European Commission, DG Information Society

Evaluation of the e-Participation preparatory action

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1. Executive summary

Democracy and democratic processes in Europe are facing a number of challenges today as people are losing interest and confidence in the way their countries are being governed. Reconnecting citizens with politics and policy-making is therefore a great priority in the EU. Information and Communication Technologies provide a range of tools to make this process easier, by giving citizens easier access to information about decision-making at local, regional, national and EU level and by helping to foster communication and interaction between politicians and government bodies on the one side, and citizens on the other.

In this respect, the European Parliament recognised the need for more transparency and democracy and approved in 2006 a budget for a "Preparatory action for the creation of an internet-based system for better legislation and for public participation". This initiative by the Parliament has been turned into the e-Participation preparatory action by the European Commission, DG Information Society and Media.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the preparatory action in terms of the human and financial resources allocated and the results obtained to verify that they are consistent with the objectives. In particular, the relevance, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the e-Participation Preparatory Action have been assessed, with a particular focus on whether the initial thoughts behind the preparatory action from the European Parliament's side were sufficiently accounted for in the preparatory action carried out by the European Commission.

The main conclusions emerging from this study are as follows:

Overall, the e-Participation preparatory action was a success. Three calls for proposals were implemented, a total of 21 projects funded, and the evidence points to the projects contributing to reaching the objectives of the action. The action was managed efficiently and the instruments used and resources allocated were generally appropriate.

The Members of the European Parliament interviewed for this evaluation expressed their satisfaction with the way in which the Commission transformed the original ideas into the Preparatory Action.

In terms of the relevance of the e-Participation preparatory action, the achievement of the objectives of the 2006 and 2007 Work Programmes is well on track. Coherence and complementarity with FP5, FP6 and ICT-PSP has generally been satisfactory when project participants from especially the FP projects participate in projects under the preparatory action.
In terms of **efficiency**, the project managers of the e-Participation preparatory action projects largely agreed that the programme was implemented and managed effectively and efficiently. The time to contract was overall considered to be appropriate by the project participants and the Commission, which has to do with the fact that it was a relatively small and manageable programme. The administrative procedures of the programme were by most participants found to be reasonable, both in the application phase, in the negotiation phase and in the implementation phase.

Exchange of knowledge and ideas has been a significant factor for the achievement of the programmes’ objectives and thereby its success. Much has been done to support this, including the support action funded under the 2007 Work Programme. Several projects have made good use of this knowledge-sharing. However, it has not been entirely clear to several project participants what was required from them in terms of disseminating knowledge and ideas. As a consequence, the meetings and dissemination activities were not accounted for in the project’s initial budgets, and some project managers ended up seeing the support action activities as a burden.

The instruments used (trial projects and the support action) have been appropriate when the state-of-the-art ICT tools have been readily applicable. However, when this has not been the case, the trial projects have in some cases ended up developing tools as well, which was not the aim. Not all ICT tools are developed well enough to support the trial projects. The state of the ICT tools available also influenced the appropriateness of the resources allocated. Overall, the resources allocated were deemed appropriate by the project managers, but in the cases where the tools available were not readily applicable, these had to be further developed which meant that the projects were more costly than initially budgeted for.

There have been some efforts to coordinate with other Commission services interested in or working in the field of e-Participation, especially in the beginning of the preparatory action, but it seems that more could be done in this area.

In terms of **effectiveness**, the preparatory action has indeed contributed to demonstrating the use of ICT for both a better legislative process and for enhancing the public participation in such processes. With respect to the involvement of the stakeholders identified in the stated objectives, the relevant stakeholders have been involved in the projects, albeit at a slower pace than initially expected. The process of involving especially politicians and citizens is time-consuming, and a certain amount of flexibility is needed towards engaging the relevant stakeholders. For the majority of the projects, it is still too early to say whether user groups have or will take up any of the results from the preparatory action. However, a few projects have already seen interest from user groups.

The **future institutional set-up** of the preparatory action has already been decided as it has been decided by the European Parliament that the preparatory action is included in the ICT-PSP part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Pro-
gramme (CIP) for 2009. The projects under the e-Participation preparatory action are similar to Pilot B projects of the ICT-PSP, as it is about putting tools together and demonstrating that implementation of technologies is possible. Hence, the inclusion of e-Participation into the CIP programme is expected to be rather smooth.

In the second call for proposals under the preparatory action, the Commission opened up for a citizen-driven approach. This approach may be the way forward for fuelling e-Participation, as the decision-maker driven approach is not always the best way to ensure that the citizens are interested in the subjects and thereby feel called to become actively involved. It should also be acknowledged that most people’s interests are at local or national level, which means that something extraordinary may be needed in order to catch the citizen’s interests in issues on the EU level, for instance by focusing on cross-border issues of interest to the citizens (such as climate change) where the EU has a very clear role.

The below recommendations have emerged from this study. Some of the initiatives are already undertaken in the e-Participation preparatory action, and are recommended to be continued in the future shape of the e-Participation initiative.

**Recommendation 1: Focus programme on a certain level and certain policy areas**

In order for the e-Participation initiative to achieve real impact with a relatively limited budget and create critical mass for e-Participation, it is important for the e-Participation projects to be focused. This can be done by focusing on a certain level (e.g. EU Level, National level etc.), and /or focusing on certain policy areas (e.g. climate change, environment, energy etc.) where citizens need to be mobilised in order to make something happen.

During the e-Participation preparatory action, much focus has been on focusing on certain policy areas. However, if the programme should increase potential impacts, it could be suggested to focus on only one of these levels, for instance by only focusing on EU level issues of interest to the citizens.

**Recommendation 2: Continue involvement of both citizens and decision-makers**

It is recommended to continue the citizen-driven approach (bottom-up approach) where citizens are given the opportunity to interact with the decision-makers. Decision-makers should also be given the tools to be able to collect, monitor and use the input provided by the citizens. The Commission has already ensured this with the 2007 Work Programme, and this should be a focus in the new e-Participation initiative under the CIP as well.
Apart from the two above-mentioned key recommendations, the following additional recommendations have emerged from the analysis and the conclusions:

**Recommendation 3: Take into account that not all technology is readily applicable**

Some projects have experienced that the state-of-the-art technology available to them was not readily applicable, resulting in the projects having to further develop the technologies before they could apply them. A certain flexibility has so far been shown towards projects by the Commission, but it is recommended that this issue is more explicitly considered in the future e-Participation initiative in the ICT-PSP. It is important to clarify at an early stage whether applying the available technology is feasible or whether further development is needed, which may necessitate either a prolongation of the project, or early termination.

**Recommendation 4: More focus on dissemination events between the FPs and the e-Participation initiative**

When project participants participate in both FPs and e-participation projects, technology from the FPs is used in the e-Participation projects, but not otherwise. This suggests that there is much unused potential here. It is recommended that common dissemination and networking events for FP and e-Participation participants are held in order to facilitate knowledge-sharing between the two programmes and to ensure that the potential for complementarity is exploited to a larger extent.

**Recommendation 5: Better communication of requirements for dissemination/networking activities**

Project participants were not always aware of the costs of the dissemination activities and had not always budgeted for these costs, even though it was required in the Work Programmes that the projects should share knowledge with each other. It is recommended that these budgetary requirements are made clear to potential project participants from the beginning, e.g. via information on the Commission web site and in the Work Programmes that project participants should expect to set aside X% of their budget for dissemination activities.

**Recommendation 6: More focus on knowledge-sharing across the different e-Participation initiatives within the Commission**

Several e-Participation initiatives take place in the Commission and several DGs have an interest in e-Participation. However, more could be done in terms of sharing the knowledge obtained in these different areas. DG INFSO is hosting an e-Participation conference on 4 March 2009, which could advantageously be used as a catalyst for the future knowledge-sharing within the Commission.
2. **Introduction**

To reconnect EU with its citizens has been widely recognised as a priority for the near future\(^1\). Today, democracy and democratic processes in Europe are facing a number of challenges and many people are losing interest and confidence in the way their countries are being governed\(^2\). This tendency can for instance be observed in the low turnout at European elections. At the 2004 European elections, the overall turnout in the EU-25 countries was of 45.5\%, and it has been continuously decreasing from 1979\(^3\). Although the percentage is declining, there are still many EU citizens who feel uncertain about whether their voice is heard and counted for in Europe\(^4\).

The European Commission recognises this and states that there is a strong feeling that EU must move closer to its citizens. EU leaders showed their commitment to making Europe more democratic and transparent by including this aim in the Lisbon Treaty\(^5\), which sets out three democratic principles of governance in the EU, of which the latter supports increased e-Participation:

- Democratic equality: all citizens should be given equal attention
- Representative democracy: a greater role for the European Parliament and greater involvement of national parliaments
- Participatory democracy: new forms of interaction between citizens and European institutions, like the citizens’ initiative.

EU Member States also supported the inclusion of e-Participation as one of the five priorities of the eGovernment Action Plan. The aim is to demonstrate, by 2010, tools for effective public debate and participation in democratic decision-making\(^6\).

Also the European Parliament has recognised the need for more transparency and democracy. Members of the Parliament agreed that finding innovative ways to enhance the participation of the European Citizens in the decision-making process had


become a necessity\(^7\), and approved in 2006 a budget for a “Preparatory action for the creation of an internet-based system for better legislation and for public participation”. It was the Parliament’s opinion that giving the public the possibilities to be listened to will promote their interest in government issues and will make them engage further in these\(^8\). Moreover, using new Information Technology tools would provide a means to enhance this process\(^9\).

The initiative by the Parliament has been turned into a preparatory action by the European Commission. So far, fourteen projects were selected and contracted under two work programmes, with proposals under a third work programme currently being evaluated. When finalising this report seven further projects were selected for funding resulting from the third work programme. The purpose of the e-Participation Preparatory Action was to harness the benefits of the use of ICT for a better legislative process and better legislation at all levels of governmental decision-making and to enhance public participation in such processes.

2.1 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the preparatory action in terms of the human and financial resources allocated and the results obtained to verify that they are consistent with the objectives. In particular, the relevance, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the e-Participation Preparatory Action have been assessed, with a particular focus on whether the initial thoughts behind the preparatory action from the European Parliament’s side were sufficiently accounted for in the preparatory action carried out by the European Commission.

The scope of this evaluation is limited to the analysis of the work programmes of the three years of the Preparatory Action (2006-2008). However, at the time of this evaluation, only the projects initiated under the first work programme were concluded. The projects funded under the 2007 work programme are still running and the projects under the 2008 work programme have not started yet. This means that only the fourteen projects funded under the 2006 and 2007 work programmes are included in the evaluation.

2.1.1 Method

A range of methods and tools were employed in order to retrieve the data that the present study is based on. As a starting point, past initiatives and relevant EU legislation were identified and gathered through extensive desk research and meetings.

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\(^8\) Interview with MEP Ralf Walter, 18 November 2008

with the European Commission, DG Information Society and Media. Afterwards, a thorough analysis of the available evidence and literature about the topic of e-Participation was undertaken.

In order to thoroughly answer the key evaluation questions, interviews with Commission services and the project managers of the projects funded under the preparatory action, Members of the European Parliament and other e-Participation experts have been conducted. The interviews were a mix of face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews. In total, 24 interviews were carried out.

Two MEPs, one who initiated the entire process of a preparatory action and another who is to carry it further, as well as Commission staff who have been involved in the e-Participation preparatory action were interviewed in order to understand the process behind the preparatory action.

The execution of the preparatory action and the project results were discussed with all the project managers of the 2006 and 2007 work programmes, as well as with Commission staff involved in the implementation of the preparatory action.

The coherence and complementarity with research programmes and other implementation programmes were shed light on through extensive desk research and interviews with project managers of projects under FP5, FP6 and ICT-PSP.

Finally, information related to the e-Participation preparatory action’s future as well as the future directions of e-Participation in general has been collected through personal and phone interviews with MEPs, Commission staff and experts in the fields of e-Participation. Discussions with the project managers of the projects funded under the preparatory action have also allowed collecting recommendations for future e-Participation initiatives.
3. Genesis of the e-Participation preparatory action

3.1 The Parliament’s decision on e-Participation

The e-Participation preparatory action was an initiative originating from the European Parliament. Via budget amendments, the European Parliament has the possibility to set aside funds to “test” different ideas, for instance through pilot or preparatory actions. This way, there is a range of new ideas coming from the European Parliament.

Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Mr. Ralf Walter initiated the idea and the Parliament conceded two million euros to the Commission (DG Information Society and Media) to carry out the action. The aim was to create a system that allows making the public (citizens, businesses, NGOs) participate in the decision-making process of the European Parliament, thanks to the use of new Information and Communication Technology tools and the Internet.

The basis for the e-Participation preparatory action was stated as follows in the Commission budget for 2006: "Preparatory action for the creation of an internet-based system for better legislation and for public participation. Remarks: This appropriation is to be used to develop an Internet-based system for participation by businesses, NGOs and members of the public in the legislative process, by analogy with the American Federal Docket Management System\(^{10}\). Based on this, the Commission had to create a preparatory action.

The idea behind an e-Participation preparatory action came from several personal experiences. First of all, as an MEP Mr Walter had often been confronted with questions regarding the activities of the European Parliament. There appeared to be a lack of information about the legislative procedures in the EU and their implications for European citizens. No suitable tools were available to inform people about the procedures in due time for them to contribute to the legislation process. The information available was too technical and there was thus a need for a better, more easily accessible information tool that would be easier for the citizens to understand and allow them to find the relevant piece of information when needed.

Secondly, citizens want easy access to information on for instance the legislative procedures in the EU and they want to be able to collect this information themselves. Much information is available today, but it is difficult to access for the citizens due to technical reasons or user interfaces that are not very user-friendly.

Thirdly, Mr. Walter’s political experience at the local level indicated that it is possible to involve citizens in the decision-making process. Citizens are generally will-
ing to be involved in this process, if their viewpoints are heard and taken into ac-
account. If what they say is heard, they will even engage further. What is decided at
the EU level is so important and relevant to each citizen that there is a critical need
for more transparency and more democracy, where the public also have their say.

The idea of an e-Participation preparatory action was thus raised in the Budget
Committee, and the idea was broadly accepted by other MEPs. It was also welcomed
by the European Council which accepted the budget that the European Parliament
had initially allocated for the preparatory action without any cuts (which is otherwise
a fairly common phenomenon). Thus, there was broad agreement on the importance
of e-participation and the need for a preparatory action.

3.2 Transforming the parliamentary decision into a preparatory action

When the European Parliament and the Council had approved the proposal for the e-
Participation preparatory action, the European Commission had to react very quickly
in order to put the preparatory action together. Within DG INFSO, there was already
some fairly scattered experience with e-Participation from the e-Participation, e-
Government and e-Democracy areas of FP5 and FP6. The Commission had little time
to create a preparatory action but succeeded in doing so within a relatively short
time span. The Commission started preparing the action in March 06, issued a call
for proposals in May, carried out evaluations of the project proposals in September,
and the projects started up in January of the following year.

The first step in the process was to draft the Work Programme. DG INFSO set up a
consultation workshop with experts in the field of e-participation to get concrete and
tangible ideas. The Commission wanted input to identify areas that could be tested
immediately. They therefore held a workshop with experts in areas where it was
thought that the Commission could meaningfully support activities. Following the
consultation workshop, the first Work Programme was drafted and DG INFSO organ-
ised service consultations with other Directorates-General involved in (or with activi-
ties relevant to) e-Participation.

Finally, a first call for proposals was launched in May 2006. Six projects were granted
two million euros in total. A second call followed in 2007, in which eight projects (in-
cluding a support action) were funded from a budget increased by the European Par-
liament and the Council to five million euros.

Mr. Walter, who initiated the e-Participation preparatory action, was highly satisfied
with the way the preparatory action was carried out, as the Commission has involved
both citizens and parliamentarians, has taken up experiences from different places,
and granted several universities to conduct studies on the topic. There were even
discussions to allocate a larger budget to the 2008 Work Programme, but it ended up
not being possible. According to Mr Walter, it would have been ideal if the citizens
had been able to benefit from the results of the preparatory action and intervene
actively in debates before the end of his legislature, but in retrospective, Mr Walter agreed that this was probably too optimistic. The first tangible results from the preparatory action are expected by the Parliament to be observable in two to three years’ time. The EU Commission has been equally pleased with the two first work programmes, since the diverse trial projects involved “real actors” (both citizens and decision-makers), “real decision-making processes” and “real institutions”.

3.3 The project portfolio and the constituency

The e-Participation Preparatory Action was implemented through three Work Programmes. 14 projects were supported under the first two Work Programmes. The first Work Programme in 2006 financed six projects and the second Work Programme in 2007 financed eight projects. The eight projects funded under the second Work Programme also comprise a support action project, Momentum, which sets out to help proposals close and coordinate and promote the e-Participation initiative. The third call for proposals closed in August 2008 and, at the time of this evaluation, seven projects had been selected for funding under the 2008 Work Programme.

3.3.1 Project portfolio

In the Work Programmes from 2006 and 2007, the two main objectives of the Preparatory Action were as follows:\(^\text{11}\):

1. Improve the legislative process and its outcomes
2. Enhance the participation of the public (citizens, businesses, socio-economic and political groups, etc.) in the decision making process, in particular through improved interaction with decision-makers.

In the 2008 Work Programme, the overall objectives are very similar to the objectives in the 2006 and 2007 Work Programmes, namely "to strengthen and broaden citizens' participation in democratic decision-making and contribute to better legislation through applying the latest available innovative ICT tools and concepts in concrete cases"\(^\text{12}\). The specific objectives were as follows\(^\text{13}\):

1. Advancing e-Participation: exploring the future course of e-Participation by applying novel tools and applications to the EU decision-making processes, including their scalability with a view to mainstreaming them within institutional environments

\(^\text{12}\) DG Information Society and Media, eParticipation Work Programme 2008
\(^\text{13}\) DG Information Society and Media, eParticipation Work Programme 2008
2. Inter-parliamentary networking and cooperation: exploring ways to improve inter-parliamentary networking and cooperation on applications of e-Participation.

The six projects funded after the first call have all finished and were primarily aiming at the objective of improving the legislative process and its outcomes, by focusing in particular on making the legislative processes more accessible, creating awareness and increasing transparency. The eight 2007 projects started in January 2008 and are expected to terminate at the end of 2009. Therefore, they are still at an early stage. These projects especially aim at enhancing public participation in the decision-making process, by giving citizens the opportunity to discuss, input and interact with decision-makers. Thus, from the 2006 to the 2007 work programme, the focus has evolved from being mainly on tools to improve the legislative process to also including tools for involving citizens. This is further mirrored in the fact that the 2007 Work Programme introduced two approaches for the projects, namely the citizen-driven approach and the decision-maker driven approach.

In the 2008 Work Programme, the focus is on consolidating and advancing the results from the previous Work Programmes, but it also aims to broaden the scope of e-Participation by including the objective of inter-parliamentary networking and cooperation.

The 2006 projects responded more directly to the thoughts of Ralf Walter and the initial guidelines given in the Parliamentary decision for a preparatory action on e-Participation, as it was here stated that is was a preparatory action for the creation of an internet-based system for better legislation and for public participation. The 2006 projects were to a large extent concerned with developing systems. In the second year of the preparatory action (2007), the project focus was expanded to also involve debating the legislation among citizens and decision-makers, and finally, the 2008 Work Programme is – in addition to consolidating existing results – focused on the debate itself and how it can facilitate cooperation between parliaments for the benefits of citizens' participation. Hence, the programme has evolved as the Commission has learnt from the experiences with previous Work Programmes. The citizen-driven approach was introduced in 2007, thus broadening the scope, and the focus areas of the calls are being reviewed each year based on the current projects and the evolution of the e-Participation domain. It is positive that the Commission constantly seeks to improve the programme and ensures that it is consistent with the development within the domain.

The Work Programmes for 2006 and 2007 will be discussed and analysed in more detail in chapter 4.1.

As the call for proposals under the 2008 Work Programme closed on 29 August 2008 and the proposals were evaluated by the Commission in late 2008, these projects have not been included in this evaluation as such, but are presented briefly in the
table below. Under the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Work Programmes, the following projects were selected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2006 Work Programme – projects selected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>DALOS</strong>, 'Drafting legislation with ontology-base support': the project aims to provide law-makers and European citizens with linguistic and knowledge management tools to assist in accessing and retrieving as well as drafting legal texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>LEGESE</strong>, 'Easing participation in legislative processes': this project provides easier access to, and understanding of, EU legislation and processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>LEXIPATION</strong>, 'An advanced ICT tool for enhancing Citizen's participation in the legislative process': this project provides tools to aid interaction between members of parliaments and citizens or groups of citizens at the regional level in four member states (Germany, Greece, Italy, and UK).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>SEAL</strong>, 'Smart Environment for Assisting the drafting and debating of Legislation': developing an integrated working environment to help those involved in drafting legal texts. The project provides the tools to make it easier to create legal drafts and connections from and to existing legal sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>TID+</strong>, 'Enabling citizens' initiative to e-Participation': based on an Estonian experience (Today I Decide) which enables citizens to propose, discuss and express views on new legislation initiatives, while allowing decision-makers to deliver a response to them, this project will adapt and make available this service in a cross-border environment.</td>
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<tr>
<th>2007 Work Programme – projects selected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>CitizenScape</strong>, 'e-Participation in Legislation Implementation': helping citizens to debate and engage with the implementation of EU environmental legislation at a local level with the use of state-of-the-art Web 2.0 social networking tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Demos@Work</strong>, 'European-wide discussion between elected representatives and civil society': facilitating European-wide discussions between elected representatives and civil society on emerging policy issues in the field of public health, particularly the harmful effects of smoking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>eCommittee</strong> provides citizens with the opportunity to follow issues in the European Parliament's Environment Committee and to interact with MEPs. The focus will be on climate change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>FEED</strong>, 'Federated e-Participation Systems for Cross-Societal Deliberation on Environmental and Energy Issues': provides users with seamless access to existing federated content that matches their information search requirements, with a focus on Environmental and Energy issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Ideal-EU</strong>, 'Integrating the Drivers of e-Participation at Regional Level in Europe': raising awareness on the latest evidence on climate change, and appropriate policy responses, together with assessments of the financial impact and costs of inaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>VEP</strong>, 'The Virtual European Parliament': creates a virtual European Parliament in which...</td>
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young citizens can participate via mobiles and web2.0 technologies and tools.

- **VOICE**, ‘Giving European People a voice in EU-legislation’: enhancing the participation of citizens from regions in Germany and Spain in EU decision-making in the area of consumer protection.
- **Momentum**, A support action to help monitor, coordinate and promote the EU e-Participation initiative.

**Work Programme 2008 – projects selected**

- **WAVE** aims to improve the inclusiveness and transparency of EU decision-making at national and European level by using state-of-the-art Argument Visualisation Techniques to make the impact of complex EU environmental legislation on climate change more accessible and easy to understand for citizens, special interest groups and decision makers alike.
- **U@MareNostrum** aims at supporting citizens and local actors in identifying and solving environmental problems related to the management of water and marine environmental protection. Citizens will be better informed about the national and EU water and marine environment policies.
- **eMPOWER** sets out to motivate and strengthen the involvement of NGOs and citizens in the decision-making process on environmental issues at national and European level by providing method and tools for supporting citizens in promoting relevant public initiatives and demands of civil society.
- **EuroPetition** will develop, scale-up and prove an open-source ePetitions service already in operation in the UK and Sweden whilst building on a number of Web 2.0 applications proven with the projects Citizenscape and LEGESE, to produce a trans-European EuroPetition service that will allow Local Authorities across the EU to facilitate ePetitions and on-line discussion groups with their citizens.
- **HuWY** sets out to support discussions on Internet policy topics held by youth groups using their online chosen media, to collate these results and present them to policy-makers, to collect feedback on the issues from policy-makers, and to provide user-friendly information on which legislative bodies are responsible for the topics in question.
- **VIDI** aims at supporting various types of analyses which can explore the information hidden between “big” arguments, which in fact contributes enormously to understanding the public opinion. Current tools for visualisation miss this opportunity, especially the explicit link between the discussions related to legislation and their impact on this legislation.
- **VoiceS** will update and complement the VoicE internet platforms with the objective to promote the dialogue between citizens from European regions and “their” regional policy makers from the European parliament or the Assembly of Regions – hence creating a direct link between citizens and the representatives from their region.

As the 2008 projects were only just contracted by the end of this evaluation, the following analysis of the programme portfolio only includes projects from 2006 and 2007.

The following figure illustrates the extent to which the projects cover the four legislation phases, namely policy formation, legislation drafting, legislation implementation and amendments and follow-ups.
It can be seen that the projects especially seek to impact the first two phases, policy formation and legislation drafting. This is rather logical as it is particularly in these stages that the citizens’ participation and debates with legal drafters can have an influence on the decision-making process. When the legislation is being implemented and amendments are being drafted, the influence of the citizens is considerably smaller.

Environmental and energy issues are commonly focused on by the Preparatory Action projects\textsuperscript{15}, as these are issues that European citizens are concerned with. 88% of the European citizens agree that environmental consequences of a policy should be considered by decision-makers\textsuperscript{16}, meaning that environmental topics are very suitable areas in which to enhance public involvement in the decision-making process.

The projects funded under the preparatory action have used several methods to reach their objectives. The following figure presents these methods and the extent to which they have been used by the projects.

\textsuperscript{15} CitizenScape, eCommittee, FEED, Ideal-EU, LEGESE, and LEXIPATION
Information provision and consultations are among the most commonly used methods to enhance e-participation, which may have to do with the fact that it is important to inform the public about what e-participation can be used for, and also to consult the public to better understand which electronic tools would work for them and if they have any problems in using electronic tools. It is however also the first and easiest steps in the process to begin with. Given the fact that the programme set out to apply ICT tools and novel solutions, it could have been expected that the projects had been a bit more ambitious in their choice of methods.

The projects funded under the 2006 and 2007 Work Programmes vary with respect to the decision-making level on which they operate. The following figure illustrates this variation.
It can be seen that most of the projects operate at regional level, followed by local and national levels. Fewer projects are influential at the EU level. Several project managers stated that projects were often initiated at regional or local level as it was often easier to involve citizens at this level as they are more interested in and informed about the actions taking place at these levels.

“Our project has been more influential at local and regional level than at EU level. Efforts have been made to act on the EU level as well, but this is difficult as the citizens are not always very interested in the subject.”

Project manager, e-Participation project

Another explanation provided by one project manager was that there might be cultural issues (such as language, the level of internet literacy) that hinder the project’s distribution across borders – at least in the short run. An e-participation expert supports this by stating that some of the decision-making at EU level might be too distant for the citizens and might be perceived to be too far away from their daily life. With that being said, it should be noted that some of the managers of the projects particularly influential at the local or regional levels expect indirect outcomes at the national and EU levels in the long run, but state that e-participation takes time to mature and will have to start somewhere, and as mentioned it is often at the local, regional and national levels that people can relate most easily to the decision-making
process. Also, as one e-Participation expert stated, issues of major political importance are easier to relate to for the citizens such as the upcoming climate conference in Europe and might trigger citizen's interest for involving themselves in decision-making at EU level.

3.3.2 Programme constituency

Geographical coverage
The partners participating in the Preparatory Action cover a large number of Member States. However, Denmark, Luxembourg, Portugal, and several new Member States are not present. The map below illustrates the degree to which the different Member States are represented.

It can be observed that partners are often located in Greece, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. The interviews with project managers show that many projects take departure point in the project participants’ country of origin. Hence, it is mainly in those countries that local, regional or national actions have been undertaken. The fact that eight EU Member States were not represented in neither the 2006 nor the 2007 projects could be seen as a sign of imbalance among the countries in terms of e-Participation involvement. However, in several of the countries not participating in the preparatory action other e-Participation actions have been undertaken without funding from the EU. For instance, Denmark has implemented an e-Participation initiative called “DanmarksDebatten” (The Denmark Debate), where citizens can present ideas to and discuss issues with their local government online. In Hungary the e-Participation initiative “magyarorszag.hu”, has been initiated, which is a forum set up by the Prime Minister's Office with the primary goal to enable
users to freely express their opinions, to exchange information, to discuss issues and to create a community\textsuperscript{17}.

\textsuperscript{17} Panopoulou, Tambouris, Tarabanis, 2008: e-Participation good practice cases, Deliverable D4.2a
4. **Relevance**

4.1 **Achievement of the objectives specified in the 2006 and 2007 Work Programmes for the preparatory action**

4.1.1 **Objectives of the e-Participation Preparatory Action**

The e-Participation Preparatory Action is part of the second action of the i2010 Action Plan, contributing to the objective for 2010 of "demonstrating tools for effective public debate and participation in democratic decision-making"[^18].

The objectives of the 2006 Work Programme were as follows[^19]:

- Improve the legislative process and its outcomes
- Enhance the participation of the public (citizens, businesses, socio-economic and political groups, etc.) in the decision making process, in particular through improved interaction with decision-makers.

Both these objectives are relevant at EU, Member State and local levels[^20]. Hence, the 2006 Work Programme addresses the overall objectives of the Preparatory Action, better legislation and public participation, at four stages:

- the legislation proposal formation stage (e.g. by Ministries and relevant institutions)
- the debate on draft legislation (e.g. in Parliaments and with citizens, businesses, NGOs etc.)
- the implementation level
- the follow-up/monitoring of the legislation life-cycle

The 2007 Work Programme focuses on the two objectives from the previous Work Programme[^21]. It builds on the achievements of the projects started under the 2006 Work Programme and aims at further improving legislation and strengthening public participation in the decision-making process. Moreover, the 2007 Work Programme addresses the legislative and decision-making processes from two perspectives:

- the citizen-driven approach, and


• the decision-maker driven approach

The first perspective aims at empowering citizens to form, debate, and voice opinions as input for decision-makers and politicians on concrete, significant topics. The second perspective aims at enabling citizens and politicians to better appreciate the impact of legislation by making the complex political debate meaningful and interesting for all citizens. The trial projects have to follow one of these two approaches.

4.1.2 Achievement of the objectives

Each of the thirteen trial projects funded under the two first work Programmes are related either to both or to one of the main objectives presented above, namely improving the legislative process and its outcomes, and/or enhancing public participation in the decision-making process.

The first objective, “improving the legislative process and its outcomes”, is targeted by several projects. For instance, DALOS aimed at developing tools that allow overcoming the language barrier of legislation at the EU level, via the integration of ontology-learning tools. Hence, the improvement of the quality and the readability of legislation were targeted. LEX-IS aimed at improving the content of legislation by providing input from the public to national Parliaments. Another example of a project corresponding to the first objective of the Preparatory Action is the SEAL project. It set out to develop an integrated working environment for legislative drafters both within the Parliament and at the Ministries, thus improving coordination and producing a better legislation.

The second objective, “Enhance the participation of the public (citizens, businesses, socio-economic and political groups, etc.) in the decision making process, in particular through improved interaction with decision-makers”, is also targeted by several of the trial projects. For instance, LEGESE aims at increasing the citizens’ participation in their regional legislative processes. Another example is provided by the TID+ project, which aimed at developing and disseminating an online tool that allows for citizens’ initiative and participation in proposing and discussing regulation. Thus, public participation was directly targeted. Finally, the Virtual European Parliament has aimed at creating motivation and engagement from the citizens in order to bring them together with decision-makers in dialogue and debate.

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22 European Commission, DG Information Society and Media, e-Participation in the legislative and decision-making processes, Work Programme 2007
24 http://www.lex-is.eu/default.aspx?page=home
26 http://www.legese.org/About/Project_overview.aspx
27 tidplus.net/
28 http://www.virtualep.eu/node/123
Also the two approaches stated in the 2007 Work Programme, namely the citizen-driven and the decision-maker-decision approaches, have both been covered. Citizens’ empowerment to form inputs for decision-makers, i.e. the citizen-driven approach, is among the objectives of CitizenScape, FEED and VOICE for instance[^29]. Moreover, the decision-maker approach, consisting of making the impact of legislation better known and appreciated by the public, has also been used by several projects. The e-Committee[^30] project aims at informing the citizens about the national impacts of the environment-related legislation done at the EU level, through broadcasting interviews with MEPs on the project’s website. FEED[^31] is also providing users with seamless access to existing content on environmental and energy issues. VOICE and LEGESE[^32] have set as a goal to make legislation content accessible to the public, so that as a second step public opinion can be taken into account.

The interviews with the project managers show some indications as to whether the projects have reached their intended results and thus are contributing to achieving the objectives of the work programmes. However, only the projects funded under the 2006 Work Programme have finished and final results are therefore only available from these projects.

The objective of “improving the legislative process and its outcomes” has been achieved to a significant extent. For instance, the DALOS project has developed a methodology which allows legal drafters and decision-makers to overcome the multilingual issue of EU legislation and the problem arising when a law is transposed at the national level. This directly contributes to the improvement of the legislative process.

There are also indications that the objective of “enhancing the participation of the public (citizens, businesses, socio-economic and political groups, etc.) in the decision making process, in particular through improved interaction with decision-makers” has been or will be achieved. Among the projects funded under the 2006 Work Programme, the DALOS project has contributed to enhance public participation since the system it developed has been used to better understand the citizens’ opinion. LEPARATION focused on reducing the complexity of the workflow of the participatory legislative process, ensuring better e-collaboration techniques, by implementing an ICT platform for moderated online discourse and legislative proposals. This achievement contributed to both main objectives.

Interviews with project managers of the projects funded under the 2007 Work Programme show that the projects are well on track towards meeting their objectives. For instance, even though their online system has only been available for one month, the VOICE partners are very pleased so far with the involvement of both citizens and politicians. The project manager of FEED sees the project’s objectives of developing a deliberation tool through which citizens can access information and express their opinion as realistic and achievable within the time scope of the project. SEAL is contributing to the enhancement of the participation of citizens indirectly through their representatives. It focuses on building networks between the European Parliament and legislation drafters, so that publishing legislation is eased and more accessible.

In sum, the achievement of the objectives of the 2006 and 2007 Work Programmes is well on track. The projects funded are in line with the objectives, and the results from the 2006 projects show that their individual objectives have largely been achieved. Moreover, the positive indications from the 2007 projects point to these projects also contributing towards achieving the objectives of the Work Programmes.

4.2 Complementarity and coherence between the preparatory action and the activities of FP5, FP6, and ICT-PSP

In the present report, coherence refers to the logical connection between the framework programmes and the preparatory action, and ICT-PSP and the preparatory action, respectively. What is more specifically analysed is whether e-Participation is a logic and natural continuation of the framework programmes and/or the ICT-PSP, i.e. whether the implementation projects of the preparatory action naturally can build on the research conducted in the framework programmes and/or the results from the ICT-PSP projects, or vice versa.

Complementarity refers to the extent to which the results of the preparatory action and the framework programmes, and the activities of the preparatory action and the ICT-PSP have supplemented each other, or even created synergies.

4.2.1 Research activities

FP5

FP5 was initiated to help solving problems and to respond to major socio-economic challenges faced by Europe. FP5 focused on a set of key actions, comprising four Thematic Programmes, which covered a series of well-defined problems, and three Horizontal Programmes, which responded to common needs across all research areas.

The four thematic programmes were:\footnote{http://cordis.europa.eu/fp5/src/key.htm}{34}:

1. Quality of life and management of living resources (Quality of Life)
2. User-friendly information society (IST)
3. Competitive and sustainable growth (GROWTH)

The three horizontal programmes were:

1. Confirming the international role of Community research (INCO II)
2. Promotion of innovation and encouragement of SME participation (Innovation/SMEs)
3. Improving human research potential and the socio-economic knowledge base (Improving)

The second thematic programme, namely the programme on a user-friendly information society, contains four inter-related key actions, where the First Key Action: Systems and services for the citizens, is the most essential action with respect to e-Participation. This key action aimed at enabling the European users (citizens, businesses, public authorities) to take advantage of the recent advances in ubiquitous computing, ubiquitous communication and intelligent interfaces to improve access to and delivery of services\footnote{http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/bwp_en3.htm#3_1}{36}.

The first Key Action of FP5 was primarily carried out in the fields of health and persons with special needs\footnote{http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/overv-1.htm#workprogr}{37}. However, the technologies were developed with the aim of engaging the citizens electronically so that it would be possible to for instance treat patients, prevent illnesses and transferring medical information via the Internet (telemedicine)\footnote{http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/bwp_en3.htm#3_1}{38}. Nevertheless, if the technologies developed in FP5 are to be implemented, they will definitely need citizens’ engagement. In this respect, it is an immediate possibility that the technologies developed in FP5 could be used to underpin the projects undertaken in the e-Participation preparatory action and thereby providing the technology needed for improving the legislative process and engage citizens further in this process. Thus, there is a definite possibility for coherence between the two programmes. There is a clear need for the citizens and other stakeholders in Europe discussing an issue to have the technical possibilities to do so, and the technologies developed in the FP5 projects could support this need. A project manager for several FP5 and FP6 projects as well as reviewer of several e-Participation projects stated that in his view, it is definitely possible to use the research being carried out in the FPs in the implementation projects under the e-Participation preparatory action. Also complementarity is a possibility, as the implementation-oriented projects

\textsuperscript{34} http://cordis.europa.eu/fp5/src/key.htm
\textsuperscript{35} http://cordis.europa.eu/fp5/src/key.htm
\textsuperscript{36} http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/bwp_en3.htm#3_1
\textsuperscript{37} http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/overv-1.htm#workprogr
\textsuperscript{38} http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/bwp_en3.htm#3_1
of the Preparatory Action could supplement the technological developments carried out under the FP5 and provide new ways of using the ICT tools developed.

One example of an e-Participation project which has attempted to build on the technologies developed under FP5 is LEXIPATION. The project manager of LEXIPATION was also involved in a project under FP5 and it was therefore natural for LEXIPATION to attempt to build the e-Participation project on the technologies developed under FP5. However, the LEXIPATION team faced problems with the intellectual property rights of the specific methodology developed in the FP5 project, so they had to redevelop the technology to be used for the e-Participation project. Intellectual property rights may not usually be an issue in the FP projects, but it should however be kept an eye on so that other projects do not experience similar problems. However, the Commission states that although some adjustment might be needed in some projects, the IPR rules of the FP should not present a large problem in the future.

Also in the SEAL project, the project manager had previously been involved with several FP5 projects and has used some of the results and methodology developed under the FP5 project for the SEAL project. As with LEXIPATION, it is a project manager previously involved in an FP5 project that has taken the research and knowledge conducted there and aimed at implementing this in an e-Participation project. Thus, it can be seen that if the project participants of the e-Participation projects have not been involved in FP5 projects, they have not taken up the technologies developed in FP5 and used them as a starting point for their e-Participation preparatory action projects.

In the FEED project, the involvement in both FP5 and FP6 made it possible for the team to prepare a solid proposal under the e-Participation preparatory action. The project manager did not believe that this would have been possible without involvement in the FP5, and the knowledge obtained from being part of the FP5 are believed to be valuable in order to prepare other proposals within the e-participation domain. In the projects CitizenScape and LEGESE, there has been some coherence with FP5, in the sense that they could use some of the techniques and knowledge developed in FP5 to focus the e-Participation projects.

The e-Participation preparatory action and FP5 have been coherent in the sense that much research conducted under FP5 can be and have been used as a basis for the implementation projects in the preparatory action. However, as can be seen in the next chapter, coherence of the objectives and activities is easier identifiable between FP6 and the preparatory action than between FP5 and the preparatory action. This indicates that the Commission is constantly improving the links between its different programmes. Some complementarity can also be found, as the implementation projects carried out under the preparatory action in some projects have complemented the research carried out under FP5 in terms of implementing the ICT tools developed under FP5.
However, it should be noted that all the project managers which have taken up research results from FP5 have done so because they have been an active member of a FP5 project. Some of the project managers from the e-Participation preparatory action knew little about the FP5 and their results. Thus, if the Commission wishes that the links between the programmes be even stronger, dissemination and knowledge sharing activities may be held to an even larger extent than today. The Commission is aware of this; they used to hold many clustering events with the project participants from FP5 and FP6, but due to staff changes and staff shortages this has not been possible recently. The Commission states that had these numerous changes in personnel not happened, it might have been possible to exploit the research results even better in the preparatory action. Based on the above evidence we agree, and find it very positive that the Commission is aware of this.

**FP6**

FP6’s main objective was to contribute to the creation of a true “European Research Area” (ERA), which is a vision for the future of research in Europe as an internal market for science and technology[^39].

FP6 had two main strategic objectives[^40]:

1. Strengthening the scientific and technological bases of industry and encourage its international competitiveness
2. Promoting research activities in support to other EU policies.

Furthermore, FP6 had seven specific thematic areas[^41]:

1. Life sciences, Genomics and Biotechnology for Health
2. Information Society Technologies (IST)
3. Nano-technologies and nano-sciences, knowledge-based multifunctional materials, new production processes and devices
4. Aeronautics and Space
5. Food Quality and Safety
6. Sustainable Development, Global Change and Ecosystems
7. Citizens and Governance in a knowledge-based society

The second thematic area, namely the one concerned with Information Society Technologies (IST), contained four strategic objectives. One of these strategic objectives, “applied IST research addressing major societal and economic challenges”, and its sub-objective, to “promote ICT research for innovative eGovernment” are the most relevant objectives with respect to e-Participation, as it set out to modernise and innovate public administrations at all levels, to foster good governance, to provide citizens and industries with new service offers, and thus create new public.

[^40]: [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6)
[^41]: [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6)
value. Moreover, the strategic objective aims among other things at contributing to support active citizens through innovative government services and through participation in decision-making processes.\textsuperscript{42}

The aim of the strategic objective of supporting active citizens through innovative government services and through participation in the decision-making process is indeed coherent with the objective of the preparatory action of “demonstrating concrete cases where, with the help of modern ICT tools and applications, improvements of the legislative/legislation process and its outcomes can be achieved, and at the same time, enhance the participation of the public in the decision-making process, amongst others, through improved interaction with decision-makers”\textsuperscript{43}. As mentioned, the coherence is more directly visible between the strategic objective of FP6 and the e-Participation preparatory action than between the objective of FP5 and the preparatory action.

As mentioned, a project manager for several FP5 and FP6 projects as well as reviewer of several e-Participation projects stated that in his view, it is definitely possible to use the research being carried out in the FPs in the implementation projects under the e-Participation preparatory action, and that the results of FP6 were even better suited to complement the implementation projects of the preparatory action than the results from FP5, as some of the FP6 projects under the sub-objective of promoting ICT research for innovative e-Government aims at conducting research underpinning e-Participation. FP6 had numerous research projects related to e-Participation, including the Terregov and Genesis projects.

One of the projects funded under the e-Participation preparatory action that has built on the results of FP6 projects is Demos@work. Here, the project manager for Demos@work was project manager of an FP6 project called Terregov. Demos@work built on the research results of Terregov and used these as a starting point for the Demos@work project, thus being a good example of coherence between FP6 and the e-Participation preparatory action. Both projects aimed at increasing public participation in the decision-making process, but at two different levels, namely the research level and the implementation level, thus complementing each other rather well. The project manager however noted that since the budgets for the two projects differed, only some of the results from the FP6 project have been reused for the Demos@work project, particularly with respect to improve the capabilities and knowledge of e-Participation within the team, and to create a collaborative platform. Hence, the project manager stated that the coherence could have been even more pronounced had the budget for the e-Participation project been larger, enabling the e-Participation project to take up more of the FP6 results.

Another project manager that had been involved in an FP6 project as well agreed that it would be logical if the results from the Framework Programmes fed into the

\textsuperscript{42} http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/so/govt/home.html

\textsuperscript{43} ToR, page 3
preparatory action and the results from the FPs were used in the implementation projects under the preparatory action to integrate the public in the decision-making process, but he did not see it happen in reality. Part of the explanation is that the FP6 project was a rather large research project and it can be difficult in the interviewee’s opinion to implement this on a smaller scale. However, the above evidence showed that it did happen in the Demos@Work project.

Other e-Participation projects that have built on the research developed in FP6 include CitizenScape and FEED. The FEED project uses the general knowledge about eGovernment projects gained from participating in FP6 as well as the tools and architecture developed in the FP6 projects they have participated in as departure point. However, the FEED project could not use the tools developed in FP6 directly, as these tools were developed by partners from the FP6 project for other purposes. Instead, they used to tools as a starting point in the FEED project.

In sum, it can be seen that also the FP6 projects show coherence with the projects funded under the e-Participation preparatory action. As with FP5, some complementarity can also be found, as the implementation projects carried out under the preparatory action in some projects have complemented the research carried out under FP5 in terms of implementing the ICT tools developed under FP5.

However, although it initially seems that there is greater potential for coherence between FP6 and the preparatory action than between FP5 and the preparatory action, this is not reflected in the interviews. The research resulting from the FP5 projects are used as frequently in the preparatory action as the research resulting from the FP6 projects. A possible explanation is that the Commission, due to staff shortages and frequent staff changes, have not been able to hold as many clustering events with the participants from FP6 as they would have liked. Key staff involved in the e-Participation preparatory action indicated that the potential of basing the projects under the e-Participation preparatory action on more FP6 projects may not have been used to its fullest extent, which is also supported in the above analysis.

4.2.2 FP7
In the recent Work Programme for FP7 for 2009-2010, links with other programmes are emphasised, and especially the links with the ICT-PSP of the CIP. In the FP7 Work Programme for 2009-2010, it is stated that ICT in the CIP aims at ensuring the wide uptake and best use of ICT by businesses, governments and citizens. ICT in FP7 and ICT in the CIP are therefore complementary instruments aiming at both progressing ICT and its applications and at making sure that all citizens and businesses can benefit from ICT. Thus, on a general note, complementarity between FP7 and the preparatory action in its future form (embedded in ICT-PSP) is accounted for in the Work Programme and thus a focus area of the Commission.

More specifically, Objective 7.3 under Challenge 7 in the Work Programme for FP7 for 2009-2010 complements the objectives of the e-Participation preparatory action very well. It targets outcomes within the areas of a) Governance and Participation
Toolbox, b) Policy modelling, simulation and visualisation, and c) roadmapping and networking for “participation, governance and policy modelling”\textsuperscript{44}. Among others, it aims at achieving the impacts of improving empowerment and engagement of individuals, groups and communities in the policy-making processes, and improving the prediction of impacts of policy measures with increased contribution and involvement of individuals and communities. These impacts directly correspond with the expected impacts of the e-Participation preparatory action. Thus, there is great potential for further complementarity and coherence between the FPs and the e-Participation initiative in its future shape.

4.2.3 \textbf{ICT-PSP}

The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) is one of the key instruments in the i2010 programme. CIP aims to enhance the competitiveness of European enterprises, by mainly targeting the SMEs and supporting innovation. It provides, for instance, specific measures for innovation and ICTs.

It is organised around three specific programmes:

- The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP)
- The Information and Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP)
- The Intelligent Energy Europe Programme (IEE)\textsuperscript{45}

The ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP) is a substantial part of the CIP and focuses on motivating innovation and competitiveness with a broad uptake and best use of ICT by citizens, governments and businesses and SMEs. The aim is to optimise and promote national, regional and other EU initiatives\textsuperscript{46}.

The ICT-PSP focused on three main thematic areas in the initial Work Programme for 2007, these being eGovernment, eHealth and eInclusion. Here, the most relevant thematic area is eGovernment, which focuses on using ICT to make public administrations more efficient and effective and promoting growth. By connecting government departments, companies and citizens, eGovernment-powered public services also become faster and more personalised. eGovernment also aims at strengthening democracy by improving two-way communication between the citizens and their government.\textsuperscript{47} Several implementation measures are to be taken in order to meet the objectives of the Work Programme ICT-PSP. One of them consists of the Pilot

\textsuperscript{44} European Commission, ICT – Information and Communication Technologies, FP7 Work Programme (2009-10)

\textsuperscript{45} http://ec.europa.eu/cip/index_en.htm

\textsuperscript{46} http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/about/index_en.htm

\textsuperscript{47} http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/soccul/egov/index_en.htm
projects (type B), which are supposed to uptake and put into practice the service-based ICT previously developed.\(^48\)

Hence, ICT-PSP pursues similar objectives to the ones of the Preparatory Action, as it aims at putting new technological tools into practice in order to enhance public participation in the decision-making process. Hence, the possibility for achieving especially complementarity is definitely present.

To date, only one project of relevance to e-Participation has been funded under the ICT-PSP, namely the PEP-NET project. This project aimed at creating a European network of the stakeholders active in the field of e-Participation. The PEP-NET project is a logical continuation of the preparatory action, among other e-Participation initiatives, and can thus be said to be coherent with at least the trial project activities of the preparatory action.

Several of the project participants of the projects funded under the e-Participation preparatory action participated in the PEP-NET project. Hence, the PEP-NET project complemented the e-Participation preparatory action in the sense that the project participants from the preparatory action used the PEP-NET network to exchange best practise. The PEP-NET project also supplements the work being carried out by the support action of disseminating the results of the preparatory action projects.

According to the project manager of PEP-NET, this exchange contributed to create awareness of e-Participation in Europe, most pronounced via the use of a web-log where the project participants from the preparatory action posted articles, ideas and experiences on the use of e-Participation. Hence, the PEP-NET project helped disseminate the knowledge and best practise obtained in the projects under the preparatory action. Based on this one project and the objectives of the ICT-PSP programme, it is definitely possible to detect especially complementarity with the e-Participation preparatory action, however, it also seems that it can be exploited to an even greater extent, something that will probably materialise in the coming years when e-Participation may become an objective/initiative under the ICT-PSP programme.

5. **Efficiency**

5.1 **Effectiveness and efficiency of the management in reaching its results**

The overall conclusion emerging from the evidence concerning the effectiveness and efficiency of the management of the e-Participation preparatory action is that it was implemented and managed effectively and efficiently. According to project managers of e-Participation projects, the cooperation with the Commission went smoothly and problem solving was efficient.

Although the project participants believed the management of the programme to be efficient, the Commission stated that initially, there were too few people handling the programme. Currently, three project officers (all of which part-time) as well as one financial assistant are involved in managing the action, which is deemed to be sufficient.

One small paradox was however raised with respect to the Commission not having an electronic system for submitting proposals etc. The project manager stating this found it quite amusing that in a programme that promotes the use of electronic tools, the communication with the Commission must be carried out via paper-based procedures. The interviewee noted that promotion of electronic instruments could be done internally in the Commission as well. The Commission is aware of this and also believes that electronic tools for preparing proposals and evaluating proposals should be introduced. However, the e-Participation preparatory action was a rather small programme and a specific electronic application would thus have been too costly to develop.

5.1.1 **Time to contract**

The time to contract (the period between the deadline for the submission of proposals and signature of the final project contracts between the Commission and the selected project consortia) was overall considered to be appropriate by the project participants. Only one project manager did not find the time to contract appropriate, stating that they had to start working before the contract was signed in order to reach their goals. The Commission also agrees that the time to contract was very fast in this programme, which mostly has to do with the fact that it is a small programme with rather few projects.

5.1.2 **Administrative issues**

The administrative procedures of the programme were by most participants believed to be reasonable. This was true both in the application phase, in the negotiation phase and in the implementation phase.
Administrative tasks were reasonable in the application phase and did not present a huge problem. The bureaucracy in negotiation phase was reasonable, especially since the costs statement was only needed at the end of the project, and since only short minutes of the meetings were required. Also in the implementation phase the administrative issues were manageable.

Project manager, e-Participation project

Some project participants believed that the administrative procedures were quite time-consuming, but at the same time they could see that they were necessary and therefore acceptable. From the interviews conducted, it seems that the projects which experienced difficulties (projects partners left, disputes over funding size) were also the ones that felt that the administrative burdens were too high.

5.1.3 Inclusion of other stakeholders

As mentioned in the Work Programmes, it is a prerequisite for being granted funding by the EU that the projects exchange knowledge and ideas. The Commission believes that one of the reasons for the preparatory action’s success is that there was made room for this. This is part of the support action (carried out by the Momentum team), which should ensure that the project participants do not just disseminate their knowledge internally in the projects, but also shares the results and knowledge with other projects.

The support action Momentum have as part of their assignment set up three working groups, where they believe that the project participants can create synergies by sharing knowledge. The three working groups are 1) a group focusing on greater transparency and facilitate more user-friendly writing of legislative texts (FEED, LEXIS, DALOS, SEAL), 2) a group focusing on empowering citizens (TID+, VOICE, LEXIPATION and LEGESE) and 3) a group inviting citizens to exchange views and information (Demos@Work, IDEAL-EU, CitizenScape, VEP and eCommittee).

The knowledge-sharing has worked well in some projects, and not always limited to knowledge-sharing within the three working groups. For instance, both the VOICE project and the Demos@work project used results from the DALOS project in their further work. The DALOS team also exchanged results and methods in particular with the SEAL team.

However, from the interviews with project managers it can be seen that this initiative is not always honoured. Several project managers have stated that they had not budgeted the costs for the dissemination and knowledge sharing activities that was requested by the Commission and the Momentum support action, and suggested that the Commission either should have stated very clearly from the beginning that it was required to participate in meetings and dissemination events, or that the Commission should have paid for the additional costs. Since it was required in the Work Pro-
grammes that the projects should share knowledge with each other, one could argue that the project managers could just have budgeted for these activities from the beginning. However, from the interviews it seems that it was not entirely clear to the project participants what was required from them in terms of disseminating knowledge and ideas. It would be advisable to ensure that these additional requirements are more clearly laid out to the project participants in the future.

5.1.4 Coordination with other Directorate-Generals

According to the Commission, when the first work programme for the preparatory action was drafted, service consultations were held with other services of the Commission interested in e-Participation in order to receive comments on the work programme and explain the preparatory action and its aims to the other DGs. However, it seems that the cooperation with the other DGs interested in e-Participation (DG COMM; DG EAC, DG DIGIT, DG Research, DG ENVR etc.) could be improved even further. DG COMM, who is currently carrying out the Plan D/Debate Europe project, is trying to cooperate with the e-Participation preparatory action among other initiatives within the Commission. DG COMM suggests, in line with DG INFSO, that it would be advantageous to try to align the different administrative divisions and their ways of running the programmes, as well as focusing more on knowledge-sharing across the different units within the Commission.

However, some e-Participation initiatives within the Commission are clearly not aligned with the preparatory action. The Interactive Policy-Making (IPM) initiative by DG DIGIT is an initiative which aims to help both Member State administrations and EU institutions to understand the needs of citizens and enterprises better, thanks to web-based technologies. It is intended to assist policy development by allowing more rapid and targeted responses to emerging issues and problems, improving the assessment of the impact of policies (or the absence of them) and providing greater accountability to citizens. Despite the similar aims DG DIGIT was not aware of the e-Participation preparatory action. There seems to be potential for synergies between the e-Participation preparatory action and the IPM programme, as they have similar aims of improving legislation and enhancing participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process. However, DG INFSO and DG DIGIT have not been in contact regarding knowledge-sharing or discussions of the two programmes. It could be beneficial to share this knowledge in the future.

5.2 Appropriateness and coherence of the instruments and resources allocated

49 http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/ipm
5.2.1 Instruments
The instruments through which the e-Participation preparatory action provided funding were as follows:

- Call for proposals: Pilot/trial projects, which aimed to test state-of-the-art ICT tools and novel solutions to achieve the objectives.
- Call for tenders: Complementing the trial projects by assessing conditions, costs, benefits and impacts of a possible scaling up of trial projects.
- Consultation and dissemination activities, which consists of a support for targeted seminars, workshops and conferences.

The results from the interviews show that overall the project managers find the instruments appropriate for reaching the objectives set. With respect to the overall aim of the e-participation preparatory action, namely to use readily available tools in an implementation context, the trial projects make sense. The appropriateness of the pilot/trial projects is however closely linked to the fact that the ICT tools and techniques are readily available. If the state-of-the-art tools and techniques are not available or ready to being implemented, the project participants will have to spend resources developing the tools further, which means that the focus of the project will change and not only be about engaging citizens or improving the legislative process. Moreover, the budget allocated for the trial projects are likely not to become sufficient if a development aspect is to be added to the project. Some project managers discovered that the available research is not always directly applicable and not always innovative enough and had to further develop the tools and techniques available. Hence, some of the projects under the preparatory action ended up focusing not only on applying existing tools and integrating these with the users, but also on developing existing tools further or adapting these. In one project, the eCommittee project, the project did use a state-of-the-art web conference system available to them, but unfortunately this could not support the numerous people online at the same time, which meant that the citizens could not participate actively in a debate with the MEPs, only listen. The project managers experiencing this stated that this situation could advantageously be accounted for in the future.

With respect to the support action, many of the project managers state that the support action was appropriate in order to facilitate exchange of experience and deployment of initiatives, and that it is an initiative that should be continued in future programmes. However, as mentioned above, few of the project managers were aware that the meetings and dissemination activities should have been accounted for in their initial budgets. As a result, many of the project managers saw this support action as a burden. One of the project managers stated that the support action was

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50 European Commission, DG Information Society and Media, e-Participation in the context of legislative processes, Work Programme 2006
European Commission, DG Information Society and Media, e-Participation in the legislative and decision-making processes, Work Programme 2007
satisfactory, but that Momentum also had a hard job in trying to bring together all the projects. Another project manager noted that is was not that easy to “just come to Brussels” as they would have to pay significant travel expenses each time. Finally, one project manager noted that the cooperation with Momentum was hindered by the fact that they did not know enough about Momentum’s role. Thus, for future reference it would be beneficial to explain to the project participants even clearer what the support action can do and how participation in meetings should be funded, as this seemed to be an obstacle for the project participants to fully exploit an otherwise helpful initiative.

5.2.2 **Resources**
The size of the budget allocated to the first call for proposal “e-Participation in the context of legislative processes” was 2 million euros. This was increased to 5 million euros for the second call, “e-Participation in legislative and decision-making processes”, a quite significant increase approved by the European Parliament. The Parliament even decided to increase the budget with more than the Commission initially asked for, demonstrating the high political focus on e-Participation from the Parliament. Thus, the first call funded 6 projects with a budget of 2 million euros, while the second call funded 8 projects with a budget of 5 million euros, meaning that the funding allocated per project was significantly larger under the second call.

The funding per project under the first call ranged from 0.20 million euros to 0.28 million euros with an average of 0.26 million euros. Under the second call in 2007, the projects were granted between 0.45 and 0.71 million euros in funding with an average of 0.61 million euros. This means that the average funding per project has more than doubled.

The distribution of the budget on for each of the 2005 and 2006 Work Programmes is illustrated below. Here it can be seen that the distributions between the trial projects/studies, the support action and the budget set aside for consultations and experts are approximately the same in the 2006 and 2007 Work Programmes.
As mentioned, both the total budget for the preparatory action and the budget per project increased from 2006 to 2007. The interviews with the project managers also show that the majority of the project managers found the resources allocated appropriate for reaching the results. The main complaint about the budget referred to the dissemination activities which the project managers had not budgeted for, and thus resulted in a tighter budget than otherwise foreseen.

However, four of the project managers stated that the budget was too small for reaching the project’s results. Two of the project managers were from projects funded under the first call, and the two others were from projects funded under the second call. Thus, even though the funding per project increased considerably from the first to the second call, it still was not sufficient for all projects.

One project manager, who had managed both a project under the first and second call, however stated that the funding granted to them under the first call was too low, but the funding of the second call was satisfactory and allowed them to reach their results much better and to meet and commit people “on the ground”.

One of the project managers dissatisfied with the funding size stated that in his opinion, efforts and costs for a full-scale implementation are underestimated. The funding granted to them only allowed the testing of ideas. However, from the interviews it is also clear that the projects which thought that the budgets were too low have spent more resources on the projects that they initially had thought necessary. One
project manager stated that in retrospect, they might have been too ambitious for the project and probably should have included fewer countries in their project.

The project managers who did not find the resources appropriate believed that the Commission should fund fewer, larger projects. Even though no maximum amount has been specified as an exclusion criterion in the calls for proposal for the e-Participation preparatory action, an indicative amount (from 0.6 to 0.8 million euros\textsuperscript{51}) was given. It is the impression that the project managers have used this amount as a maximum amount. Also, it is debatable whether the Commission would have wanted to fund for instance two large projects instead of 6-8 smaller projects.

6. **Effectiveness**

6.1 **Relevance of the preparatory action in demonstrating the benefits of the use of ICT for a better legislative process, better legislation and enhancing the public participation in such processes**

Across the different projects with their different objectives it can be seen that the preparatory action has been very relevant in demonstrating the benefits of the use of ICT for both a better legislative process and for enhancing the public participation in such processes. Using ICT to create better legislation has not been the main aim of any of the projects. Some of them have seen this as a more long-term effect - for instance if the legislative process is improved, the laws can require less time to be drafted and the technology can help pointing out errors in the process, ultimately resulting in better legislation.

In the SEAL project, the project manager stated that the project has demonstrated how ICT can be used to ease the process of drafting the laws and make them more accessible to the public. Moreover, the technology applied in the SEAL project has helped pointing out errors in the legislation-making process, which ultimately results in better legislation.

In the DALOS project, ICT has been used to provide legislation drafters with language tools to make EU legislation more consistent and coherent in its terminology. This is again an example of a project where ICT has been used to improve the legislative process and ultimately, the legislation itself.

In the Virtual European Parliament (VEP) project, ICT has been used to enable people (in this case, young people between the ages of 18-35) from all over the EU to have a Virtual Parliament where they can discuss propositions from politicians. The project is thereby enhancing the participation of the public in the legislative processes. ICT is a crucial tool here as it would have been practically impossible to establish this discussion if they had to meet physically due to time and money constraints. Another way of looking at the relevance of the preparatory action is to see whether the projects could have reached the same results without Commission funding. Almost all project managers state that this would not have been possible. A few projects believe that if necessary, they could have asked for funding at national level. However, although some of the projects operate at local, regional and national level, they are often carried out simultaneously in different countries. Thus, the project results reach a wider audience when carried out across Member States. Moreover, it is easier to use the results at EU level and apply them across borders when they have been tested in several countries.

6.2 **Engagement of stakeholders identified in the stated objectives**
The stakeholders identified in the stated objectives are according to the ToR citizens, businesses, civil society, NGOs, and socio-economic and political groups. When analysing the engagement of the stakeholders identified in the stated objectives, it is first of all relevant to have a look at who the project managers and project participants are. This is presented in the below figures:

From the above figures it can be seen that the majority of the project managers (43% of the projects or 6 projects) comes from Business/Industry. However, when looking at all the participants involved in the e-Participation Preparatory Action, they mostly come from Universities/Research centres (34% of the projects). National, regional or local public authorities have been largely involved as project participants (30% of the projects), which is not surprising since the projects are to be implemented here.

In general, the interviews with project managers show that they managed to include the stakeholders that they aimed at including. This mainly consists of citizens and politicians at either local, regional, national or EU level. However, it is also a general impression from the interviews that the citizens and politicians have been more difficult to involve than the project managers initially thought. It takes time to get the citizens to participate. The Commission has been understanding with respect to this challenge, and have in several projects been very flexible towards the stakeholders. It seems that flexibility is needed if citizens and politicians are to be involved, and it is very positive that the Commission takes this stance.
If citizens are to engage more in e-Participation, it is important to understand and acknowledge the needs of the people and provide proper issues that the stakeholders can relate to. The issues must be put it in a language that people understand. If the issues are not well explained the citizens cannot be expected to actively participate. Also, as suggested by an e-Participation expert it is important to provide the citizens with incentives so that they can understand why they should use e-Participation, and to monitor that the citizens’ contribution are actually being collected, listened to and ultimately used.

It can also be difficult to engage citizens at EU level as they may not be interested enough in the European Parliament’s work. This was the case in the eCommittee project even though it was concerned with environmental issues, which as mentioned earlier is a subject of great interest to the citizens in Europe. An e-participation expert suggested that one way for the citizens to be more involved in e-participation on an EU-level could be to latch e-participation onto key events such as the climate conference in Copenhagen in 2009 etc. It sounds plausible that the citizens will find it easier to relate to tangible events and thus be more willing to participate in such events. This way, their senses are alerted towards e-Participation and it might be easier to engage them in other issues in the future.

Some of the project managers have also experienced that the politicians have been difficult to engage, and only a limited number of politicians that are interested in e-participation and willing to engage in it. It is difficult to get the politicians to change the way they interact with the citizens. However, the recent Obama campaign in the US, which was very successful at involving the citizens through ICT-supported means and set completely new standards in this area, shows that it is possible and is very likely to become an example which will inspire European politicians. Some of the project participants having trouble with involving the citizens and the decision-makers stated that the projects’ duration could in some cases advantageously be longer, so that more stakeholders could have been involved and better results could have been achieved.

6.2.1 User groups

For the majority of the projects, it is still too early to say whether user groups have or will take up any of the results from the preparatory action. However, a few projects have already seen interests from user groups.

In the VOICE project, a Hungarian regional government have expressed interest in establishing a Voice project. In the eyes of the project manager, it would be a perfect result for the project if they could “export it”. In the LEGESE project, the regions involved continue to use the project outcomes after the project had finished, and the project manager is aware of other regions that have started to implement similar actions. The TID+ project has been contacted by the Finnish Ministry of Finance and several Italian regions, which are all interested in implementing a similar action, and
in the SEAL project, the Austrian Government has taken up the project's results, and there are other areas where the results could be used, for instance in a Court of Justice or in a Ministry of Spatial Planning.
7. The future of e-Participation initiatives within the Commission

7.1.1 The future institutional set-up for the preparatory action

The future of the e-Participation preparatory action has already been decided by the European Parliament. A preparatory action can run no longer than three years and must then either be transformed into an actual programme (or integrated into an existing programme), or abandoned.

In 2008, a budget amendment was tabled by the European Parliament to include e-Participation in the ICT-PSP part of the CIP, with a formal legal basis and a formal character. The three years of the preparatory action have served to convince decision-makers that the e-Participation initiative should be included in ICT-PSP.

There are several reasons for including e-Participation in the existing ICT-PSP rather than making it a separate programme. First of all, it would have been a long and difficult process to establish a specific programme focusing on e-Participation with a similar budget. Also, the projects under the e-Participation preparatory action are similar to “Pilot B” projects of the ICT-PSP, which makes the inclusion of the preparatory action even smoother. The thinking behind these two types of projects is similar, as it is about putting tools together and demonstrating that implementation of technologies is possible. Finally, and not unimportantly, the Commission prefers larger umbrella-programmes over small, individual programmes.

7.1.2 Future focus of e-Participation

It is important that e-Participation is further integrated in institutional environments. Real-life participation is already used by young citizens on Facebook, YouTube etc., and the decision-makers are trying to do this on institutional level as well. The ultimate goal is to step away from paper-based drafting of legislation and move into web-based drafting. This preparatory action and the subsequent work with e-participation have triggered the development within the institutions. The next step is that the European Parliament discusses issues with citizens electronically full-scale. The Parliament has already started web-casting its sessions.

The work programme focus as of now has very much been on the institutional level, but it has also opened up to other areas where e-Participation can be influential. In the 1st call of the preparatory action, there was a very narrow focus. In the following calls the scope was broadened, and the Commission intends to continue this. In the 1st year the preparatory action was focusing on legislation. Then, in the 2nd call, the Commission opened up for a bottom-up approach, and has now opened up to further policy issues, e.g. young citizens discussing the legislation-making. The bottom-up approach may be the way forward for fuelling e-Participation, as the top-down approach does not always ensure that the citizens are interested in the subjects and thereby actively involved. With the bottom-up approach, it is possible to channel good ideas from the citizens and support the enthusiasm that people show when
they are able to influence or decide something themselves. However, as discussed earlier the political structures in Europe are very old and the politicians are used to approaching the public using a top-down approach. Hence, it might take some time before the bottom-up approach is the most pronounced in Europe.
8. Conclusions

Overall, the e-Participation preparatory action was a success. Three calls for proposals were implemented, a total of 21 projects funded, and the evidence points to the projects contributing to reaching the objectives of the action. The action was managed efficiently and the instruments used and resources allocated were generally appropriate.

The e-Participation preparatory action was started based on the initiative of the European Parliament and implemented by the European Commission, DG INFSO. The Members of the European Parliament interviewed for this evaluation expressed their satisfaction with the way in which the Commission transformed the original ideas into the Preparatory Action. This is also mirrored in the fact that the Parliament and the Council granted an even larger budget to the 2007 call (5 million euros) than the Commission had initially asked for.

With respect to the relevance of the e-Participation preparatory action, the achievement of the objectives of the 2006 and 2007 Work Programmes is well on track. The projects funded are in line with the objectives, and the results from the 2006 projects show that their individual objectives have largely been achieved. Moreover, there are positive indications from the 2007 projects showing that these projects also contribute towards achieving the objectives of the Work Programmes.

Coherence and complementarity with FP5 and FP6 has generally been satisfactory. Both with regards to FP5 and FP6, the results of several projects have been taken up in the e-Participation preparatory action trial projects. However, the complementarity is only present when project participants from FP projects participate in projects under the preparatory action. More clustering events might help to ensure that the potential for complementarity is exploited to a larger extent. With respect to the ICT-PSP part of the CIP, the PEP-NET project (the only project focusing on e-Participation) has been complementary with the preparatory action in the sense that it has supplemented the preparatory action by providing a forum for exchange of ideas and knowledge, and coherent in the sense that PEP-NET is a natural continuation of the preparatory action.

In terms of efficiency, the project managers of the e-Participation preparatory action projects largely agreed that the programme was implemented and managed effectively and efficiently. The cooperation with the Commission went smoothly and problem solving was efficient. The Commission on the other hand believed that too few resources were set aside to manage the programme in the beginning, but this has not been felt by the project managers.

The time to contract was overall considered to be appropriate by the project participants and the Commission, which has to do with the fact that it was a relatively small and manageable programme. The administrative procedures of the programme
were by most participants found to be reasonable, both in the application phase, in the negotiation phase and in the implementation phase.

Exchange of knowledge and ideas has been a significant factor for the achievement of the programmes’ objectives and thereby its success. Much has been done to support this, including the support action funded under the 2007 Work Programme. Several projects have made good use of this knowledge-sharing. For instance, both the VOICE project and the Demos@work project used results from the DALOS project in their further work, and the DALOS team exchanged results and methods in particular with the SEAL team. Moreover, several project managers believe that it is an initiative that should be continued in future programmes. The plan proposed by Momentum for further synergies clearly indicate that there is still much unexploited potential in this area. However, it has not been entirely clear to some project participants what was required from them in terms of disseminating knowledge and ideas. As a consequence, the meetings and dissemination activities were not accounted for in the projects’ initial budgets, and some project managers ended up seeing the support action activities as a burden.

The **instruments** used (trial projects and the support action) were appropriate when the state-of-the-art ICT tools were readily applicable. However, when this was not the case, the trial projects in some cases ended up developing tools as well, which was not the aim. The state of the ICT tools available also influenced the appropriateness of the **resources** allocated. Overall, the resources allocated were deemed appropriate by the project managers, but if the tools available were not readily applicable, these had to be further developed which meant that the projects were more costly than initially budgeted for.

There have been some efforts to coordinate with other Commission services interested in or working in the field of e-Participation, especially in the beginning of the preparatory action. However, it seems that more could be done in the area.

In terms of **effectiveness**, the preparatory action has indeed contributed to demonstrating the use of ICT for both a better legislative process and for enhancing the public participation in such processes. Some of the projects have seen the creation of better legislation as a more long-term effect. For instance, if the legislative process is improved, the laws can require less time to be drafted and the technology can help pointing out errors in the process, ultimately resulting in better legislation. However, the projects are still in an early phase and more results on how ICT can be used to enhance the legislative process and the public participation in such processes are expected in the future.

With respect to the **involvement of the stakeholders** identified in the stated objectives, the evidence shows that the relevant stakeholders have been involved in the projects, albeit at a slower pace than initially expected. It should be taken into account in the future that the process of involving especially politicians and citizens
is time-consuming, and that a certain amount of flexibility may be needed towards engaging the relevant stakeholders.

For the majority of the projects, it is still too early to say whether user groups have or will take up any of the results from the preparatory action. However, a few projects have already seen interests from user groups.

The future institutional set-up of the preparatory action has already been decided as it is to be included in the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP) under the Competitiveness & Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) in 2009. The projects under the e-Participation preparatory action are similar to Pilot B projects of the ICT-PSP, as it is about putting tools together and demonstrating that implementation of technologies is possible. Hence, the inclusion of e-Participation into the CIP programme is expected to be rather smooth.

In the second call for proposals under the preparatory action, the Commission opened up for a bottom-up approach. The bottom-up approach may be the way forward for fuelling e-Participation, as the top-down approach is not always the best way to ensure that the citizens are interested in the subjects and thereby feel called to become actively involved. It should also be acknowledged that most people’s interests are at local or national level, which means that something extraordinary may be needed in order to catch the citizen’s interests in issues on the EU level, for instance by focusing on cross-border issues of interest to the citizens (such as climate change) where the EU has a very clear role.
9. Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions the following key recommendations have emerged:

Recommendation 1: Focus programme on a specific institutional level and/or specific policy areas

e-Participation will continue to be a relatively small area within the ICT-PSP programme and there is a significant risk that resources are spread too thinly to make a difference. In order to achieve real impact with a relatively limited budget, it is important to focus on creating a leverage effect in selected areas. There are two main ways to focus the programme, namely

1. Focusing on a specific institutional level

2. Focusing on certain policy areas

During the e-Participation preparatory action, much focus has been on certain policy areas, both in the 2006 and 2007 Work Programme. The focus on a certain level has also been stressed in the Work Programmes, most pronounced in the 2007 Work Programme where it was stated that the focus should be on key issues of clear EU relevance. Moreover, it can be seen in the 2008 Work Programme that the application of the tools should address key issues at EU level, or at national, local or regional level where there are clear cross-border issues. However, in order to increase impacts, it could be suggested to focus on only one of these levels, for instance by only focusing on EU level issues of interest to the citizens.

Focusing on specific policy areas would be another way to increase potential impacts and involving citizens. Examples of such policy areas could be climate change, environment, energy and other “global” issues where citizens need to be mobilised in order to make something happen.

Recommendation 2: Continue involvement of both citizens and decision-makers

The involvement of citizens is highly important to ensure that the citizens feel called to become actively involved in the decision-making processes. However, it is equally important that decision-makers are actively involved and respond to the needs of the citizens, so that the citizens feel that their voices are heard. It is very important that the citizens’ input have an impact on the decision-making process, or at least that

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52 For instance, the 2007 Work Programme had a focus on visualisation, tools to assess costs and benefits of legislation, and tools and services to enable interaction on cross-border EU-level issues
citizens input is monitored and that it is communicated back to the citizens what their inputs have been used for.

It is therefore recommended to continue the citizen-driven approach (bottom-up approach) where citizens are given the opportunity to interact with the decision-makers. Decision-makers should also be given the tools to be able to collect, monitor and use the input provided by the citizens. The Commission have already ensured this with the 2007 Work Programme, where it was emphasised that the legislative and decision-making processes should be addressed from two perspectives, both the citizen-driven, or proactive, civil society initiatives and decision-maker driven initiatives. This should be a focus in the new e-Participation initiative under the CIP as well.

Apart from the two above-mentioned key recommendations, the following additional recommendations have emerged from the analysis and the conclusions:

**Recommendation 3: Take into account that not all technology is readily applicable**

Some projects have experienced that the state-of-the-art technology available to them was not readily applicable, resulting in the projects having to further develop the technologies before they could apply them. Thus, a certain flexibility has so far been shown towards projects by the Commission.

However, it is recommended that this issue is more explicitly considered in the future e-Participation initiative in the ICT-PSP. It is important to clarify at an early stage whether applying the available technology is feasible or whether further development is needed, which may necessitate either a prolongation of the project, or early termination, since further development of technology is not within the scope of the programme and should not be supported financially. It is recommended that the projects after six months in their intermediate report are required to clearly state whether the technology available to them is readily applicable. If not, the timeline for the project could be re-evaluated with the Commission’s project officers, or the project terminated.

**Recommendation 4: More focus on dissemination events between the FPs and the e-Participation initiative**

Using the technologies developed in the FPs in the implementation projects under the e-Participation initiative is a natural link for further exploiting the research being done in the FPs and giving the implementation projects easy access to state-of-the-art technology. When project participants participate in both FPs and e-participation projects, technology from the FPs is used in the e-Participation projects, but not otherwise. This suggests that there is much unused potential here. It is recommended that common dissemination and networking events for FP and e-Participation partici-
participants are held in order to facilitate knowledge-sharing between the two programmes.

**Recommendation 5: Better communication of requirements for dissemination/networking activities**

Project participants were not always aware of the costs of the dissemination activities and had not always budgeted for these costs, even though it was required in the Work Programmes that the projects should share knowledge with each other. It is recommended that these budgetary requirements are made clear to potential project participants from the beginning, e.g. via information on the Commission web site and in the Work Programmes that project participants should expect to set aside X% of their budget for dissemination activities.

**Recommendation 6: More focus on knowledge-sharing across the different e-Participation initiatives within the Commission**

Several e-Participation and related initiatives take place in the Commission and several DGs have an interest in e-Participation. However, more could be done in terms of sharing the knowledge obtained in these different areas. For instance, knowledge-sharing across the different units within the Commission engaged in e-Participation in the form of meetings could be advantageous in order to learn from each other’s programmes and possibly improve the synergies. In particular, knowledge-sharing between DG DIGIT’s IPM programme and the future form of the e-participation preparatory action would be beneficial, as this has not been initiated as of yet, but also further collaboration with other e-Participation initiatives within the Commission such as DG COMM’s Plan D/Debate Europe initiative. It is recommended that this knowledge-sharing is initiated to mark the entering of the preparatory action into the ICT-PSP. DG INFSO is hosting an e-Participation conference on 4 March 2009, which could be used as a catalyst for the future knowledge-sharing within the Commission.
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## List of interviewees

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<th>Country</th>
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**TRIAL PROJECT MANAGERS**
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<td>Dimitris Askounis</td>
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<td>Eleni Panopoulou</td>
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<td>Jeremy Millard</td>
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