it easier and faster for GPs and other primary care staff to book hospital appointments for patients; a system for the Electronic Transmission of Prescriptions; and an IT infrastructure with sufficient connectivity and broadband capacity to meet current and future NHS needs. With a budget of £6.2 billion (approx. €9.32 billion) over 10 years, this National Programme for IT (NpfIT) is the world’s largest civil IT programme.


  In that same month, the report ‘Privacy and data-sharing: The way forward for public services’ is published by the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU). The report pushes data efficiency up the Government agenda and creates the twin objectives of enhancing privacy, making better use of personal data to deliver smarter and more trusted public services.

  In addition, the National Audit Office publishes the report ‘Better public services through e-government’. This report considers departments’ progress in achieving eGovernment, focusing on the action taken to improve the delivery of IT projects and the risks that need to be managed by departments.

2001

- In December 2001, the Office of the e-Envoy publishes the E-Policy Principles, a set of guidelines for policy makers across government designed to ensure that new government policies are effective in the e-world.

- In February 2001, the Government Gateway is launched, constituting a secure authentication and transaction engine and acting as a central hub designed to help join up eGovernment services across government departments.
News 2000 and before

- In April 2000, the 'E-Government: a strategic framework for public services in the Information Age', UK’s official eGovernment strategy, is published. This strategic framework challenges all public sector organisations to innovate, commits all central government departments to develop eBusiness strategies and challenges the centre of government to provide the necessary common infrastructure and leadership.

- In September 2000, the UK online initiative is launched. Bringing together new actions and investments with a series of pre-existing ones, UK online aims to deliver universal Internet access, literacy and usage in Britain by 2005. Moreover, in December 2000, the UKonline.gov.uk citizen portal is set up, providing an "one-stop shop" to public services online.

- In 1999, the Modernising Government Action Plan is published. The plan lists 62 commitments for the first two years of the Modernising Government programme, including the development of a single electronic "gateway" aimed at opening up a range of one stop shop services.

- In February 1998, the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) publishes the report 'Electronic Government: Information Technologies and the Citizen', assessing how ICT could be used by the Government to improve internal working and the delivery of public services.

- In October 1997, the Prime Minister sets a target that 25% of all dealings with the Government should be capable of being carried out electronically by 2002, using telephone, television or computer.


- In October 1994, the Central Computer & Telecommunications Agency (CCTA), under the responsibility of the Cabinet Office, establishes a central government website at the address open.gov.uk, routing Internet users to departmental and agency sites. CCTA also hosts websites on its servers for departments and agencies new to the Internet.
The UK’s current eGovernment strategy is set in the document ‘Transformational Government - Enabled by Technology’ published on 2 November 2005. The Prime Minister commissioned this strategy to seize the opportunity provided by technology to transform the business of government. Technology has a major part to play in the solutions to each of three major challenges, which globalisation is setting modern governments – economic productivity, social justice and public service reform. The document presents a strategic view, which shall enable the United Kingdom to use technology decisively and effectively across government to meet its national objectives.

UK’s strategy focuses upon the core themes, which each public sector organisation needs to develop into actions for its area of responsibility, and on the supporting actions to be taken across government as a whole. The strategy has been initially complemented by the ‘Transformational Government Implementation Plan’, published on 29 March 2006. For each of the work streams identified in the strategy, this implementation plan focused on the priority tasks to have been completed in July 2007.

**Vision..........................................................**

The vision of the ‘Transformational Government - Enabled by Technology’ strategy is about better using technology to deliver public services and policy outcomes that have an impact on citizens’ daily lives: through greater choice and personalisation, delivering better public services, such as health, education and pensions; benefiting communities by reducing burdens on front line staff and giving them the tools to help break cycles of crime and deprivation; and improving the economy through better regulation and leaner government.

The specific opportunities lie in improving transactional services (e.g. tax and benefits), in helping front line public servants to be more effective (e.g. doctors, nurses, police and teachers), in supporting effective policy outcomes (e.g. in joined-up, multi-agency approaches to offender management and domestic violence), in reforming the corporate services and infrastructure, which government uses behind the scenes, and in taking swifter advantage of the latest technologies developed for the wider market.

In overall, this strategy aims to ensure that:

- Citizens and businesses have choice and personalisation in their interactions with the Government. Choice will come through new channels and more fundamentally through new opportunities for service competition.
- Taxpayers benefit from efficiency gains.
- Citizens, businesses, and the voluntary and community sector benefit from the better regulation, reduced paperwork and lower costs from a leaner, modern and more effective public sector.
- Public servants have better tools to undertake their jobs and the opportunity to provide better service as a result.
- Policy makers will be better able to achieve intended outcomes in practice.
- Managers are able to free resources from back office to the front-line.
- Citizens feel more engaged with the processes of democratic government.

However, the vision is not just about transforming government through technology. It is also about making government transformational through the use of technology - creating and retaining the capacity and capability to innovate and use technology effectively as technology itself develops. This is the only way in
which public services can keep up with a fast-paced changing and globalised society.

Strategy..............................................

Achieving the vision requires three key transformations:

1. Services enabled by IT must be **designed around the need of the citizens or businesses**, and must be provided through modern, co-ordinated delivery channels. This will improve the customer experience, achieve better policy outcomes, reduce paperwork burdens and improve efficiency by reducing duplication and routine processing, leveraging delivery capacity and streamlining processes.

2. Government must **move to a shared services culture** - in the front-office, in the back-office, in information and in infrastructure - and release efficiencies by standardisation, simplification and sharing.

3. There must be broadening and deepening of government's **professionalism in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and governance** of IT enabled change. This will result in more successful outcomes; fewer costly delivery failures; and increased confidence by citizens and politicians in the delivery of change by the public services.

Actions..............................................

- **Citizen and Business Centred Services**

  Services need to be designed around citizens and businesses to ensure effectiveness of delivery to the customer, to achieve policy goals, and to release savings by reducing duplication and streamlining processes (customer satisfaction, although important, is not the only goal). The key actions required are (a) to increase understanding of customer needs and behaviours; (b) to define customer groups and appoint directors to lead the overall development of services to those groups; and (c) to develop modern channels and manage the migration to them.

- **Shared Services**

  A new Shared Services approach is needed to release efficiencies across the system and support delivery more focused on customer needs. Technology now makes this far easier than ever before. Shared services provide public service organisations with the opportunity to reduce waste and inefficiency by re-using assets and sharing investments with others. Tackling this will be a major challenge as government prepares for the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review. Particular attention should be paid to the following areas: Customer Service Centres; Human Resources, Finance and other corporate services; Common Infrastructure; Data Sharing; Information Management; Information Assurance; Identity Management; Technology standards and architecture.

- **Professionalism**

  Government's ambition for technology enabled change is challenging but achievable, provided it is accompanied by a step-change in the professionalism with which it is delivered. This requires: coherent, joined up leadership and governance; portfolio management of the technology programmes; development of IT professionalism and skills; strengthening of the controls and support to ensure reliable project delivery; improvements in supplier management; and a systematic focus on innovation.

- **Leadership and Governance**

  Coherent, joined-up leadership and governance across government are essential to ensure the vision and programmes set out in this strategy are achieved and that the opportunities for technology to enable change continue to be identified, communicated, managed and delivered effectively. Complex reform requires consistent pressure to be applied across the whole system for a number of years. Leadership needs to be provided at several levels – by Ministers and Councillors; by Heads of Department and equivalents; by business leaders across the public sector; by CIOs; and by industry leaders – and aligned with the wider governance of the public services. An open and transparent approach to plans and performance is essential.
Timetable for Change

The Transformational Government - Enabled by Technology plan outlines the broad timing for the implementation of the envisaged strategic targets:

› **2007 to 2011**

Between 2007 and 2011 the priority for technology investment and business change must be transforming delivery into public services centred on citizens and businesses, and transforming support into a shared services framework. During this period it will also be important to realise the financial and service benefits of current and planned investments. The goal should be to have made the key changes, to have embedded the new cultures, and to have made the process irreversible, by 2011.

› **Beyond 2011**

Beyond 2011 should be a period of further radical change in the delivery of public services, enabled by technology. The cycle of technological advancement is rapid and hard to predict. But if the broad themes of this strategy over the next five years are achieved in practice, strong foundations will be in place. In particular:

- The focus on delivery and professionalism is expected to generate confidence in government’s ability to transform itself in radical ways.

- The switchover to new channels, supported by common infrastructure and the digital home will enable radical new service delivery options to be implemented.

- Some of the newer technologies today will be mainstreamed by 2011 and the time will be right to roll out their widespread exploitation.

- The culture of government is expected to change to one, which will embrace sharing, and will continue to breakdown the silos perceived today.

- The market and other governments will have set new citizen expectations and created new opportunities for government in the UK to exploit.

It is likely therefore that the planning for this era will be based upon a vision that sees citizens and businesses increasingly serving themselves - at home, in work and public places and on the move; public servants truly dependent on technology to discharge their professional roles; policy makers regarding technology as crucial to designing policy and achieving policy outcomes; and backed by a government delivery network in which the boundaries between departments, between central and local government, and between public, private and voluntary sectors continue to be less important and less visible to the citizens and businesses.

Digital Britain Final Report

The Digital Britain Final Report -published on 16 June 2009- represents both the culmination of that process and the first step in delivering the Digital Britain agenda over the coming months. It contains actions and recommendations to ensure first rate digital and communications infrastructure to promote and protect talent and innovation in country’s creative industries, to modernize TV and radio frameworks, and support local news, and it introduces policies to maximize the social and economic benefits from digital technologies.

One of the central policy commitments in the Government’s Building Britain’s Future is -among others- to reform Britain’s public services by ensuring that the delivery of public services in the UK is keeps pace with users’ expectations of new technology and that the public sector is efficient and smart in procuring and using ICT systems.

Putting the Frontline First: Smarter Government

This action plan of December 2009, outlines how the Government will improve public service outcomes, while achieving the fiscal consolidation that is vital to economic growth. It sets out the direction for government ICT until 2020. The plan has three
central actions: to drive up standards by strengthening the role of citizens and civic society; to free up public services by recasting the relationship between the centre and the frontline; and to streamline the centre of government, saving money through sharper delivery. Putting the frontline first will therefore extend and accelerate government’s plans for supporting many more citizens to gain access to online services. By doing so, the Government will take some actions to further accelerate the move to digital services. More precisely it aims to:

- Invest £30 million (approx. €33 million) with UK Online to support the development of the National Plan for Digital Participation to get more than one million people online in the next three years.
- Roll out the groundbreaking ‘Tell Us Once’ service for births and deaths nationally, together with local government, in 2010.
- Accelerate plans to drive more rapid transition to online and personalised services.
- Focus on transition plans for key services such as student loans, Jobseeker’s Allowance and Child Tax Credits to be online, and by Budget 2010 we will have set a timetable for an online Child Benefit service.
- Make it easier for public services to join up, by establishing a set of common protocols and reviewing the legal framework that governs the way in which public services exchange information.
- Collect all VAT returns and employer tax returns exclusively online by 2011 and we will streamline engagement with the tax system through use of diverse communications channels.

Power of Information Taskforce Report

This report -published in February 2009- has been produced shortly after the Interim report on Digital Britain. The Taskforce’s recommendations affect the things people do with broadband networks that are the major focus of Digital Britain.

The report calls for action in six areas, where the Taskforce believes significant improvements can be made to government’s use of digital technologies:

- enhancing Digital Britons’ online experience by providing expert help from the public sector online, where people seek it;
- creating a capability for the UK public sector to work with both internal and external innovators;
- improving the way government consults with the public;
- freeing up the UK’s mapping and address data for use in new services;
- ensuring that public sector information is made as simple as possible for people to find and use;
- building capacity in the UK public sector to take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital technologies.

 Millions of people in Britain regularly seek help online and in public about their daily lives. The report explains how the public sector can and should help people online in the places they go to seek help.

Open Source, Open Standards and Re–Use: Government Action Plan………………

In March 2009 one of the most significant cultural developments in IT and beyond over the last two decades -that is the Open Source Action Plan- has been published. It has shown that individuals, working together over the Internet, can create products that rival and sometimes beat those of giant corporations; it has also shown how giant corporations themselves, and Governments, can become more innovative, more agile and more cost-effective by building on the fruits of community work; and from its IT base the Open Source movement has given leadership to new thinking about intellectual property rights and the availability of information for reuse by others. In the light of the Action Plan a public page, which contains links to blog posts, news stories and tweets about UK government, open source and open standards has been set up.
In May 2009, the Government published its third Annual Report on Transformational Government. This report describes the progress made towards designing and delivering public services around the needs of the citizens. In particular, it shows how transformed services are having an impact on peoples’ lives and demonstrates outstanding successes in delivery across the public sector. The report sets out the steps that the Government is taking in order to achieve:

Focus on the citizens:

- During 2008, the Customer Insight Forum (CIF) continued to champion the cause of the service user by publishing a series of guidance documents, including a customer satisfaction measurement and a Customer Journey Mapping. The Customer Journey Mapping approach aims to better understand the daily life of users and the impact service use has on this, in order to design and adapt eGovernment services adequately before their launch.

By the end of 2008, the first issue of the Customer Matters - a handbook of innovative examples of customer insight work - is published, providing ideas and motivating staff to utilise those lessons learned within their own organisations that make a real difference to citizens and businesses. Since then, the second (March 2009) and third (August 2009) Customer Matters issues have been issued, continuing to collect best practice examples of the tools, techniques and approaches the staff in the public sector is using to understand and respond to the needs and behaviours of the citizens.

- The Tell Us Once strategic pilot programme constitutes an important example of service redesign based on the effective use of customer insight. This programme, led by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) demonstrates one of the key principles of service transformation: the better coordination of service delivery whether through face-to-face interaction, online or telephone services. It has changed the way in which people tell government - both central and local - about any changes to their circumstances (birth or death).

- As a result of the Government’s focus on rationalising a number of websites, the Directgov public services portal now has over 15 million visits a month, and the customer satisfaction rate for Businesslink.gov.uk enterprises portal received over 90% (as reported in its May 2008 survey).

Directgov provides citizens with easy and effective digital access to all the public services and information they need, when and where they need it. It is the place to apply for a job, plan a journey using public transport, find local services on your mobile, and also find out detailed information on income tax, benefits and employment.

Businesslink.gov.uk is a portal for businesses seeking authoritative information and advice from the Government. It is a comprehensive tool to help employers with all aspects of dealing with employees, and it has supported the initiative to simplify government support to business by providing clear information on products available.

- NHS Choices is the number one health information website in the UK. It offers easy online access to health information and services from the national health website.

NHS Choices serves as a portal to HealthSpace, a part of the NHS suite of digital products. HealthSpace offers a completely secure account where patients and their clinicians can access, store and amend personal medical information.

In addition, the Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) which operates in NHS, captures and stores digital images, including X-rays, scans and 3D images. It helps patients to be assessed and treated more efficiently, supports clinicians in providing the best possible diagnosis; and provides remote access to images, enabling diagnoses to be made out of normal practice hours.

The National Programme for Information Technology delivers new systems and applications to hospitals and GP practices to provide improved services and safe care for patients. Linked to this is the NHS Care Records Service which links patient information from different parts of the NHS.
electronically, ensuring that authorised staff and patients have access to the information they need to make care decisions. Within the NHS, the NHS Care Records Service includes detailed records (held locally) and the Summary Care Record (held nationally) which contains information such as current medications, adverse reactions and allergies.

> To ensure citizens’ data safety, information assurance and data sharing were covered in the Data Handling Review. This report sets out how Government is improving its arrangements around information and data security, by putting in place core protective measures, getting the working culture right, improving accountability and scrutiny of performance.

**Joining up – shared services (in human resources, IT, finance & other common processes)**

> Work continued in 2008 to join up front-and back-office services, with the majority of central government employees now served by shared human resources (HR) and finance systems. By the end of March 2008, the shared services of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) had delivered cumulative savings of £50 million (approx. €55 million) or around 15% year on year. The Department is on track to deliver a further 13% by the end of 2008/09, bringing the cumulative total to £100 million and is projected to make further savings as more customers come on board.

> In local government, the **Front Office Shared Services (FOSS)** programme investigates opportunities for local authorities to deliver more integrated and efficient services through shared front-office arrangements. Examples include one-stop shops, contact centres, web portals and home visiting schemes. Case studies and guidance can be found on the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) website.

**More professional project delivery**

> The year 2008 saw the **Government IT Profession** develop an interlinked framework to help drive, support and embed professionalism across the public sector.

> Better services for the citizen are being supported by the **strategic approach to information and communications technology** (ICT). This means flexible systems with open, common standards that support the delivery of streamlined, joined-up and efficient services. Initiatives include:

- an Open Source Action Plan to improve value for money in the use of software for government and covering open source software, new relationships with proprietary software suppliers and reuse of successful solutions;

- a strategy to ensure that we work more efficiently with key suppliers, improving their performance and rendering the public sector a procurer of ICT services through performance measurement, performance review, performance improvement planning and performance improvement delivery; and,

- the development of an action plan that will lead the way in green IT, driving down the amount of carbon dioxide generated by IT equipment, extending the lifecycle of ICT equipment, reducing the overall number of PCs and printers used, implementing central management of power usage and increasing the average server capacity.

**Service Transformation Agreement**

The Service Transformation Agreement sets out an ambitious programme of action to be the foundation for public services that are more personalised to the needs of citizens and businesses. It places this challenge at the centre of government plans for public service delivery.

This approach was already incorporated in the Pre-Budget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review of October 2007; a document which presents updated assessments and forecasts of the economy and public finances, describes reforms that the Government is making and sets out the Government’s priorities and spending plans for the years 2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.
Among other things, the ‘2007 Pre-Budget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review’ introduced 30 Public Service Agreements (PSAs) that articulate the Government’s highest priority outcomes for the forthcoming period, setting out a shared vision, spanning departmental boundaries and leading collaboration at all levels of the delivery system. PSAs, while structured around various strategic axis, such as ‘fairness and opportunity for all’ and ‘stronger communities and a better quality of life’, they are all underpinned by a Service Transformation Agreement, also published in October 2007, setting out the Government’s vision for building services around the citizen and specific actions for each department in taking forward this challenging agenda.

The Agreement sets out an ambitious programme of reforms including:

- **Piloting a new ‘Tell Us Once’ service** that enables citizens to inform public services just once about changes of circumstances;
- **Rationalising the plethora of government websites** by closing down the majority and moving their citizen and business content to the Government’s two single websites, Directgov and Businesslink.gov.uk, thereby giving customers access to the information and services they need with greater speed and ease;
- **Requiring all publicly funded call-centres to undergo formal published accreditation** to ensure faster and better services for citizens and businesses;
- **Reducing avoidable or duplicated contacts** with call centres and local offices;
- **Empowering individuals to influence their services**, with greater opportunities and direct involvement to influence the way they are designed and delivered; and
- **Improving management of information and identity across the Government’s delivery systems** to reduce wasted time and inconvenience for citizens, businesses and frontline workers.

In addition, the Service Transformation Agreement commits all departments to specific plans for transforming the services they provide across all delivery channels, coordinating with other departments where relevant. Examples of the initiatives that are being developed include the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) working to merge the application processes for driving licences and National Insurance numbers; DWP, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and some local councils developing a single transaction approach for working age benefits, housing benefit and tax credit; and HMRC and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) working to develop an International Trade Single Window to enable traders or their agents to submit all regulatory information required in a single message that can then be shared by the relevant government departments. Local government will also play a vital part in delivering this agenda, including on reducing avoidable contact which has been included in the new National Indicator Set.

### Working Together - Public Services on your side

In June 2008, the Cabinet Office published the Excellence and fairness: achieving world class public services document setting out the Government's overall approach to improving public services over the next few years. This document was structured around the following three main axes: driving improvements through giving greater power to the citizen; fostering professionalism across services; and providing greater strategic leadership from the centre of government. On 10 March 2009, the Government published the document “Working Together - Public Services on your side”, setting out how this delivery of this approach will be accelerated over the coming years. Comprehensive information is available on a dedicated website.

### Transformational Government in the Devolved Administration

The devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each have their own particular approaches to eGovernment policy.
Scotland

In June 2006, the discussion document Transforming Public Services: the Next Phase of Reform was published. The document set out Scottish Executive’s vision for reform, which is build around the fundamental understanding that public services have to ‘promote social justice and equality’, as well as to ‘build for the future’ thus fostering sustainable change.

In the area of ICT and integration, the document pointed out Scottish Executive’s efforts, which closely collaborated alongside councils and other public bodies, to develop innovative, Scotland-wide but locally responsive ways of improving service quality and efficiency. At the same time, it also stated, that more had to be done to realise the full potential of ICT to transform services. In particular, lack of comprehensive overview of eGovernment activity has been observed, as Information Communication Technology development was often based in service silos, with limited opportunity for common issues to be addressed in a shared way. This could lead to duplication and wasted effort. Even though the ‘Openscotland Information Age Framework’ (OSIAF) published in August 2006, provided a framework for developing and approving interoperability standards, there was no common approach to address the full range of technical issues needed to support joined up ICT.

Following its publication, the discussion document triggered a wide ranging, ‘open dialogue’ across Scotland. Discussions were held with public service leaders, service users, front-line workers and others with an interest in public service reform. A formal web-based consultation was also held, and the public responses have been published.

In June 2006, a scoping study was commissioned as the first stage of developing a strategic approach to ICT infrastructure transformation management. This study was commissioned to establish the current ICT baseline to measure progress against, and to provide an indication of the opportunities for delivering a more efficient and effective public sector ICT infrastructure. It involved a questionnaire which was completed by 75% of the public sector (over 100 organisations), meetings with key influencers and workshops with stakeholders. The final report and database were delivered on 21 December 2006. Some of the key findings from the scoping study are, as follows:

- No major technical constraints were identified to improve collaborative working across the public sector.
- Organisational culture and political issues represent the greatest constraints on effective data sharing across the public sector.
- There is broad support for collaboration on procurement and shared services for a range of front and back office processes including HR, Payroll, helpdesk, data centres, CRM and disaster recovery.

The ICT scoping study, together with the outcomes from previous consultations, have been analysed and the ‘Transforming Public Services: the Next Phase of Reform Progress Report’ has been published in 2007, explaining how the reform is being taken forward across public services. According to the report, ICT constitutes an important factor in achieving efficiency and in supporting the culture of innovation. Systems and processes have to ensure better information sharing to support joined up services.

The Scottish Executive is committed to achieve a clearer and more simplified public sector, freeing up more resources for vital frontline services and ensuring value for money. Its strategic vision for transforming public services focuses on:

- **smaller government** – with more of the money spent on frontline services;
- **seamless public services** – joining up to deliver for business and for citizens;
- **transparent technology and business processes** – respecting the privacy of the individual and avoiding big centralised databases;
- **efficient services for Scotland, making maximum use of existing investments** – avoiding duplication and waste.

Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government’s programme is set out in its strategic policy statement ‘One Wales’. The citizen-centred approach outlined in ‘One Wales’
recognises that as rapid technological change occurs people will expect to access services more quickly and conveniently: online; through one-stop shops and face to face.

The Welsh Assembly Government has developed a number of specific e-services and, where appropriate, has also leveraged products and services produced in conjunction with the UK Government. It has developed a Citizen Access strategy, which defines the principles and methodologies for enhanced citizen engagement. The Welsh Assembly Government’s work in ‘Informing Healthcare’ is one of its key e-Government enablers in improving healthcare in Wales.

In 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government commissioned a public sector broadband network, which has the capability to effectively and efficiently link public services across Wales. This network is part of a programme of projects, which has significantly enhanced citizen access to ‘broadband’ in Wales.

To support the delivery of the Assembly Government’s goals an ‘Enabling Government Infrastructure’ has been put in place, which recognises the need to achieve excellence and the importance of valuing people. Supporting the ‘Enabling Government’ agenda, during 2008 the Welsh Assembly Government published three important strategies relating to e-Government: ICT; Knowledge and Information; and Information Assurance. These three strategies, which are linked, describe the delivery and use of confidential, accessible and reliable information to support the delivery of the Assembly Government objectives. The strategies also define a road map for strategic advancement in all three areas. In 2008 the Welsh Assembly Government also embarked on three significant e-Government investment programmes:

- a refresh of its ICT infrastructure, principally using ‘thin client’ technology, which is potentially capable of being used by the wider public service in Wales;
- electronic Records and Document Management; and
- the implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning system, which will help to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public service investment in Wales.

Northern Ireland

A Multi-Channel Contact Centre Strategy of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), developed in 2005, made a case for significant changes to the way the NICS manages customer contact and recognised the need to involve the private sector in both the development and the operation of the new strategy. This has resulted in the creation of the NI Direct Programme, the first phase of which consists of two separate projects:

- NI Direct online is a web consolidation project, which primarily focuses on delivering a consolidated view of all NICS web sites via a single access point, which will mirror the Directgov site in England. This project featured the initial target completion date of March 2009 and is soon to go online.
- NI Direct telephony focuses on delivering a phased implementation of enhanced telephone query response services via a single number (101).

The first phase involves a number of anchor tenants. Work on the second phase has commenced, focusing on scope, sponsorship and governance on delivering a full multi-channel solution and capability to the whole NICS.

The Delivery and Innovation Division (DID) within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) continues to deliver a range of projects since the introduction of a Digital Inclusion Strategy in 2003. Its main objectives are to reduce barriers to access, and provide citizens with opportunities to gain the skills to access and utilise modern computing and Internet technology.

Recent statistics commissioned by DID’s Digital Inclusion Unit show that efforts on digital equality are returning positive results and access is increasing, with digital exclusion decreasing. With access to broadband running at 100% of citizens in Northern Ireland, further projects are rolling out to continue the upward trend of statistics from NISRA. These include a range of innovative training initiatives (Silver Surfers day, Get Online Day and Everybody Online). The installation of Kiosks in several high footfall areas to encourage e-transactions and the introduction of Digital TV and SMS pilot schemes will encourage the further use of alternative communication channels with Government in Northern Ireland.
eGovernment Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eGovernment

eGovernment Legislation

There is currently no overall eGovernment legislation in the UK.

Freedom of Information Legislation

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000 and came fully into force on 1 January 2005. It provides clear statutory rights for any member of the public to apply for access to information held by bodies across the public sector, together with a strong enforcement regime. The main features of the Act are: a general right of access to information held by public authorities in the course of carrying out their public functions, subject to certain conditions and exemptions; in most cases where information is exempted from disclosure there is a duty on public authorities to disclose where, in the view of the public authority, the public interest in disclosure outweighs the public interest in maintaining the exemption in question; a new office of Information Commissioner, and a new Information Tribunal, with wide powers to enforce the rights created; a duty imposed on public authorities to adopt a scheme for the publication of information. The legislation will apply to a wide range of public authorities, including Parliament, Government Departments and local authorities, health trusts, doctors' surgeries, publicly funded museums and thousands of other organisations in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Scotland has a specific Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Data Protection/Privacy Legislation

Data Protection Act 1998

The Data Protection Act 1998 received Royal Assent in July 1998 and came into force on 1 March 2000, giving effect to the EU Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC). The Act gives rules for the way organisations must treat personal data and information, which apply to paper as well as electronic records. These rules are mandatory for all organisations that hold or process personal data, in the public as well as private and voluntary sector. The Act contains eight Data Protection Principles, stating that all data must be: Processed fairly and lawfully; obtained and used only for specified and lawful purposes; adequate, relevant and not excessive; accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date; kept for no longer than necessary; processed in accordance with the individuals rights; kept secure; Transferred only to countries that offer adequate protection.

eCommerce Legislation

Electronic Communications Act 2000

Electronic Commerce (EC Directive) Regulations 2002

The Electronic Communications Act 2000 aims to help build confidence in electronic communications by creating a legal framework for electronic commerce and the use of electronic signatures, both in the private and public sectors. The Act is completed by the Electronic Commerce (EC Directive) Regulations 2002, which transposes into UK law the majority of the

**eCommunications Legislation.................**

**Communications Act 2003**

**Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003**

Transposition of the new EU regulatory framework for eCommunications was substantially completed with the entry into force of the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 (transposing the ePrivacy Directive) on 11 December 2003. Other key elements of the Framework, such as the Framework Directive (2002/21/EC), the Access Directive (2002/19/EC), the Authorisation Directive (2002/20/EC) and the Universal Service Directive (2002/22/EC), were implemented in the UK via the Communications Act 2003.

**eSignatures Legislation......................**

**Electronic Communications Act 2000**

**Electronic Signatures Regulations 2002**


**eProcurement Legislation....................**


**Re-use of Public Sector Information (PSI)..................................................**

**Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005**

The Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005, which came into force on 1 July 2005, implements in UK law the EU Directive 2003/98/EC of 17 November 2003 on re-use of public sector information (PSI Directive). In May 2005 the UK Government established an Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), with responsibility for the coordination of policy standards on the reuse of public sector information. Attached to the Cabinet Office, the new body has an extended remit to advise on and regulate the operation of the re-use of public sector information, and will set standards and provide a practical framework to increase transparency and remove obstacles to re-use. According to the government, the OPSI will lead the UK public sector to provide consistent and transparent processes for potential re-users to gain access to public sector information. The United Kingdom Report on the Re-use of Public Sector Information 2009 captures the scale and acceleration of activity in the three years since the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005 (S.I. 2005 No. 1515) (PSI Regulations), setting out the key initiatives and landmarks that have shaped the information policy landscape over the past years.
eGovernment Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

National eGovernment

Policy/Strategy

Cabinet Office

The Cabinet Office holds political responsibility for government reform and modernisation and for the UK’s Transformational Government policy. The Cabinet Office is a government department whose role is to support the Government’s delivery and reform programme. It sits at the heart of Government, alongside the Prime Minister’s Office and the Treasury and aims to ensure that the Government delivers its priorities. To this end, the Cabinet Office works with Departments and others to secure excellence in policy-making and responsive, high quality public services. Within the Cabinet Office, the Transformational Government Group is in charge of driving the Transformational Government agenda forward and of formulating IT strategy and policy.

Chief Information Officer Council

Formed in January 2005, the Government Chief Information Officer (CIO) Council is chaired by the Government CIO and composed of Chief Information Officers (CIOs) drawn from across all parts of the public sector to address common issues. The CIO acts as a focus for partnership between IT professionals across government; has a membership drawn from the wider public sector - central government, local government, and agencies in fields such as health and policing; is charged with creating and delivering a government-wide CIO agenda to support the transformation of government and to build capacity and capability in IT-enabled business change and balances government-wide agendas with accountabilities in line organizations.

Coordination

Transformational Government

Transformational Government is in charge of coordinating transformational government developments in government departments and of promoting best practice across government.

Sub-Committee on Public Engagement and the Delivery of Services

The Sub-Committee on Public Engagement and the Delivery of Services (DA(PED)) has been newly established in order to strengthen and focus the governance of public service reform and Transformational Government. It is the first committee of Cabinet to look at all delivery issues across public services in one place.

Implementation

Transformational Government Group

The Transformational Government Group is in charge of developing, implementing and operating the main components of the national eGovernment infrastructure (such as the Direct.gov.uk citizen portal and the Government Gateway secure transaction hub).
Central Government Departments, Agencies and Bodies

Central government departments and agencies are in charge of implementing departmental or sector-specific information systems and eGovernment projects.

Support

Transformational Government

The Transformational Government Group provides support and guidance to Government departments and agencies for the implementation of their business transformation strategies.

Delivery Council

The Delivery Council, within the Cabinet Office, provides expert input into cross-cutting agendas supporting the transformation of Government and the building of capacity in delivery skills and competencies, among other things, also in relation to the Transformational Government strategy.

Local Government Delivery Council

The Local Government Delivery Council (LGDC), established in 2007, is aimed at bringing together delivery leaders from the local authority community. It acts as the link between local and central government on service transformation, providing a strong local voice in national discussions. Further objectives of LGDC include: highlighting and sharing good practice already taking place at local level as well as identifying the support that is required to push forward service transformation. The LGDC has produced its first Annual Report (2008-2009). This document outlines what the objectives are, the projects that they have helped support and the key areas of focus over the coming year.

Local Government Customer Insight Forum

The Local Government Customer Insight Forum promotes work on local service transformation and acts as a link to central government. It is a sub-group of the Local Government Delivery Council, which was established, during 2007, under the auspices of the Local Government Association.

Contact Council

The Contact Council will provide oversight across public sector on all matters relating to customer contact. Initially the Council is already overseeing the improvement of performance and standards in publicly funded contact centres, facilitating the promotion of best practices as a norm in contact centres and leading the development of customer contact as a profession in government.

Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Council

CTO Council was formed at the end of 2005 to bring together CTOs from across the public sector to create the principal intergovernmental forum tasked with improving government practices related to the design, interoperability, development, modernisation, use, reuse, sharing, performance and efficient use of IT resources. In particular, the CTO Council sets and implements a programme of technological development and standards to deliver the solutions to support the delivery of the Transformational Government Implementation Plan such as the cross-Government Enterprise Architecture, of which an overview (release 1) is already available.

Common Infrastructure Group (CIB)

Within the framework of the Transformational Government Strategy, the Common Infrastructure Group is tasked with overseeing the delivery and management of existing elements of common technical infrastructure and providing governance of technical issues and infrastructure.

Office of Government Commerce (OGC)

The OGC is an office of the Treasury, whose role is to help central civil government and the wider public sector to achieve value for money from their procurement and commercial activities. Its remit also includes providing government departments, their executive agencies and NDPBs with programme and project management support. In particular, the OGC provides information and guidance to help government bodies achieve successful IT-enabled business change. The OGC also performs the Gateway reviews, designed to examine projects at critical stages in their lifecycle to provide assurance that they can progress successfully to the next stage. The OGC is in charge of
driving forward the Government’s Efficiency Programme, aiming to deliver the Government’s target of achieving £21.5 billion (€32.3 billion) efficiency gains a year by 2007/08.

Audit/Assurance

National Audit Office (NAO)
The NAO is an independent body in charge of scrutinising public spending on behalf of Parliament. It audits the accounts of all government departments and agencies as well as a wide range of other public bodies, and reports to Parliament on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which government bodies use public money to perform their duties and provide services. Over the past years, the NAO has published several reports related to eGovernment or to departmental ICT projects. Government spending, including on eGovernment, is also scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the House of Commons. As the NAO, the PAC has published in recent years several reports related to eGovernment or specific IT projects.

Data Protection

The Information Commissioner
The Information Commissioner is an independent supervisory authority in charge of enforcing and overseeing legislation in the field of Data Protection/Privacy and Freedom of Information. The Commissioner has a range of duties including the promotion of good information handling and the encouragement of codes of practice for data controllers regarding the collection and processing of personal data. The Information Commissioner reports directly to Parliament.

The Information Commissioner’s Office's three regional offices were established in 2003 as a direct response to the devolution process in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The offices provide relevant services where the legislation or administrative structure is different as a result.

Regional and Local eGovernment

England

Policy/Strategy

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)
Number 10 Downing Street announced the creation of a new department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) on 5 May 2006. CLG has a powerful new remit to promote community cohesion and equality, as well as responsibility for housing, urban regeneration, planning and local government. It unites the communities and Civil Renewal functions previously undertaken by the Home Office, with responsibility for regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and local government (previously held by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister). The new department brings together responsibility for equality policy, including policy on race, faith, gender and sexual orientation. These functions were previously split between several government departments.

Coordination

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)
The department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) is tasked with coordinating local eGovernment efforts.
Implementation

Local Councils

Local councils are responsible for the implementation of e-Government projects, within the framework of their competences.

Support

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)

Transformational Government Group

Local e-Government National Projects

Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)

IDeA is an agency established by and for local government to promote and support self-sustaining improvement. The agency focuses on a limited number of key areas of improvement and development, among which eGovernment. Acting on a nation-wide scale, IDeA aims to provide support for the implementation of local eGovernment and to enable local authorities to coordinate and share progress. In particular, it enables local authorities to share information and join up services, and leads a series of national projects to build the infrastructure required to support local eGovernment (among which the IDeA Marketplace, a national procurement system for local government). IDeA also champions the interests of local government with central government, suppliers and other sectors.

Society of IT Management (SOCITM)

SOCITM is the professional association for ICT managers working in and for the public sector. It has over 1450 members from 550 different organisations, drawn primarily from local authorities but also from the police and fire services, housing authorities and other public services delivered locally. SOCITM provides a forum for the promotion, use and development of ICT best practice. It is a significant provider of research, advice and guidance on ICT and eGovernment to local authorities.

Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA represents all local authorities in England and Wales - a total of just under 500 authorities. Its aim is to put local councils at the heart of the drive to improve public services and to work with government to ensure that the policy, legislative and financial context in which they operate, supports that objective. The LGA supports local authorities’ efforts to meet the challenges set, to deliver responsive services to their communities, and places a significant emphasis on the role that eGovernment can play in delivering this vision.

Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE)

SOLACE is the representative body for senior strategic managers working in local government all over the UK. The Society promotes effective local government and provides professional development for its members. SOLACE is represented on the ODPM e-government Programme Board.

Power of Information Task Force

In March 2008, the Power of Information Task Force was established. The new department acts as an independent expert to advise and assist the government on delivering benefit to the public from new developments in digital media and the use of citizen -and state- generated information in the UK, including those identified in the Power of Information Review. The work of the Power of Information Taskforce is being enhanced by the Digital Engagement Team.

Audit/Assurance

The Audit Commission

The Audit Commission is an independent non-departmental public body sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister with the Department of Health and the National Assembly for Wales. It is responsible for ensuring that public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively by local authorities and for other public services delivered locally. The Audit Commission is running a project to audit local authorities’ eGovernment efforts. In addition, it conducts data matching exercises in order to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud, by comparing sets of data, such as the payroll or benefits
records of a body, against other records held by the same or another body to see how far they match.

**eGovernment in the Devolved Administrations**

**Scotland**

**The Scottish Executive**

The strategic vision of the Scottish Executive regarding the future of Public Administration focuses on achieving a clearer and simplified public sector, freeing up more resources for vital frontline services and ensuring value for money. In particular, the strategy aims to ensure:

- **smaller government**, with more of the money spent on frontline services.
- **seamless public services** – joining up to deliver for business and for citizens.
- **transparent technology and business processes** – respecting the privacy of the individual and avoiding big centralised databases.
- **efficient services for Scotland**, making maximum use of existing investments – avoiding duplication and waste.

**Wales**

**The Corporate Information and Services Department of the Welsh Assembly**

The Corporate Information and Services Department of the Welsh Assembly Government provides:

- Easy and intelligent access to data required by the Welsh Assembly Government, including records, relevant materials in the public domain, and research studies conducted or commissioned by the Assembly Government.
- An ICT infrastructure that facilitates the storage, retrieval, analysis and communication of data throughout the organisation and beyond.
- Develops the necessary skills and processes to collect and retrieve data and provide consultancy to support those using data.

- Accessible information relevant to the citizens of Wales and the general public at large in compliance with the FOI Act.
- Programme and project expertise to support the delivery of appropriate solutions to support the Assembly Government’s ‘Enabling Government’ programme.

eGovernment expertise is found in a number of the Assembly Government’s departments, including the Department of Public Service and Performance.

**Northern Ireland**

**Delivery and Innovation Division (DID)**

The Delivery and Innovation Division (DID) of the Department of Finance and Personnel was established in April 2007 to provide a range of specialist business services to the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

- Provide strategic direction and leadership on the application of modern technology to transform the delivery of public services in Northern Ireland.
- Develop policies, strategies, standards and guidelines for Information Systems (IS) and Information Technology (IT) in the public service in Northern Ireland.
- Take forward a full range of innovative initiatives in respect of the electronic delivery of services by government including the development of shared services (IT Assist) and improving citizen’s access to government (NIDirect).

In addition, DID is responsible for providing a number of Services to Northern Ireland Citizens, such as the OnlineNI portal and the Citizen e-Mail Service (free access to easy-to-use email services).

**e-Government Policy and Strategy Team**

The e-Government Policy and strategy team within the Delivery and Innovation Division (DID) is responsible for the development of policies and strategies across the Northern Ireland public service and for taking forward a range of initiatives in respect of reform and modernisation.
Enterprise Design Authority

The Enterprise Design Authority within the Delivery and Innovation Division (DID) is responsible for driving a standards based NICS ICT infrastructure and championing technical innovation within the NI Public Sector. Key elements of work are comprised of: e-Government Technical Standards; Emerging Technologies (Research & Development Activities); ICT Strategy. The Head of the Enterprise Design Authority is also the NI Chief Technical Officer, responsible for representing the NI Public Sector on the Cabinet Office Chaired CTO Council.
eGovernment Who’s Who

Main eGovernment decision-makers and executives

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Source: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk
eGovernment Infrastructure

Main eGovernment infrastructure components

Portal..................................................

Directgov

Launched in March 2004, Directgov is the Government's citizen portal. It provides the citizens with easy and effective digital access to all the public services and information they need, when and where they need it. It is the place to apply for a job, plan a journey using public transport, find local services on your mobile, and also find out detailed information on income tax, benefits and employment. Unlike its predecessor, UK online, Direct.gov.uk is not organised on a "life-cycle episodes" model but on the basis of major public services areas (e.g. health, education, employment, etc.) and of target customer groups (parents, disabled people, young people, etc.). The depth of information presented on Direct.gov.uk is also much greater, reducing the need for users to navigate further sites.

Besides the Internet, Directgov services are also available through digital TV and mobile phones. By using the digital TV channel more than ten million UK households are able to access public services information through their digital TV sets. Mobile access is also an important communication channel, having a major impact on the way citizens interact with the Government. In this context, Directgov is working with NHS Choices, the official website of the National Health System, to deliver health information and services on the Directgov mobile phone platform. This helps people search for local NHS Health Services, hospitals, A&E departments, doctors, dentists, opticians, pharmacies and Walk-in Centres from their mobile, taking the service to people where they are. The mobile phone service has seen strong growth from a low base, with a 944 % increase in users since its launch at the end of October 2006 and 4 840 people using it a week in September 2007.

Within the framework of an ongoing large scale websites rationalization process, aimed at reducing the main public-facing sites for service delivery to just three (Directgov, Business Link and NHSChoices), the Directgov portal has already received the contents of several websites. Directgov usage has continued to grow and the portal along with relevant branded sites featured more than 18 million visitors in April 2009. Since 1 April 2008, the ownership of Directgov lies within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Business Link

A separate eGovernment business portal was launched in November 2003, for businesses seeking authoritative information and advice from the Government. It is a comprehensive tool to help employers with all aspects of dealing with employees simplifying government support to businesses by providing clear information on products available. More precisely, it provides access to government information and services for businesses, business owners and managers. The Business Link provides the information, advice and support to start, maintain and grow a business. It also provides information and advice to help customers make the most of their opportunities. Rather than providing all the advice and help itself, it fast-tracks customers to the expert help they need. It is primarily funded by the Department of Trade and Industry, supported by a number of other government departments, agencies and local authorities. In October 2008, Businesslink.gov.uk had its highest ever number of monthly visits at over 1.2 million.

The UK is committed to building service delivery around the customer, not the convenience of the provider. In order to drive up the quality of services, “joining up” government services have to be set up, rather than expecting the customer to visit many different Government sites. Therefore, there is an ongoing process of transforming service delivery...
through Directgov and Business Link with the target that in the future, these sites will become the single sites for citizens & businesses respectively.

**Info4local**

This portal is an one-stop information gateway for people working in local public services. It can be used to get quick and easy access to the information from central government departments, agencies and public bodies. It is run by a group of eight departments:

- Communities and Local Government (which oversees info4local)
- Department for Children, Schools and Families
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department of Health
- Government Offices for the English Regions
- Home Office
- Department for Transport
- Department for Work and Pensions

**Public Sector Network (PSN)**

PSN is a single, integrated infrastructure, delivered by multiple selected service providers – in effect, a ‘private network of networks’ for the public sector, addressing the various special, security, resilience, service and availability needs of the different organisations. It introduces a new approach to public service collaboration with industry to generate benefits for both. PSN will make use of existing capabilities, with added governance and standards to create the effect of a trusted Internet for the public sector.

PSN will be available for use by:

- departments and agencies in England;
- devolved governments;
- local government;
- international bodies; and
- by 2011, the third sector.

PSN brings the following benefits:

- improved ability to respond to changes in the way Government provides services to the citizen;
- increased opportunity for public sector organisations to collaborate more efficiently;
- more cost-effective procurements for products and services;
- reduced cost of service management;
- improved ability to share services and information across the public sector;
- secure, flexible and reliable access to information; and
- faster, more efficient public service provision to citizens.

**Government Secure Intranet (GSI)**

Initially launched in April 1998, the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) is the primary network infrastructure for connecting and joining up central government departments and agencies. It provides a secure and reliable connection to the Internet, including secure access to the web, file transfer and search facilities, directory services, web publishing, and a mechanism for exchanging electronic mail both within the GSI community and over the Internet. An upgraded and improved version of the GSI went live in February 2004, providing users with restricted-level access to better services and functionalities while at the same time driving down costs. The service based on an IP Virtual Private Network, is capable of carrying voice and video data, involves broadband technology, and allows for separate virtual private networks for closed user groups. It also expands beyond the boundaries of the previous network to cover local authorities. Already connecting over 350 000 users in central and local government, the new GSI is designed to become a central infrastructure for eGovernment countrywide. It could be extended to organisations, such as the National Health Service and the Ministry of Defence, and may ultimately link a million users.
eIdentification/eAuthentication

Government Gateway

The main central UK identification platform is the Government Gateway, which, launched in February 2001, is a central registration and authentication engine enabling secure authenticated eGovernment transactions to take place over the Internet. Users need to register with the Gateway in order to enrol for using online government services and subsequently transact securely with government departments. Built on open standards, the Gateway also enables the joined-up delivery of government services by allowing different systems in different departments to communicate with the Gateway and with each other. Depending on the type of government transactions, user identification is based either on a digital certificate issued by an accredited certification authority, or on a User ID (supplied by the Government Gateway) and a password (chosen by the user) for government services that do not require the level of security provided by digital certificates.

The services offered address both citizens and the business community. Services to citizens include submission of forms to government departments as well the ability to carry out some services by filling in online forms on government or private company websites. For other services, online forms will not be available and users will only be able to send forms by using software packages (such as payroll software).

Recent figures show that the number of registered users on eGovernment Gateway approaches the 14 million mark. The gateway has served over 30 million transactions so far with 150 secure online services available to date. The payment transactions to date have exceeded 1.12 million with a total value well in excess of £100 million (€123 million). In 2006-2007, three million people chose to submit their Self Assessment Tax forms through the portal and, on just one day in January 2007, 153 000 people logged on to file their tax returns. The gateway features 24/7 availability, 365 days a year.

The Government Gateway is recognised by the Chief Information Officers as the ‘Champion Asset’ in its area and public sector organisations are actively encouraged to use it.

National Identity Scheme

The National Identity Scheme, developed by the Passport and Identity Service (IPS) agency, is a long-term programme, laying the foundations for a comprehensive identity management infrastructure. It is intended to be an easy-to-use and extremely secure system of personal identification for adults living in the UK. Its cornerstone is the introduction of national ID cards. The cards will be unique and will combine the cardholder’s biometric data with their checked and confirmed identity details, called a ‘biographical footprint’. These identity details and the biometrics will be stored on the National Identity Register (NIR). Basic identity information will also be held in a chip on the ID card itself. First ID cards are expected to be issued to British citizens in 2009. Over the longer term, electronic ID cards are likely to become the preferred identification method for eGovernment services.

eProcurement

The UK has a non-mandatory national eProcurement platform (Buying solutions). However, the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) operates (through its trading arm OGCbuying.solutions) Catalist, a catalogue-based electronic procurement scheme. Catalist provides public sector organisations with a simplified means of procuring and contracting for a wide range of products and services (information technology, telecoms services, professional services, facilities support), based on a series of Framework Agreements signed by OGCbuying.solutions with a number of suppliers. OGC and OGCbuying.solutions have set up an eProcurement platform called Zanzibar, which went live in March 2006. Zanzibar consists of an eProcurement hub including 3 features: an electronic marketplace containing details of Public Sector supplier contracts, a Purchase to Pay solution and a pan-Public Sector data warehouse. It is available through a single point of access for buyers and suppliers.

For local government procurement, the Improvement & Development Agency has developed I&DeA marketplace, a web-based, central ordering system that allows the whole purchase to pay process to be
conducted electronically. Moreover, in Wales, a new platform – xChangeWales – has been launched on in December 2007. Being the first eProcurement solution on this scale, this platform is predicted to provide savings of over €250 million for Wales in the next five years. The Welsh Assembly intends to reinvest this money in improving services for citizens. The system was expected to go live in the spring of 2008.

Finally, a National e-Procurement Project has also been launched as part of the local eGovernment strategy to deliver standard eProcurement tools for local councils.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge network

The Knowledge Network (KN) is a government-wide electronic communication tool helping government departments to share knowledge with each other and providing an online collaborative working environment across government. The KN was launched in October 2000 and is currently available to approx. 55 000 users through the Government Secure Intranet.

Other Infrastructure

GovTalk – eGovernment policies and standards

The GovTalk website aims at enabling Public Sector, Industry and other interested participants to work together to develop and agree policies and standards for eGovernment. A major part of the site is dedicated to a comprehensive presentation of important eGovernment schemas and standards, such as e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF), the e-Government Metadata Standard (e-GMS) and the Government Data Standards Catalogue (GDSC). Another part of the site is dedicated to Cabinet Office Delivery and Transformation Group technology policy documents and allows for online discussions and consultations to be conducted regarding eServices policy development.

Security

- **Global System for Checking the Fingerprints of Visa Applicants**

  Completed in January 2008, the new global system for checking the fingerprints of visa applicants currently covers visa applications from 133 countries, approximately 75% of the world’s population. Biometric cross-checking with UK databases has already helped the Home Office identify nearly 500 cases of identity fraud. Fingerprint checking was a key part of the largest shake-up of UK border security and immigration system for 40 years. Other changes announced by the minister include the introduction of compulsory ID cards for foreign nationals by the end of the year. They are also pressing ahead with plans for a biometric ID card for UK citizens, despite opposition from politicians and civil liberties groups and concerns over spiralling budgets.

- **Employee Authentication Service (EAS)**

  EAS is a cross-government project which enables authorised public employees to access sensitive information safely and securely. It is an example of how the re-use of existing technology can contribute to significant cost savings to central and local government. IT is a resource built on the Government Gateway which allows local government employees to use a single authentication process to access multiple central government applications in a secure way. In that manner, the local government can maximise the benefits to be gained from quick, secure communication with central government by implementing a single solution that is adaptable and sustainable over time.

Education

- **Excellence Gateway**

  The Excellence Gateway is a complete national online service for practitioners at all levels within the learning and skills sector in England. It provides practical help for improving everyday’s work and aims at promoting innovations in teaching and learning. Furthermore, this portal also enables
practitioners to share both professional knowledge as well as examples of effective practice with other users. In March 2008, an evaluation of the Excellence Gateway showed a total of 43,460 unique visits, representing a 480% increase in a year and a tripling of registered users to just under 10,000.

- **eAdmissions**

School admissions have become one of the most popular online services in the UK. People find it empowering, convenient and time saving, and even those without internet access can benefit by using a local UK online centre. Online school admissions are part of the national Gateway to Educational Services programme to develop user-friendly ways of joining up a range of useful local services for parents.

- **Myguide**

In 2008, the Government’s Digital Inclusion Action Plan was launched and the myguide service was successfully converting increasing numbers of people into confident internet users, including those from disadvantaged groups and the digitally excluded. More importantly, its guidance modules are enabling people to explore the benefits of the web, whether to save money, find a job or use public services.

**Communication**

**Connecting People**

The “Connecting People” agenda is improving communication and collaboration between civil servants in different departments. This will increase cost-effectiveness and efficiency within government by facilitating better communication, knowledge sharing and networking between departments and agencies. Currently, three pilot projects are under way to achieve this: Civil Pages, Civil Wiki and Civil Blogs; all of which have been developed by customising low-cost software and are already connecting 3,000 individuals throughout the Civil Service.

Civil Pages is a pilot programme that provides a private people directory for the Civil Service and allows collaborative ways of working within online communities. Civil Wiki is a knowledge-sharing site for all civil servants on the government secure intranet. The content is completely generated and moderated by users. Civil Blogs is a personal publishing tool, linked to Civil Wiki, which enables sharing of work experience, knowledge and thinking, in text or image forms, across the government secure intranets.

**Health**

**NHS Choices** is the number one health information website in the UK. It offers easy online access to health information and services from the national health website. NHS Choices serves as a portal to HealthSpace, a part of the NHS suite of digital products. HealthSpace offers a completely secure account where patients and their clinicians can access, store and amend personal medical information.

The Electronic Prescription Service enables prescribers - such as GPs and practice nurses - to send prescriptions electronically to a dispenser (such as a pharmacy) of the patient’s choice. This makes the prescribing and dispensing process safer and more convenient for patients and staff. According to the Transformational Government Annual Report 2008, over 155 million prescriptions have been transmitted by the Electronic Prescription Service (26% of all prescriptions).

In addition, the Picture archiving and Communications System (PACS) which operates in NHS captures and stores digital images, including X-rays, scans and 3D images. It helps patients to be assessed and treated more efficiently, supports clinicians in providing the best possible diagnosis; and, provides remote access to images, enabling diagnoses to be made out of normal practice hours.

The National Programme for Information Technology delivers new systems and applications to hospitals and GP practices to provide improved services and safe care for patients. Linked to this is the NHS Care Records Service which links patient information from different parts of the NHS electronically, ensuring that authorised staff and patients have access to the information they need to make care decisions. Within the NHS, the NHS Care Records Service includes detailed records (held locally) and the Summary Care
Record (held nationally) which contains information such as current medications, adverse reactions and allergies.

**Criminal Justice**

Major improvements to the Criminal Justice System technology have delivered a modern IT infrastructure and case management systems. A more joined-up service and more rapid, secure information between CJS organisations.

- **Criminal Justice Secure eMail**: It serves over 40 000 users and over 1 600 organisations and departments, processing over 800 000 secure messages each month.
- **Exchange**: used by CJS organisations to share information securely via the web, saving time, lowering costs and improving the management of victim and witness care. It delivers its services through:
  - **Exchange Links**: common case details are shared between the police and CPS; the police and magistrates’ courts; ands the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and magistrates’ courts.
  - **Exchange Portals**: provide information across the CJS (either through the Internet or across government and police secure networks) to meet the needs of citizens and businesses. Over a million messages pass across these links every month. The Exchange enables the electronic sharing of risk and assessment data between the Prison and Probation Offender Assessment System (OASys).
- The CJS Exchange **XHBIT** (eXchanging Hearing Information by Internet Technology), a portal which allows the police and witness services to transfer information to witnesses, and which gives other CJS professionals access to information and results from Crown Court hearings.
- Since the introduction of 'No Witness, No Justice' project, over 800 000 witnesses have been registered on the IT system which provides timely case information to Witness Care Unit officers, who directly support victims and witnesses and update them on case progression. Thanks to this programme, the percentage of discontinued cases fell from 13.9 % to 9.9 %, over the last four years.

The optimum business model is now operational and producing a framework of tested structures to drive efficiency and effectiveness in magistrates’ court processes across the **Crown Prosecution Service** (CPS). In March 2008, the structural foundations were put in place to enable Complex Casework Units to deal more effectively with serious and complex casework and to establish Group Operations Centres to deliver essential and specialist non-legal expertise.

- The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) has been transforming police services since its creation in 2007. It carries out its mission to support the police to improve and deliver better services to the public. The major programmes involved are the following:
  - The **Police National Database** (PND) enables police forces to share intelligence information electronically.
  - The **National DNA Database** contributes to detection outcomes, eliminating the innocent from inquiries and focusing their direction. This saves police time and builds public confidence in detecting offenders and bringing them to justice. More information is available on the NPIA website.
  - The **Mobile Information Programme** promotes the roll-out of hand-held computers to front-line officers. It represents a major step forward in providing information to officers when and where they need it.
  - The **Custody and Case Preparation Programme** and the CJS Joined-up Justice Programme enable police forces to exchange information with each other and with other CJS agencies electronically.
  - **Mobile fingerprint identification** (MIDAS) allows remote searching against the national policing fingerprint collection (IDENT1) and other databases.
December 2009

• Airwave radio has replaced outdated, individually run force analogue radio systems with a national digital radio service.

Tax

The HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) continues to develop high-quality services tailored to meet the needs of the citizens.

During 2008, HMRC delivered a number of IT improvements, comprising:

‒ the launch of the National Direct Debit System. This offers an online direct debit ‘single’ payment facility for corporation tax, self-assessment, PAYE, VAT, stamp duty, land taxes and tax credits;

‒ the successful and seamless move of complex, business-critical tax credit services, framework databases and other closely linked services to a much more resilient and modernised data centre;

‒ the creation of an effective disaster recovery operation for all data centres to support the millions of HMRC online customers;

‒ changes to improve data security, such as removing read-and-write access on desktops and laptops, and designing and building a secure electronic mechanism to transfer bulk data (this is being piloted with financial institutions from December 2008); and

‒ the successful delivery of a robust and cost-effective, world-class, disaster-tolerant IT environment, which is now supporting a 38% increase since last year in the number of HMRC self-assessment online customers.
eGovernment Services for Citizens

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Citizens

The information in this section is based on the common list of 20 basic public services contained in the annual report "Smarter, Faster, Better eGovernment - 8th Benchmark Measurement" prepared for the European Commission, Directorate General for Information Society and Media, November 2009.

The 12 services for citizens are as follows:

1. Income taxes: declaration, notification of assessment
2. Job search services by labour offices
3. Social security benefits
4. Personal documents: passport and driver’s license
5. Car registration (new, used, imported cars)
6. Application for building permission
7. Declaration to the police (e.g. in case of theft)
8. Public libraries (availability of catalogues, search tools)
9. Certificates (birth and marriage): request and delivery
10. Enrolment in higher education/university
11. Announcement of moving (change of address)
12. Health related services (interactive advice on the availability of services in different hospitals; appointments for hospitals)

1. Income taxes: declaration, notification of assessment

Responsibility: Central Government, HM Revenue & Customs
Description: Online self-assessment system enabling individuals and agents to send tax returns over the Internet and offering automatic calculation of tax and faster repayments. The system features improved response to customer feedback and is now able to remember personal details securely, pre-fill forms, perform all calculations automatically and make instant refunds electronically. In order to participate, registration with the Government Gateway is required. Comprehensive information on taxes is also available on the Directgov website.
### 2. Job search services by labour offices

**Responsibility:** Central Government, JobCentrePlus  

**Description:** JobCentrePlus, a part of the Department for Work and Pensions, aims to facilitate citizens searching for a job. This department offers a broad spectrum of relevant information on its website as well as telephone job-matching service. Comprehensive information is also available on the Directgov portal along with a fully functional job search facility enabling job seekers to conduct nationwide searches online.

### 3. Social security benefits

#### a. Unemployment benefits

**Responsibility:** Central Government, JobCentrePlus  

**Description:** Jobcentre Plus is a government agency supporting people of working age from welfare into work, and helping employers to fill their vacancies. It is a part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and plays a major role in supporting the Department’s aim to ‘promote opportunity and independence for all through modern, customer-focused services’.

#### b. Child allowances

**Responsibility:** Central Government, HM Revenue & Customs  

**Description:** Child Benefit is a tax-free monthly payment to anyone bringing up a child or young person. It is not affected by income or savings so most people who are bringing up a child or a young person qualify for it. The Child Benefit eService allows parents to claim child benefit electronically, report a change of circumstances or issue a message to Child Benefit over the Internet. It uses the Government Gateway to do this securely. Since 2003, part of family support is payable under the form of tax credits (Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit) paid by HM Revenue & Customs. The tax credits website enables online calculation of entitlement, filling and submission of applications, prior to electronic payment.
c. Medical costs (reimbursement or direct settlement)

Responsibility: N/A
Website: N/A
Description: This service is not relevant for the UK. Most treatment in the National Health Service (NHS) is free at the point of delivery. There can be charges for some things (NHS prescription and dental charges, optical and hospital travel costs), for which help with some health costs is limited to people living on a low annual income (maximum amount is decided for each tax year). Health costs outside the public health service are not reimbursed.

d. Student grants

Responsibility: Central Government, Student Loans Company (SLC)
Website: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/
Description: The Student Finance England online service enables full-time higher education students from England to apply for finance online. Registered users can apply for loans via a simple online form, check their loan accounts online, see details of scheduled payments, view correspondence and update their profile. This service is operated by Student Loans Company, a public sector organisation, entirely owned by the UK government.

A further specific online application service has already been in operation for some years in Scotland (set up by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland – SAAS).

4. Personal documents: passport and driver’s licence

a. Passport

Responsibility: Central Government, UK Passport Service (UKPS)
Websites: http://www.passport-application.gov.uk,
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Passports/index.htm
Description: The Identity and Passport Service (IPS) online passport application service is a secure site designed to help UK Nationals complete a passport application form on screen (users can request online or telephone help, if necessary) and to pay the application fee online. Once the fee has been paid the application form can be submitted online. The pre-printed application form will then be returned by post to the applicant to sign, date and return to the UKPS for processing. This service as well as additional relevant information may also be accessed through the Directgov portal.
### b. Driver’s licence

**Responsibility:** Central Government, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)

**Websites:**
- [http://www.dvla.gov.uk/drivers.aspx](http://www.dvla.gov.uk/drivers.aspx)

**Description:** Information and online application service. Among other things, self-service facilities enable private motorists to go online to apply for a first provisional driving licence, renew their existing one or apply for a replacement. Relevant information provided by DVLA can be found in the Directgov Portal, created to provide all UK citizens easy access to public services in one place.

### 5. Car registration (new, used, imported cars)

**Responsibility:** Central Government, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)

**Websites:**
- [http://www.dvla.gov.uk/vehicles/vehicle.htm](http://www.dvla.gov.uk/vehicles/vehicle.htm)

**Description:** Information and forms to download are available on the Directgov Portal.

### 6. Application for building permission

**Responsibility:** Local Government

**Websites:**
- [http://www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

**Description:** The Planning Portal, developed by the Planning Inspectorate and a number of other stakeholders, provides access to information on the planning process and allows users to download planning applications forms. Applications can be submitted online through the Planning Portal's online application system to all local authorities in England and Wales and the associated fee can be calculated, with an option to pay electronically in some cases. The Government intends to create a single standard planning application form, which will be available on the Planning Portal.
### 7. Declaration to the police (e.g. in case of theft)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Central Government, Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Information on reporting a crime is available on the Directgov portal. An online search facility for locating the nearest local policy authority is also available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8. Public libraries (availability of catalogues, search tools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Central Government/Local Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Most public libraries have online catalogues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9. Certificates (birth and marriage): request and delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Central Government, General Register Office (part of the Office for National Statistics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/">http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/</a>,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>The General Register Office (GRO) offers the facility to order certificates online, which can be used to place orders using the GRO index reference and for certificates dating from 1900 up to 18 months before the request date where the exact details are known. The service applies for England and Wales only. The General Register Office (Northern Ireland) also has an online request facility, while the General Register Office for Scotland provides information only. Moreover, general Information on birth and marriage certificates is also available on the Directgov portal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 10. Enrolment in higher education/university

**Responsibility:** Universities and other higher education institutions, Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS)

**Websites:**

**Description:** UCAS is the central organisation that processes applications for full-time undergraduate courses at UK universities and colleges. UCAS Apply is a secure web-based system allowing applicants to apply online to UK higher education.

### 11. Announcement of moving (change of address)

**Responsibility:** N/A

**Website:** N/A

**Description:** This service is not relevant for the UK, where there is no obligation to inform the authorities of a change of address. However, the commercial website IamMoving.com enables citizens to notify a change of address to multiple public and private organisations. The service is free for users and paid for by partner organisations.

### 12. Health related services (interactive advice on the availability of services in different hospitals; appointments for hospitals)

**Responsibility:** N/A

**Website:** [http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

**Description:** Even though patients are entitled to book online an appointment at the hospital and time of their choice on the “Book and Choose” website, a general practitioner must provide them with a prior authorisation and reference number to have the appointment finalised with the hospital. Health information and advice is provided by the NHS Direct website. It is supported by a 24-hour nurse advice and information helpline and is also accessible through interactive digital TV.

*Further information on the services and on the latest official online sophistication ratings is available in the "Smarter, Faster, Better eGovernment - 8th Benchmark Measurement" report, prepared for the European Commission, Directorate General for Information Society and Media, November 2009.*
eGovernment Services for Businesses

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Businesses

The information in this section is based on the common list of 20 basic public services contained in the annual report "Smarter, Faster, Better eGovernment - 8th Benchmark Measurement" prepared for the European Commission, Directorate General for Information Society and Media, November 2009.

The 8 services for businesses are as follows:
1. Social contributions for employees
2. Corporate tax: declaration, notification
3. VAT: declaration, notification
4. Registration of a new company
5. Submission of data to statistical offices
6. Customs declarations
7. Environment-related permits (incl. reporting)
8. Public procurement

1. Social contributions for employees

Responsibility: Central Government, HM Revenue & Customs

Description: Internet service enabling employers to submit and receive PAYE (Pay as You Earn) and NIC (National Insurance Contributions) forms and returns over the Internet, and to make payments electronically. Requires registration and enrolment with the Government Gateway. An EDI-based service is also available. This type of information is also available on the businesslink portal.
## 2. Corporate tax: declaration, notification

**Responsibility:** Central Government, HM Revenue & Customs  
**Websites:** [http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ctsa/ct-online.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ctsa/ct-online.htm), [http://www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)  
**Description:** Service enabling companies and agents to send Corporation Tax returns, computations and accounts over the Internet, and to make corresponding payments. Companies can also view details of their Corporation Tax position with the Revenue online, including liabilities and payments for each accounting period as well as any interest or penalties that may have been charged. The system requires registration and enrolment with the Government Gateway. Information on Corporate Tax may also be found at the Businesslink portal.

## 3. VAT: declaration, notification

**Responsibility:** Central Government, HM Revenue & Customs  
**Description:** Service enabling declaration and payment of VAT online. Requires registration and enrolment with the Government Gateway. Similar information can be also found at the Businesslink portal.

## 4. Registration of a new company

**Responsibility:** Central Government, Registrar of Companies (Companies House)  
**Websites:** [http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk), [http://www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)  
**Description:** Information and forms for company registration and company information submission. Forms for company registration can be submitted electronically using an online 'Electronic Filing' service. Information on company registration can also be retrieved from the Businesslink portal.
5. Submission of data to statistical offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility:</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</table>

6. Customs declarations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility:</th>
<th>Central Government, HM Revenue &amp; Customs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Websites:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/online">http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/online</a>,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.businesslink.gov.uk">http://www.businesslink.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Electronic services (web-based and EDI-based) available to importers/exporters and for declaration and payment of customs operations. Similar information on Customs may also be found at the Businesslink portal.</td>
</tr>
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7. Environment-related permits (incl. reporting)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility:</th>
<th>Central Government, Environment Agency (England and Wales only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Websites:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business">http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business</a>,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.businesslink.gov.uk">http://www.businesslink.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Information and downloadable forms. Similar information may also be retrieved from the Businesslink portal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 8. Public procurement

**Responsibility:** Central Government, Office of Government Commerce (OGC) and OGCbuying.solutions  
**Website:** [http://online.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk](http://online.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk)  
**Description:** Catalist is a catalogue-based electronic procurement scheme, providing public sector organisations with a simplified means of procuring and contracting for a wide range of products and services (information technology, telecoms services, professional services, facilities support), based on a series of Framework Agreements signed by OGCbuying.solutions with a number of suppliers. OGC and OGCbuying.solutions also have set up an eProcurement platform called Zanzibar. Zanzibar is an eProcurement hub including 3 features: an electronic marketplace containing details of Public Sector supplier contracts, a Purchase to Pay solution and a pan-Public Sector data warehouse. It is available through a single point of access for buyers and suppliers. Moreover the Office of Government Commerce operates a catalogue-based electronic procurement scheme.

*Further information on the services and on the latest official online sophistication ratings is available in the "Smarter, Faster, Better eGovernment - 8th Benchmark Measurement" report, prepared for the European Commission, Directorate General for Information Society and Media, November 2009.*
European Commission - eGovernment Practice

eGovernment practice (epractice.eu) is an information and exchange service for European professionals.

The eGovernment factsheets are one of the epractice.eu services. The factsheets present an overview of the eGovernment situation and progress in European countries.

The eGovernment factsheets are produced and updated twice a year.

eGovernment practice is a joint initiative by the Directorate General Informatics and the Directorate General for the Information Society and Media.

Production/Publishing: eGovernment Practice Editorial Team, EUROPEAN DYNAMICS SA