eGovernment in

Belgium

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Disclaimer:

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

Country Profile

Basic Data and Indicators

Basic data...

Population (1.000): 10.511,4 inhabitants (2006)

GDP at market prices: 298.540,9 million Euro (2005)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standards, EU-25=100): 118,1 (2005)

GDP growth rate: 1,1% (2005)

Inflation rate: 2,5% (2005)

Unemployment rate: 8,4% (2005)

Government debt/GDP: 93,2% (2005)

Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): -2,3% (2005)

Source: Eurostat

Area: 30.518 km^2

Capital city: Brussels

EU Official Languages: French, Dutch and German

Currency: Euro

Source: Europa Website

Political Structure...............................

Belgium is a **federal constitutional monarchy**, where executive and legislative power is divided between the federal government, 3 regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) and 3 communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking). Regions are competent for regional matters such as town and country planning, nature conservation, housing, water policy, environment, economics, energy policy, local authorities, employment policy, public works and transport. Communities are competent for personal matters (health, welfare), cultural matters, education and training, and co-operation between the communities and the regions. Each region and community has its own legislative and executive powers in its field of competence, and its own parliament and government to exercise these powers. However, the Flemish Region and Community merged their executive and legislative powers, giving birth to one single Flemish Parliament, one single Flemish Government and one single public administration, competent for community and regional matters.

For federal fields of competence, legislative power is held by a bicameral parliament made up of a Lower House (Chamber of Representatives) and an Upper House (Senate). The Chamber of Representatives has 150 members, directly elected by popular vote on the basis of proportional representation to serve four-year terms. The Senate has 71 members (40 directly elected by popular vote, 31 indirectly elected), serving four-year terms.

Executive power at federal level is held by the Federal government, headed by the [Prime Minister](), and comprising ministers and secretaries of state (junior ministers) drawn from the political parties which form the government coalition. The number of ministers is limited to 15, and they have no seat in Parliament. Ministers head executive departments of the government.

Belgium is a hereditary constitutional monarchy. The [King]() is the official Head of State and plays a ceremonial and symbolic role. His main political function is to nominate a political leader to attempt to form a new cabinet after an election or the resignation of a cabinet, and to formally appoint ministers.

The current [Belgian Constitution]() was adopted in 1993.

Belgium was a founding member of the European Economic Community in 1957.

Current Head of State: King Albert II (since August 1993)

Current Head of Government: Prime Minister [Guy Verhofstadt]() (since July 1999)

Information Society indicators...

Percentage of households with Internet access: 54% (2006)

Percentage of enterprises with Internet access: 96% (2004)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet at least once a week: 58% (2006)

Percentage of households with a broadband connection: 48% (2006)

Percentage of enterprises with a broadband connection: 84 % (2006)

Percentage of individuals having purchased/ordered online in the last three months: 14% (2006)

Percentage of enterprises having received orders online within the previous year: 15% (2006)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for interacting with public authorities:

obtaining information 25,6%, downloading forms 7,7%, returning filled forms 7,4% (2006)

Percentage of enterprises using the Internet for interacting with public authorities:

obtaining information 43%, downloading forms 44%, returning filled forms 37% (2006)

Source: [Eurostat]()

eGovernment History

Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: eGovernment News - Belgium

January 2007.....................................

The government of the region of Wallonia introduces a new accessibility 'label' aimed at encouraging further improvements in the **accessibility of the region's public administration websites** to blind, sight-impaired and handicapped internet surfers. The new label, 'Anysurfer', will replace the existing 'Blindsurfer' label introduced in 2003. The Walloon government has been actively committed to making the region's websites accessible to blind and sight-impaired people since 2002. This policy was integrated into the regional component of the National Plan to combat the Digital Divide in 2005 and has been supported by a series of grants to the National Foundations for the Blind who have taken charge of the 'labelling' operations. An accessibility 'audit' was carried out on all regional websites, and 19 sites were granted the 'Blindsurfer' label and all regional webmasters received training on web accessibility. In order to ensure that accessibility remains a priority for site managers, and to incite them to extend it beyond just visual criteria, a number of new objectives have been set. Under the new label, accessibility criteria are extending to include all types

of handicaps which may reduce users' web accessibility.

December 2006.....................................

Mr. Vanvelthoven, the Belgian Minister for Employment and the Computerisation of the State presents the **Computerisation Strategic Note 2007** which presents the priorities of the eGovernment policy for 2007.

November 2006.....................................

▸ The Avelghem local library project ('*met je chip naar de bib in Avelghem!*') is awarded with a Belgian eGovernment award as 2006 top project for its innovative use of **RFID** (Radio Frequency Identification) technology in its 'self-service' library. Implemented with a relatively small local budget, this user-friendly system allows library users themselves to very quickly and simply 'check-in' and 'check-out' books, CDs, etc. at self-service electronic stations. All 40.000 items in the library are equipped with RFID tags which users can use, in combination with their personal eID card or electronic library card, to register loans and returns. According to the industry federation Agoria, it is through the multiplication of this type of small-scale project, which facilitates the day-to-day lives of people, that eGovernment will really make its mark with the general public.

▸ Publication of the first activities report (2001-2005) of the Federal ICT Public Service (FEDICT) entitled '**A fertile ground for a user-friendly eGovernment**'. After providing an insight into FEDICT's structure, the document describes the bases and the core principles for eGovernment and

eSociety in Belgium as these were set-up by FEDICT during the past five years. Since this activities report is the first one for FEDICT, it contains an in-depth introduction both on eGovernment and eSociety in the country and on Belgium's promotion as a region for ICT knowledge. This document is designed for public officials and the political world, FEDICT partners, ICT service providers and well-aware citizens. In the future, the activities reports will be issued yearly.

▸ During the Brussels eGovernment congress (7-8 November), Belgian ministers responsible for eGovernment have agreed on a **resolution on a seamless eGovernment** in order to implement the second cooperation agreement between the federal government, the regions and the communities. The resolution focuses on a close cooperation, when possible, at two levels: (1) conceiving and implementing principles for a seamless eGovernment (2) building, using and/or managing the services and developments of a seamless eGovernment. Taking into account the objective of improving the efficiency of public services in order to deliver better services to users and the fact that communities and regions already use services initially developed by the federal state, the Ministers enjoin the cooperation agreement's strategic committee to: consolidate the existing active cooperation between administrative units of the federal state, the regions and communities; make an inventory of the core components, existing or to be created, that are needed for a seamless eGovernment; study the common services used at federal, regional and community level that could likewise be offered to provinces, cites and communes; keep on supporting current initiatives such as BELGIF (the Belgian Interoperability Framework); implement the seamless eGovernment principles especially in the fields of eProcurement, birth declaration online and social security rights for migrant workers.

October 2006......................................

Over 3.5 million **eID cards** have already been issued in Belgium and it is expected that all Belgian citizens living in Belgium will be using an eID card by the end of 2009 at the latest. A significant number of companies are now taking advantage of the possibilities offered by eID to provide new services to both employees and customers. The Belgian eID will contain all the information included on the traditional identity card and will continue to act as an identification and travel document. However, it will also offer a number of other possibilities, including: an electronic signature allowing access to restricted on-line services, making internet use safer by providing an on-line means of identification (e.g. children's chat rooms), the electronic submission of official documents, and so on. Moreover, as other organisations and private companies fully integrate the new technology, more and more services will become available. The eID could potentially replace any number of other cards, such as library cards, sport centre membership cards, company access cards, etc. The Belgian government has announced an open competition for young people to help raise awareness of the great potential of the electronic identity (eID) card in all kinds of areas. The competition is designed to encourage young people to think about what kind of services they would like to see developed, and open their eyes to the potential of this new technology.

September 2006...............................

Launch of the web4me.be website by the Belgian association '**Safer Internet** Belgique'. This website aims to inform teenagers about the dangers of using the internet and increase their awareness of abusive practices by providing information on abusive internet practices and a channel for young people to report suspect sites. The 'Safer Internet' platform is funded by the European Commission as part of a wider European campaign, namely the Safer Internet plus Programme (2005-2008) to promote safer use of the Internet and new online technologies, particularly for children, and to fight against illegal content and content unwanted by the end-user, as part of a coherent approach by the European Union.

July 2006...

▶ Starting 1 July, only the electronic procedure is authorized for introducing an application for social help for the disabled, through the **Communit-e** process. Agents from the municipality where the applicant has his main residence introduce via the internet and through secured access (using their eID) the applications in question, without being required to enter other personal data of the applicant. The social data of the applicant are indeed already included in the Crossroads Bank for Social Security database. In return, the municipality agent will receive an acknowledgement receipt online as well as pre-filled in administrative and medical forms which can be given immediately to the applicant.

▶ The Belgian region of Flanders launches the '*Surf en durf*' (Surf and dare) campaign to promote **accessibility for the handicapped**. This campaign aims to draw attention to the work of Flanders' Expert Centre for Accessibility (ENTER) as well as to the 'Accessible Flanders' (*Toegankelijk Vlaanderen*) databank.

▶ The Belgian federal government approves a proposal on the use of the **Open Document Format** (ODF) for all internal government documents from September 2008 onwards. Belgium is the first EU Member State to take this important step towards Open Source standards.

June 2006...

▶ The Belgian Council of Ministers approves numerous **eGovernment-related measures** to be implemented, including: reform of the federal portal 'Belgium.be' by the beginning of 2007 in order to reinforce its quality and to reflect the specificity of the various Federal Public Services; replacement of the smart social insurance card (SIS card) with the eID card by the end of 2008; eCommunications between notaries and the public institutions; creation of an eID label for card readers compatible with the eID card; adoption of the Open Document Format for the making and exchange of administrative documents; from 1 July

2006, launch of the kid@card -an electronic ID card for children under 12-years-old allowing them to chat in a secure way- in several pilot municipalities; development by the Federal Public Service ICT (FEDICT) of a technical concept allowing for the interception of websites proposing illegal contents or services.

▶ Since 1 June, a company can be created within 3 days (instead of 67 days originally) thanks to the **electronic registration desk** through which the data required for the company registration can be electronically exchanged at the notary's. In practice, the notary eSigns the company constitution act's copy and submits it to the various official databases (Federal Justice Department, Crossroads Bank for Enterprises and Official Journal). A few minutes later, the notary receives the company registration number for his client. Data transmission and follow-up of processes is ensured by the Federal Service Bus -on which the National Federation of Notaries is connected-, that is being here exploited for the first time.

April 2006...

▶ Following their approbation by the ICEG working group, HTML, XHTML, CSS and WCAG move into the **Belgian eGovernment interoperability framework (BELGIF)** recommended category of standards. The ICEG working group results from a collaboration agreement between the Belgian Federal State and the Belgian Communities and Regions, and it is notably tasked with the setting-up of **BELGIF**.

▶ The Belgian federal government, the regions and the communities sign a **cooperation agreement on the principles of a seamless eGovernment** implying the cooperation of all administrative levels of government (including the communes). The objective of this agreement is to harmonise initiatives relating to: (1) the use of ICTs to provide information to all citizens, businesses and other organisations and public institutions in a user-friendly way; (2) to allow secure and confidential eTransactions with public authorities at all administrative levels. To such end, all data detained

and all services provided by the parties should be, when possible, uniformly accessible and distributed through different communication channels to citizens, businesses and other public institutions as well as to the federal government, regions, communities and local governments themselves. This agreement re-conducts and enhances the 2001 intergovernmental cooperation agreement which was defining the basic principles of eGovernment.

January 2006...................................

▸ As of 1 January, Belgian companies can **register employees electronically regarding social risks** (accidents at work, paternal leave, illness and other work-related incidents). The change is part of the government's programme to switch to eSocial security services. M. Vanvelthoven, Belgium's Minister for Employment and eGovernment, announced that, starting from July 2006, this service would be extended to unemployment benefits as well.

▸ The Walloon region of Belgium, in collaboration with the King Baudouin Foundation, offers some €375000 to support **Internet democracy projects** led by local authorities and socio-cultural associations.

▸ As part of its overall programme to modernise local administrations and improve access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), the Walloon region also announces support of some €2 million to 40 projects which will establish **digital open access areas in local administration** throughout the region.

November 2005.................................

M. Vanvelthoven, the Belgian Minister for Employment and Computerisation of the State presents the **Computerisation Strategic Note for 2006** before the Federal Chamber of Representatives.

September 2005.................................

The Belgian Social Security administration launches the '**Communit-e**' application, aimed at simplifying the benefit application procedures for disabled persons, reducing examination periods and improving cost control. The application gives municipalities the ability to: enter benefit applications directly into the computer system of the federal social security administration over the Internet, and to receive, by return, an acknowledgement of receipt of the application and the administrative and medical forms (pre-completed with identification data), which can be given immediately to the applicant.

The law creating **Phenix, the eJustice information system** is published in the Belgian Official Journal ('Belgian Monitor'). This Law establishes a clear legal framework allowing courts and other judiciary institutions and actors to communicate and exchange official documents by electronic means. Phenix is based on the concept of 'electronic files'. Created at the start of each judiciary procedure, each 'electronic file' will be progressively enriched as the procedure evolves – by the courts, the police, the lawyers, the parties, etc. The system will facilitate the management of judiciary processes, enable lawyers and their clients to follow procedures in a convenient way, and allow for electronic payments to be made.

July 2005...

The **ADAPID** (ADvanced APplications for electronic IDentity cards in Flanders) project officially starts on 1 July. It aims to make the next generations of Belgian eID cards more compatible with the privacy rights of citizens.

May 2005...

The Belgian government unveils its **eGovernment interoperability framework BELGIF** ('BELgian Government Interoperability Framework') and publishes a first list of open standards to be used by public authorities. BELGIF is the result of a cooperative project bringing together the federal government and the federated entities (regions and communities). Its

aim is to promote interoperability both at national and European level, and to enforce the federal government's June 2004 decision to promote the use of open standards.

March 2005.......................................

▸ The Belgian Council of Ministers approves a Bill aimed at providing a legal basis for the country's eJustice project **Phenix**.

▸ The Belgian government awards a contract for the first phase of the implementation of an **integrated system to process tax returns and collection** for both citizens and businesses (*Système de Traitement Intégré Impôts et le Recouvrement/Geïntegreerde Systeem Belastingen en Invordering* – STIR/GSBI). The project will centralise taxpayers' data into a 'Simplified Fiscal Account' so as to optimise tax management. The system will cover the entire tax management process, including calculation, declaration, registration, collection, early payment, control, and claims handling.

▸ Launch of the **Crossroads Bank of Legislation** on 8 March. This website provides online access to Belgian legislation and case law.

December 2004...................................

▸ The government gives its green light to the development of **Be-Health**, an integrated platform aiming at delivering all health and healthcare-related information and services online through a single portal. The portal will provide services to health professionals, the general public and the government: health-related information and advice for citizens, secure electronic communication between health professionals and between citizens and healthcare institutions and organisations, collection of health-related data (e.g. spending, statistics, etc.). Making extensive use of other eGovernment developments and infrastructure services (e.g. federal intranet, electronic ID card), the project has a budget of on EUR 1.8 million only.

▸ The Belgian government also publishes the results of the **'Fed-e-View' study**, providing a complete picture of the use of ICT in the federal administration. The study assesses 46 federal public bodies against 120 computerisation indicators, grouped into 21 'global' indicators in five categories (strategic, financial, organisational, human resources, technology), enabling an overall map of the federal eGovernment to be drawn up. The Fed-e-View study, designed to help refine eGovernment objectives and activities for individual departments as well as for the federal administration as a whole, will be repeated regularly to evaluate progress.

November 2004...................................

Belgium scores a world first by becoming the **first country in the world to start issuing electronic passports** complying with the recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). A number of Belgian cities and consulates start issuing biometric passports containing a facial image of the holder stored in a microchip. Fingerprints are due to be added at a later stage, following the adoption of appropriate European legislation.

October 2004....................................

The Belgian Government publishes a **white paper on the use of open standards** by federal public bodies. The paper presents a number of guidelines and recommendations for the use of open standards and open specifications by federal administrations, aimed at supporting a better integration of federal back-offices, promoting the interoperability of their information systems, and facilitating the electronic exchange of information with citizens and businesses.

September 2004................................

A royal order setting the legal basis for the **generalisation of the electronic ID card** is published, opening the way to its large-scale deployment. With this legal basis in place, Belgium is set to become the first European country to issue

electronic identity cards to its entire population. Close to 10 million cards will be issued to the country's citizens over the next three to five years. The country's municipalities have until the end of 2009 to complete the transition to the new identity document.

June 2004...

3,2 million voters – about 44% of Belgian registered voters – cast their vote electronically during the European and regional elections (13 June). As in previous eEnabled elections, electronic voting takes place exclusively at the polling stations through a system made up of a computer unit including a card-reading device, a screen and an optical pen.

May 2004...

▸ The Belgian Government presents a first generation of **eID toolkits**, designed to allow citizens to read the content of their electronic ID cards and provide programmers with the means for developing eID applications. Targeted at cardholders as well as at IT developers, the toolkits are available for purchase online from an '**eID Shop**'.

▸ The Belgian Government unveils its **biometric passport programme**. Distribution of the future passports, which will feature a contactless microchip storing personal identification data and biometric information, is expected to start in 2005.

December 2003.................................

The Belgian federal, regional, and community authorities launch a joint initiative called **'Kafka'** to fight red tape and bureaucratic complexity across all levels of government. Until the end of March 2004, citizens are encouraged to communicate their views on complex forms, redundant processes and contradictory procedures through the website **Kafka.be** or through a toll free telephone service.

July 2003...

Launch of the **Crossroads Bank for Enterprises**, an integrated business register. Each registered business is attributed a unique identification number, linked to a set of information stored in a central database. This unique identifier is maintained centrally and used as primary key to exchange information between administrations through the Belgian middleware platform (Universal Messaging Engine - UME).This central database removes the need for businesses to provide the same information to several administrations and makes possible the delivery of joined-up services to enterprises. Data input, included company registration, is decentralised and delegated to private sector "initiators" in charge of operating one-stop shop services counters for businesses.

May 2003...

3,2m Belgian citizens cast their votes electronically during the general elections. This represents 44% of the total number of voters, making it the largest ever use of electronic voting in the world as a proportion of a country's electorate.

April 2003...

Presentation of **Tax-on-web**, the Belgian online tax filing application. The service enables individual taxpayers to calculate the amount of their income tax, validate and save their data online, submit their returns electronically, and get a receipt from the Tax Administration. An online help system is available to assist them for going through the different steps of the process.

March 2003...

Official launch of the Belgian **electronic ID card**. The card is initially launched in 11 municipalities for a three-months trial, which will be followed with an extension to all Belgian municipalities over a period of five years. Each resident will have to pay around EUR 10 to get his/her electronic ID card, which will then be used as a proof of identity for accessing services in the

real as well as the virtual world. It will contain the same data featured on the current paper ID cards, plus two electronic signatures (one serving for identifying the holder and the second for signing electronic documents). The card will therefore be the main identification and authentication instrument for accessing eGovernment services.

November 2002...................................

▸ Launch of the **Federal Portal Belgium.be**, the new single entry point to public services for citizens, businesses and civil servants.

▸ The Belgian Presidency of the EU and the European Commission organise in Brussels the first high-level ministerial conference on eGovernment (29-30 November): 'From Policy to Practice'. This conference concludes with the adoption of a ministerial declaration.

August 2001.......................................

The federal Planning Bureau publishes '**E-Gov - Towards electronic government in Belgium**', a report assessing the country's progress against several recognised eGovernment leaders (an update in English was published in August 2002).

July 2001..

Adoption of the **Law on Electronic Signatures and Certification Services**. Digital signatures gain the same legal value as handwritten signatures.

May 2001..

Creation of the **Federal Public Service for ICT (FEDICT)**. This organisation replaces the Federal ICT Manager appointed in 2000. It is responsible for developing a common strategy for eGovernment, to promote and ensure a uniform and coherent implementation of this strategy, to support the federal government's departments and agencies in this implementation and to develop cross-government

standards, frameworks, projects and services necessary to deliver this common strategy.

March 2001.......................................

Signature of a **cooperation agreement between the federal government**, the regions and the communities for the development of a common platform for eGovernment services. This platform will aim to enable and support electronic communications of public administrations both between them and with citizens and businesses. This agreement commits all parties to work together on a coordinated offer of intention-based eServices using the same navigation structure. The parties also agree to progressively use the same identification keys and to apply the principle of unique data collection (not asking twice the same information to the citizen/business).

January 2001.....................................

The Committee for Home and Administrative affairs of the Belgian Senate publishes '**eGovernment at the Federal, provincial and local level**', the first parliamentary review of e-government in Belgium.

2000 and before.................................

▸ During the year 2000, the Federal Council of Ministers approves an **eJustice programme**, designed to use ICT to modernise the work of the Belgian judiciary. The Belgian Ministers also give the green light to the **development of a federal eGovernment portal** acting as a one-stop shop for public services for citizens and businesses. It approves as well the development of an **IT system enabling the various departments and agencies to exchange data and information required for case work** by several of them and accessible through the federal government intranet Fedenet. Moreover, a **Federal ICT Manager** is appointed on 4 February 2000, with the mission to design a common strategy and architecture for ICT in the federal public administration. In October, the Government approves the **Five Star Plan for the Development of the Information Society**

prepared by the Minister of Telecommunications. This plan is based on five pillars: eGovernment, access and skills, eInfrastructure, knowledge and innovation, adequate legislation. Lastly, the government announces the introduction of an **electronic identity card** and the development of a Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) to secure eGovernment services. The administration will not provide certification services, which will be left to private players.

▸ Following the general elections in June 1999, the newly appointed government publishes its **federal policy declaration entitled 'The way to the 21st century'**. This declaration emphasises the government's commitment to modernise public administration and become more accessible to citizens and businesses through an increased and a better use of ICT. This document marks the official political launch of eGovernment in Belgium at federal level. Four months later, the Council of Ministers adopts the four strategic axes of an ambitious and wide-ranging reform of the federal public administration, known as the **Copernicus Reform**: (1) a complete re-shaping of the organisational structure of the federal administration, in order to make it clearer, more flexible and effective; (2) a new human resources policy, designed to stimulate performance,

efficiency, flexibility and motivation; (3) a better communication between government bodies, based on an increased and better use of ICT; (4) a renewed commitment to administrative simplification, accompanied with new control and reporting methods. A **consultative commission on the information society** is created. Comprising representatives of various administrations as well as from industry and the academic world, it is an advisory body in charge of identifying the obstacles to the development of the information society and the legal, technical and organisational measures.

▸ An **Agency for Administrative Simplification** is created in December 1998. Responsible for promoting and co-ordinating initiatives related to the simplification of administrative procedures, this agency is more specifically in charge of simplifying administrative procedures for businesses, especially small and medium-size enterprises and self-employed.

▸ **Fedenet**, the Intranet of the Belgian Federal Government, is introduced in November 1997. Its objectives are to provide secure e-mail and information exchange facilities between federal institutions and departments.

eGovernment Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles

The Belgian eGovernment strategy aims to create a **single virtual public administration** while respecting the privacy of users as well as the specificities and competences of all government bodies and administrative layers.

Its **objectives** are to improve public service delivery for citizens and businesses by making it faster, more convenient, less constraining and more open.

The **basic principles** for achieving this are:

▸ to organise service delivery around the users' needs (intention-based services), regardless of the actual administrative structure;

▸ to eEnable full administrative procedures, including if several administrations are involved;

▸ for the administration to avoid requesting several times the same data from users ('unique data collection' principle);

▸ to simplify administrative procedures and reduce the burden of bureaucracy for citizens and businesses;

▸ to share and exchange data and information across government.

To meet these objectives, the Belgian eGovernment strategy has four main strategic axes:

1. **Re-engineering and integration of service delivery** around user's needs and life events.

2. **Cooperation between all public administrations** to provide integrated services across organisational boundaries and administrative layers. The cooperation agreement, signed in March 2001 by the federal, regional and community authorities, laid down the framework of this cooperation. In particular, all layers of government committed to use the same standards, the same identification infrastructure and the same eSignature. This agreement was re-

conducted and enhanced by a cooperation agreement on the principles of a seamless eGovernment signed in April 2006 by the same parties. With the new agreement, Belgian authorities have agreed on strengthening the following principles:

▸ The delivery of intention-based services;

▸ The 'unique data collection' principle so as to prevent citizens and businesses to have to provide authorities with peaces of information that can be retrieved elsewhere within the administration;

▸ A maximal re-use of data collected by using authentic sources thanks to which public entities manage the specific data they have stored and exchange missing data between themselves;

▸ Ensuring interoperability at organisational, semantic and technical levels when conceiving and developing eGovernment solutions;

▸ The maximal re-use, when possible, of eGovernment developments and eGovernment services delivered by another party to the agreement;

▸ The optimal integration of the local powers' eGovernment efforts.

This second agreement was concluded for a four years period. A resolution agreed on by the ministers responsible for eGovernment at federal, regional and communities levels was adopted in November 2006 in order to implement this second cooperation agreement.

3. **Simplification of administrative procedures** for citizens and businesses. This requires an increased exchange and sharing of data and information between government departments and agencies.

4. **Back office integration and protection of personal data**: the department or agency that

requires a specific piece of data most frequently will be considered as a trusted source by other administrations that may need it and will be responsible for maintaining it. The exchange with other administrations will be channelled through the Universal Messaging Engine (UME), but they will be submitted to the existence of a legal basis and the respect of principles of purpose and proportionality. The Commission for data protection monitors and controls the process.

Furthermore, to make sure that eGovernment services are accessible to all and do not widen the digital divide, the government develops a strategy to train and encourage citizens to use the Internet ('Computerisation of the society' or **eSociety policy**) and encourages private or voluntary organisations to act as intermediaries by providing value-added public services.

The Belgian Minister responsible for the Computerisation of the State issues a yearly '**Computerisation strategic note**'. This document exposes the priorities for the development of eGovernment for the coming year. The latest Computerisation Strategic Note for 2007 was presented in December 2006 by Mr. Vanvelthoven, the Belgian Minister for Employment and the Computerisation of the State. According to this note, the year 2007 will mark the upgrade of the Federal eGovernment portal Belgium.be in terms of content and functionalities. New projects are expected to produce first results in the course of the year: the ePolice office; the Be-Health platform; the Front-Office Employment and the electronic birth declaration. Important actions such as the recycling of the public administrations' computer parc, the eID cards for children under 12 (Kids-ID) and the eID knowledge management panel are to be developed and implemented in 2007. Interoperability and the promotion of open standards remain at the core of the eGovernment Strategy. In such context, the document underlines that Open Document Format (ODF) standard will be gradually adopted as an exchange standard for internal documents.

The Belgian federal government also strongly promotes **Belgium as an ICT knowledge region** by highlighting the country's expertise of eGovernment and eSociety projects with the aim to interact with interested countries, institutions and international companies willing to develop their own competences and bring their own knowledge.

On their side, other Belgian administrative entities (non-federal) have developed their own eGovernment strategies at their level of competences. **Wallonia and Flanders regional governments** have created dedicated structures to implement these strategies.

1. **In Wallonia**, the eGovernment strategy is based on a '**Wall-On-Line' project** , adopted in June 2001. This project is being managed by a multidisciplinary team of professionals, the 'Wall-On-Line' cell, working under the authority of the Minister-President of the Walloon Region.

   The **general objective** of the Wall-On-Line project is to implement a multiple-access one-stop shop concept, common to all administrative authorities. This portal aims at conciliating citizens and businesses points of views with these of the Belgian administration. It is divided into 22 thematic fields and based on users' intentions, following citizens and businesses daily life events. The implementation of the multiple-access one-stop shop is to follow a four steps process: (1) Information; (2) Interaction; (3) Transaction and (4) Integration.

   The Wall-On-Line project is a long-term project which objectives have been clearly identified in the action plan of December 2002.

2. **In Flanders**, the eGovernment strategy is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry for Administrative Affairs of the Flemish Community. As an inter-department project within the Authorities of Flanders, it is managed by the **Flemish eGovernment Coordination unit** (CORVE).

   Flanders' past eGovernment policy gave priority to front-office applications (Flanders' portal website), with comparatively little attention being paid to the underlying "back-office applications". As a result, the new priority objective of Flanders' eGovernment policy now rests on **developing the back-office dimension of eGovernment**. This mission belongs to CORVE, which is tasked with: developing eGovernment related knowledge and

skills; coordinating and providing incentives, while creating a generic infrastructure to facilitate cooperation between the administrative entities at Flanders' various eGovernment administrative levels; following-up the progress of eGovernment projects.

Within other Belgian administrative entities, eGovernment projects are not managed by specific units. They are indeed inserted into broader structures. It is so in Brussels region with the Brussels Regional Informatics Center, in the French Community with the 'Internet cell' of the General Secretariat of the Ministry and, lastly, in the German-speaking Community.

eGovernment Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eGovernment

eGovernment legislation.......................

There is currently no specific eGovernment legislation in Belgium.

Freedom of Information legislation......

Law on the right of access to administrative documents (1994)

The right of access to documents held by the public sector is guaranteed by Article 32 of the Belgian Constitution, which was amended in 1993 to provide everyone with a right to consult any administrative document and to have a copy made, except in the cases and conditions stipulated by the laws, decrees, or rulings referred to in Article 134.39. This constitutional right is implemented at federal level by the 1994 law on the right of access to administrative documents held by federal public authorities. The text allows individuals to ask in writing for access to any document held by federal authorities and can include documents in judicial files. The law also includes a right to have the document explained. Government agencies must respond immediately, or within thirty days if the request is delayed or rejected. Each decision must include information on the process of appealing and name the civil servant handing the dossier. A law of 1997 provides for the same kind of transparency obligations for provinces and municipalities. The Flanders region/community, the French community and the Brussels region have also adopted their own legal acts on the right of access to administrative documents.

Data Protection/Privacy legislation......

Law on the Protection of Private Life (1992)

This Law was amended by the Law of 11 December 1998 transposing European Directive 95/46/EC on Data protection. The modified version entered into force on 1 September 2001. This Law is now available in its 'coordinated version', dated January 2006.

eCommerce legislation.......................

eCommerce Laws (2003)

Two Laws on certain legal aspects of information society services were adopted on 11 March 2003 and published in the Belgian Official Journal ('Monitor') on 17 March 2003. These texts define the essential concepts needed for the development of electronic commerce, such as the legal status of contract concluded electronically. They transpose in Belgian Law the EU 'eCommerce Directive' (Directive 2000/31/EC on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market). Furthermore, a 2005 law 2005 transposed in Belgian law certain provisions of the directive on remote financial services (2002/65/CE).

eCommunications legislation..................

eCommunications Law (2005)

The new eCommunications law, transposing the new EU regulatory framework for electronic communications in Belgian law, was adopted on 13 June 2005 and published in the Belgian Official Journal on 20 June 2005. Since several anomalies were retrospectively found out in the eCommunications Law, the Belgian Council of Ministers approved on 14 July 2006 a draft law ('avant-projet de loi') in order to correct the deficiencies identified. In addition, a specific law containing prescriptions relating to spamming was adopted on 24 August 2005 so as to transpose the related article of Directive 2002/58/EC on privacy and electronic communications.

eSignatures/eIdentity legislation.........

Law on the use of Electronic Signature in Judicial and Extra-Judicial Proceedings (20 October 2000)

Law on Electronic Signatures and Certification Services (9 July 2001)

These two laws transpose into national law the European Directive of 13 December 1999 on a Community framework for electronic signatures. They substantially amend some provisions of the Belgian Civil and Judicial Codes. They give legal value to electronic signatures and electronically signed documents, and set up a legal framework for certification services. The legal framework for the use of electronic identity cards is set in a series of Royal and Ministerial Decrees: Royal Decree of 25 March 2003 on the legal framework of electronic ID cards, Ministerial Decree of 26 March 2003 on the format of electronic ID cards, Royal Decree of 1 September 2004 on the generalisation of electronic ID cards and Royal decree of 18 October 2006 on the eID document for Belgian children under 12.

eProcurement legislation....................

Royal Decree on eProcurement (18 February 2004)

This royal decree authorises the use of electronic means in all or parts of the public procurement procedure. It contains rules applicable to communication, regulates storage of data, but does

not cover specific procedures such as eAuctions. Belgian authorities are thus not authorised, for the time being, to use eAuctions.

Re-use of Public Sector Information.........

There is currently no specific legislation on the re-use of public sector information (PSI) in Belgium. It is expected that the transposition of Directive 2003/98/EC on the re-use of PSI will be made by means of a federal law, regional and community decrees, as well as additional specific regulations. The transposition of the EC directive is foreseen to occur in the near future. The Belgian government has indeed approved a draft transposition law on 30 June 2006. This draft is due to be examined by the Parliament shortly. Flanders, Brussels region and two Communities (French and German-speaking) are also on their way to adopt their own legal texts. The Walloon Region has transposed the PSI directive with a decree dated 14 December 2006.

eGovernment Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

National eGovernment...........................

Policy/Strategy

Ministry for Employment and the Computerisation of the State

In the new Belgian government resulting from the federal elections held in May 2003, a State Secretariat for eGovernment and the development of IT in the Federal government had been created, linked to the Minister for the Budget and Public Enterprises and holding political responsibility for the eGovernment policy/strategy. Since October 2005, the State Secretariat has become the Ministry for Employment and the Computerisation of the State. The latter remains responsible for overseeing the Federal Public Service ICT (FEDICT), which is in charge of defining a common eGovernment strategy and of ensuring the consistency and homogeneity of this policy. The current Minister who is competent for the development of IT in the federal administration is Peter Vanvelthoven.

Coordination

Federal Public Service ICT (FEDICT)

In addition to its role in defining the eGovernment strategy, FEDICT is also in charge of coordinating the implementation of this strategy within the federal administration. It helps government departments to elaborate and initiate their projects and supports them in their implementation. It is also in charge of developing, implementing and maintaining some elements of the national infrastructure itself, such as the federal portal Belgium.be, the network FedMAN (Federal Metropolitan Area Network) and the Universal Messaging Engine (UME) middleware. The current president of FEDICT is Mr Jan Deprest.

Implementation

1. **FEDICT** for some elements of the common infrastructure (e.g. federal portal Belgium.be, FedMAN network, Universal Messaging Engine middleware).

2. **All federal departments and agencies** for their individual or joint projects.

Support

1. **FEDICT**

   FEDICT supports all entities in the public sector and helps them in their ICT projects.

2. **Agency for Administrative simplification**

   The Agency helps government departments and bodies in their efforts to simplify their administrative procedures, both internal and external.

3. **Crossroads Bank for Social Security** (CBSS)

   This body initiates, coordinates and supports the implementation of eGovernment services in the social sector. In particular, it supports the implementation of integrated services across all public institutions of social security. The CBSS also

manages the 'Register bis' which contains a database of persons who do not have the Belgian nationality but who are located in Belgium and are registered in the Belgian Social Security.

4. **BELNET**

The government agency BELNET, part of the Federal Science Policy Office, supplies secure Internet access with very high bandwidth (up to 2.5 gigabits per second) to more than 550.000 end users in Belgian education institutions, research centres and public administrations. Among other things, BELNET is in charge of the operation of the federal network FedMAN (Federal Metropolitan Area Network).

Audit/Assurance

Court of Audit

The Court of Audit is a body of the Belgian Parliament. It exerts an external control on the budgetary, accounting and financial operations of the Federal State, the Regions, the Communities, the provinces, and the public service institutions depending upon them. It can therefore scrutinise ICT and eGovernment related projects. At federal level, these projects can also be examined by the Committee for General and Home Affairs and the Civil Service of the House of Representatives and the Committee for Home and Administrative affairs of the Senate.

Data Protection

Privacy Protection Commission

The Privacy Protection Commission monitors the adequate application of legislation relating to privacy and data protection for electronic systems containing, handling or transporting personal data and advises government bodies on these issues.

Other

1. **Federal Planning Bureau (FPB)**

The FPB is a public agency in charge of performing research and studies on issues of economic, socio-economic and environmental policy. For that purpose, the FPB collects and analyses data, explores plausible evolutions, identifies alternatives, evaluates the policy impact and formulates proposals. Its scientific expertise is available to the government, parliament, social partners and national and international institutions. One of its work areas is ICT policy, including eGovernment.

2. **Internet Rights Observatory**

The Internet Rights Observatory is a body created by the Minister for Economy and Scientific research. It is in charge of advising the government on the economic, social and political impact of new technologies. It also enables all citizens and businesses to freely express their views on ICT-related issues and to receive information on their rights and duties in this respect.

3. **Belgian Institute for Postal services and Telecommunications (BIPT)**

BIPT is the regulatory body of the postal and telecommunications sector in Belgium. The Institute is responsible for strategic, regulatory and operational tasks regarding the settlement of disputes between operators and regulation of the whole sector. BIPT is notably charged with monitoring the security and the quality of service (QoS) of public electronic communications networks. It runs a virus alerting service for the general public and SMEs.

Regional & Local eGovernment............

Strategy

Regional and Local Authorities

The political responsibility for eGovernment in Belgium's regions is held directly by the 'Minister-Presidents' (prime ministers) of the three regions: Flemish Region, Walloon Region, Brussels Region. The Wallonia-Brussels French Community, in charge of education and culture policies for the French-speaking community in Belgium, as well as the German-speaking Community, are also working on eEnabling some of their services. The institutions of the Flemish

Community were merged with those of the Flemish Region in 1980.

Coordination

Regional eGovernment efforts are coordinated by dedicated units or bodies set up by the regional executives: The eGovernment Coordination Cell in Flanders (CORVE), the eAdministration and Simplification Unit in Wallonia (EASI-WAL), and the Informatics Centre in the Brussels Region.

Implementation

The coordination bodies mentioned above play a leading role in the implementation of regional eGovernment. Individual administrations in Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels are responsible for the implementation of their own ICT projects.

Support

The coordination bodies mentioned above provide support and advice to individual administrations, as well as to municipalities in their regional area, for their eGovernment projects. The Walloon region has also set up a Walloon Agency of Telecommunications, in charge of promoting the development of ICT in the regions and that provides operational and expert support to Walloon administrations and communes.

Audit/Assurance

The **Court of Audit** exerts an external control on the budgetary, accounting and financial operations of the Regions, the Communities, and the provinces (but not the municipalities). It can therefore scrutinise their ICT and eGovernment related projects. These projects can also be examined by the parliaments of the three regions (Flemish Parliament, Walloon Parliament, Brussels Parliament), as well as the Community parliaments for the French and German-speaking communities (Flanders has one single parliament for both region and community).

eGovernment Who's Who

Main eGovernment decision-makers and executives

Minister responsible for eGovernment (Federal Government)... ....

Name: Peter Vanvelthoven

Job title: Minister in charge of Employment and the Computerisation of the State

Picture:

Contact details:

Rue Royale, 180

1000 Brussels

Belgium

Tel.: + 32 2 209 33 33

Fax: +32 2 210 19 48

E-mail: info@e-gov.be

Source: Ministry for Employment and Computerisation

Head of eGovernment (Federal Government) (i.e. head of eGovernment agency/directorate)..

Name: Jan Deprest

Job title: Chairman of Fedict (Federal ICT Public Service)

Picture:

Contact details:

Rue Marie-Thérèse 1/3

1000 Brussels

Belgium

Tel.: + 32 2 212 96 00

Fax: + 32 2 212 96 99

E-mail: info@Fedict.belgique.be

Source: Fedict

Minister responsible for eGovernment (Flanders)..

Name: Geert Bourgeois   **[21]**

Job title: Flemish Minister for Administrative Affairs, Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism

Picture:

Contact details:

Alhambragebouw

Emile Jacqmainlaan 20

1000 Brussels

Belgium

Tel.: +32 2 552 70 00

Fax: +32 2 552 70 01

E-mail: kabinet.bourgeois@vlaanderen.be

Source: Flemish Ministry for Administrative Affairs, Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism

Head of eGovernment (Flanders)...

Name: Geert Mareels

Job title: Project Leader, Coordination Cell for Flemish eGovernment (CORVE)

Picture:

Contact details:

Coördinatiecel Vlaams eGovernment (CORVE)

Boudewijngebouw toren 3B

Boudewijnlaan 30

1000 Brussels

Belgium

Tel: +32 2 553 00 35

E-mail: geert.mareels@bz.vlaanderen.be

Source: CORVE

Minister responsible for eGovernment (Wallonia)..

Name: Elio Di Rupo   **[23]**

Job title: Minister-President of the Walloon Region

Picture:

Contact details:

Rue Mazy, 25-27

5100 Namur

Belgium

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Fax: +32 81 33 12 99

E-mail: edr@gov.wallonie.be

Source: Walloon Government

Head of eGovernment (Wallonia)

Name: Béatrice Van Bastelaer

Job title: Commissioner EASI-WAL (eAdministration - Simplification), Walloon Government

Picture:

Contact details:

EASI-WAL (eAdministration - Simplification)

Région wallonne

Rue des Brigades d'Irlande, 2

5100 Namur

Belgium

Tel.: +32 81 33 05 60

E-mail: beatrice.vanbastelaer@easi.wallonie.be

Source: EASI-WAL

Minister responsible for eGovernment (Brussels Region)...

Name: Guy Vanhengel   **[25]**

Job title: Minister of the Brussels-Capital Region in charge of finance, budget, external relations and IT

Picture:

Contact details:

Avenue des Arts 9

1210 Brussels

Belgium

Tel.: +32.2 209.28.11

Fax : +32 2 209 28 12

E-mail: info.vanhengel@vanhengel.irisnet.be

Source: Brussels-Capital Region

Head of eGovernment (Brussels Region)..

Name: Hervé Feuillien

Job title: Director-General of Brussels Regional Informatics Centre

Picture:

Contact details:

CIRB-CIBG

Avenue des Arts, 20

1000 Brussels

Belgium

Tel.: + 32 2 282 47 70

E-mail: information@cirb.irisnet.be

Source: Brussels Regional Informatics Centre

Head of eGovernment

Other key eGovernment executives

Name: Frank Robben

Job title: General Manager of the <u>Crossroads Bank for Social Security</u>

Picture:

[27]

Contact details:

KSZ-BCSS

Chaussée Saint-Pierre 375

1040 Brussels

Belgium

Tel.: + 32-2-741 84 02

E-mail: <u>Management@ksz-bcss.fgov.be</u>

Source: <u>Crossroads Bank for Social Security</u>

eGovernment Infrastructure

Main eGovernment infrastructure components

Portal...

1. Federal portal:

Belgium.be

The federal portal Belgium.be, launched in November 2002, is both the institutional site of the Belgian Federal Government and an eGovernment portal providing a single entry point to information and services for citizens, businesses and civil servants. A new version of the portal is gradually being set-up so as to reflect the specificities of the various Federal departments as well as ensure content and services quality, flexibility and user-friendliness. To this end, preparatory work was engaged in 2006.

2. Regional portals:

Flanders, **Wallonia** and **Brussels region**

3. Community portals:

French-speaking Community and **German-speaking Community**

Network...

FedMAN is a Federal Metropolitan Area Network connecting the administrations of 15 federal ministries and government services buildings in Brussels. FedMAN offers 80.000 federal civil servants a shared high-speed network (broadband connection of 1 Gbps) and a number of related services supporting the delivery of eGovernment, including access to the TESTA (Trans European Services for Telematics between Administrations) network of the EU. The shared network allows federal government buildings to communicate more efficiently and with greater security thanks to FedMAN 'managed security services'. FedMAN was set-up by Fedict and it is operational since September 2002. The second version of FedMAN, (FedMAN II) is operational since March 2006 and its capacities are 10 times superior to the former version. This will allow for the launch of new services such as the 'Voice over IP' and the infrastructure sharing between different federal public departments which would lead to an increased availability. At the first level of FedMAN stands a central platform while the second level allows for the creation of virtual networks for each federal administration. The federal departments have the right, though not the obligation, to use the central platform to create their own security environments. In order to extend the network and to directly connect Belgian cities to FedMAN, the FedWAN (Federal Wide Area Network) concept is currently being studied.

The exchange of authentic information via FedMAN needs to be performed in a structured way through an email federal service. **UME** (Universal Messaging Engine), the middleware platform that ensures the secure exchange of data between the federal portal and the administration's various applications, but also between these applications, transports every day more than 100.000 structured messages. The use of open standards such as XML and http(s) ensures data exchange between heterogeneous systems and UME

provides the transposition of information in an appropriate manner. However UME now coexists with the **Federal Service Bus** (FSB). The FSB, which is more services-oriented, works even more smartly than UME by allowing a simplified connexion among the various applications and federal administration IT data files and by ensuring the follow-up of specific processes. Access to such facility would also be opened to private companies by means of authorisation.

eIdentification.....................................

eID Card

Belgium is a pioneer for large-scale distribution of eID cards. The country has started an Electronic Identity Card project in 2000. The card was officially launched in March 2003 with a pilot project in 11 communes. Following the successful test distribution of about 70.000 cards, large-scale distribution started in September 2004. The country's 578 remaining municipalities now have until the end of 2009 to complete the transition. By then, every Belgian citizen will be required to own an electronic ID card and 8 million cards will be in circulation. The Belgian eID card contains all the information included on the traditional identity card and will continue to act as an identification and travel document. However, it already offers or will offer several other possibilities, including an eSignature allowing access to restricted on-line services, making internet use safer by providing an on-line means of identification (e.g. children's chat rooms), the electronic submission of official documents, and so on. Pursuant to the privacy legislation, the federal portal cautiously checks the identity and access rights of the service users. 4 levels of security exist depending on the type of eService delivered: (1) no password required; (2) password required; (3) password and token; (4) certain services are only accessible through the eID. The eID could potentially replace any number of other cards, such as library cards, sport centre membership cards, company access cards, etc. Major innovations to the current eID are to be introduced in 2007 i.e. new versions of the application and the chip as well as a new format for data stored on the chip in order to enhance user-friendliness, efficiency and security. The eID card for

children under 12, the Kids-ID, was launched in October 2006 with the aim to provide children with secured access to chat rooms and Internet services. To date, the eID is not intensively being used since only 8% of Belgian web users own a card reader and less than 1% of these internet users use their eID online. This is the reason why FEDICT participate to eID promotional initiatives such as the eID label for card readers, the dissemination of software allowing for the reading of eIDs, etc.

eProcurement infrastructure................

There is currently no central and integrated eProcurement platform or portal in Belgium. An eTendering portal called **Joint Electronic Public Procurement (JEPP)** was launched in November 2002, as the instrument used by the Belgian federal government for electronic publication of calls for tender. At the beginning only the Federal Ministry of Defence published in JEPP, but other federal organisms followed suit and all federal calls for tender are now published in JEPP. However the use of the portal has been extended to non-federal entities in October 2006, and the application is now usable by public organisations such as communes, schools, universities and all organisations subject to the eProcurement legislation. The JEPP system assists public bodies in drafting their calls for tender and submitting them electronically to the official publication organisms, and enables them to notify invitations to tender, contract awards, as well as other documents such as minutes of clarification meetings or technical notes. It allows businesses to browse and search tender opportunities and related documentation, and to subscribe to email notifications of new opportunities. The JEPP eTendering portal, which only covers the publication phase of eProcurement, forms part of a wider Public Electronic Procurement programme. Other parts of this programme cover further eProcurement phases such as eSubmission of bids and eCatalogues. All projects are developed under the responsibility of the Federal eProcurement unit of the Federal Department 'Staff and Organisation' and supervised by an eProcurement Interdepartmental Federal Steering Group. These projects are described in an eProcurement roadmap.

An abstract of this roadmap is expected to be published shortly. All public bodies, including local authorities, may use the applications developed in the framework of the Public Electronic Procurement programme. Some regional and local authorities have developed their own eTendering portals, like Wallonia. It will soon be possible to submit eTenders through the Walloon portal after registration and authentication with an eID. Such possibility will first be limited to specific calls published by the Walloon Ministry for Infrastructure and Transports.

Knowledge Management infrastructure

eCommunities

eCommunities is a groupware application that has been made accessible to civil servants since April 2003 through the federal eGovernment portal Belgium.be. The objective of this project is to enable communication, cooperation, and knowledge management and sharing within cross-departmental networks of expertise. Functionalities of the system include: document management, simple and advanced search capabilities, content management, and joint working tools. There are currently over 20 eCommunities, which are either transversal (bringing together Human Resources managers, webmasters, ICT managers, etc) or specific to a public institution (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Security, Federal Agency for Food Chain Security, etc). The eCommunities platform has currently around 4000 users. From its side, the Walloon Region is currently working on the setting up its own eKnowledge management infrastructure.

Others...

Databases/ Authentic sources: National Register, 'Register bis' and Crossroad banks for enterprises

The Belgian eGovernment strategy notably rests on the authentic sources system under which federal public departments gather and manage their own databases with information provided by citizens, businesses and civil servants. These databases, the so-called 'authentic sources' can be referred to by other federal services in need of this type of information. In this way, citizens and businesses will be asked to convey data only once. Among the operational authentic sources are the following:

National Register

Managed by the Interior Service Public Federal (SPF), the National register gathers basic data relating to all persons with Belgian nationality.

Crossroads Bank for Social Security Register

Managed by the Crossroads bank for social security (CBSS), the register bis contains basic data of persons that are not Belgian but reside in the country and are registered at the Belgian Social security.

Crossroads Bank for Enterprises

Managed by the Economy SPF, the Crossroads Bank for enterprises is a business register that contains all authentic sources of all Belgian enterprises such as: company number, company name, postal and email address, legal type, activities performed within the company, professional skills of the company staff and so on.

eGovernment Services for Citizens

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Citizens

The information in this section is based on the common list of 20 basic public services (12 for citizens, 8 for businesses) adopted by the Council of the EU in March 2001, and on the methodology used to assess their level of online availability and sophistication in the eEurope benchmarking exercises (see: *eGovernment indicators for benchmarking eEurope*).

The 12 services for citizens are as follows:

1. Income Tax Declaration

2. Job Searches by labour Offices

3. Social Security Contributions

4. Personal Documents

5. Car Registration

6. Application for Building Permission

7. Declaration to the Police

8. Public Libraries

9. Certificates (birth, marriage) Request and Delivery

10. Enrolment in Higher Education

11. Announcement of moving (change of address)

12. Health-related services (e.g. appointments for hospitals)

For each service, the sophistication stage reached is indicated, with reference to the maximum stage possible for the service.

▶ Stage 1 - Information: online information about public services

▶ Stage 2 - Interaction: downloading of forms

▶ Stage 3 - Two-way interaction: processing of forms, including authentication

▶ Stage 4 - Transaction: full case handling, decision and delivery (payment)

1. Income taxes (declaration, notification of assessment)

Responsibility: Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Finance

Website: http://www.taxonweb.be/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Tax-on-web allows Belgian residents to file their tax returns online. Launched in 2003 for some of the country's taxpayers only (mostly employees and pensioners), the system has since then been extended. The applications allows taxpayers to calculate the amount of their income tax, validate and save their data online, submit their returns electronically, and get a receipt from the Tax Administration. An online help system assists them for going through the different steps of the process. An upgraded version of the Tax-on-web application is currently being developed.

2. Job search services by labour offices

Responsibility: Regional Government, Regional Employment Offices

Website: http://www.leforem.be/ (Wallonia), http://www.vdab.be/ (Flanders),

http://www.orbem.be/ (Brussels region)

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: The Regional Employment Offices' websites allow users to post their CVs online, browse and search job ads, obtain information about companies/organisations that recruit and about professional training programmes. The National Office for Employment (http://www.rva.fgov.be/) provides information for jobseekers, but no job search services.

3. Social security benefits

a. Unemployment benefits

Responsibility: Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Social Security

Website: https://www.socialsecurity.be/

Sophistication stage: 2-3/4

Description: Information about unemployment benefits. Enrolment must be done in person with the organisms in charge of managing unemployment benefits payments: either the public body CAPAC-HVW (Auxiliary Fund for the Payment of Unemployment Benefits, http://www.hvw.fgov.be/) or the accredited trade-unions (CSC-ACV, FGTB-ABVV and CGSLB-ACLVB). These organisations' websites provide enrolment forms to download.

b. Child allowances

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Social Security, National Office for Family Allowances for Employed Workers (ONAFTS-RKW)
Website:	N/A
Sophistication stage:	N/A
Description:	This service is not relevant as it is fully automated in Belgium.

c. Medical costs (reimbursement or direct settlement)

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Social Security, National Institute of Medical and Invalidity Insurance (RIZIV-INAMI)
Website:	http://inami.fgov.be/
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	The website of the National Institute of Medical and Invalidity Insurance (RIZIV-INAMI) provides information about the reimbursement of medical costs. Belgium has been one of the first countries to introduce a smart social insurance card (SIS card). This card enables direct settlement of certain medical costs, while other costs are reimbursed through mandatory/complementary private social insurances. These social insurances have their own websites, some of which offer eServices. The scheme is administered by the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (http://www.ksz-bcss.fgov.be/).

d. Student grants

Responsibility:	Community Government: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Government of the French Community, Government of the German-speaking Community
Website:	http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/studietoelagen/ (Flemish community), http://www.cfwb.be/allocations-etudes/ (French-speaking community), http://www.dglive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-126/601_read-4810/ (German-speaking community)
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	The Scholarships website (Flemish community) offers information and downloadable forms, while the other websites provide information only.

4. Personal documents (passport and driving licence)

a. Passport

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs
Website:	http://www.diplomatie.be/fr/travel/passports.asp
Sophistication stage:	2-3/3
Description:	Information only. Passport applications are handled by local authorities (communes) according to their own processes.

b. Driving license

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport
Website:	http://www.mobilit.fgov.be/fr/route/Permis/permcond.htm
Sophistication stage:	1-2/3
Description:	Information only. Driving license applications and renewals are handled by local authorities (communes) according to their own processes.

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

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport, Vehicles Registration Directorate
Website:	http://www.leaseconnect.be/
Sophistication stage:	N/A
Description:	The service is not relevant for Belgium because it has been fully integrated. The WebDIV application accessible from allows insurance companies and car dealers to register cars online.

6. Application for building/planning permission

Responsibility:	Regional and Local Government, Municipalities
Website:	N/A
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	Each region has its own legislation regarding building permission. Applications are managed by individual local authorities (communes) according to their own processes.

7. Declaration to the police (e.g. in case of theft)

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal and Local Police
Website:	http://www.police.be/
Sophistication stage:	1-2/3
Description:	Since 3 January 2007 citizens can declare online cases of shoplifting, vandalism on private assets and bicycle theft via the 'ePolice office'. The project has been developed by Fedict in cooperation with the federal and local police. The portal is due to be expanded in the course of 2007 with declarations for other offences, a complaints' follow-up system and the integration of different applications.

8. Public libraries (availability of catalogues and search tools)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Community Government: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Government of the French Community, Government of the German-speaking Community
Website:	http://www.bibliotheek.be/ (Flemish community), http://www.cfwb.be/biblio/ (French Community), http://www.mediadg.be/ (German-speaking community), http://www.bib.belgium.be/Search.aspx (Federal Public Services Libraries)
Sophistication stage:	3-4/4
Description:	Information and online catalogue for Flemish and German-speaking libraries. Information only for French-speaking community libraries. An online common catalogue of the Federal Public Services Libraries is available on the Federal Portal Belgium.be.

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

Responsibility:	Local Government (Communes) - in partnership with regional government for Brussels region
Website:	N/A
Sophistication stage:	1-2/3
Description:	Requests of certificates are handled by individual municipalities (communes). The federal portal Belgium.be provides access to general information on the procedures related to obtaining these certificates. In the Brussels Region, a secure electronic counter system named IRISbox and featuring the use of digital signatures enables citizens to securely request and pay for civil certificates online (birth, marriage, death, residence, nationality, etc.). Payment is made for a set of 10 certificates at once. The system is provided by the Computer Centre for the Brussels Region (CIRB) and is currently used by 5 of the 19 municipalities of the Brussels Region.

10. Enrolment in higher education/university

Responsibility:	Community Government: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Government of the French Community, Government of the German-speaking Community
Website:	http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/ (Flanders),
	http://www.agers.cfwb.be/org/sup/ (French Community),
	http://www.dglive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-81/234_read-59/searchcall-235/searchcategory-59/noblendout-1/ (German speaking community)
Sophistication stage:	1-2/4
Description:	Information only.

11. Announcement of moving (change of address)

Responsibility:	Local Government, Municipalities
Website:	N/A
Sophistication stage:	1-2/3
Description:	The federal portal provides information on change of address notification. Notifications are handled by individual communes. Since the end of May 2004, citizens can eNotify their change of address to the commune provided the local authority in question is accessible via the Internet.

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

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal Public Service Health, Food Security and Environment) and Regional Government
Website:	http://www.health.fgov.be/
Sophistication stage:	1/4
Description:	The website of the Federal Public Service Health, Food Security and Environment provides information about health-related institutions and issues. In December 2004 the Government gave its green light to the development of **Be-Health**, an integrated platform aiming at delivering all health and healthcare-related information and services online through a single portal. The portal will provide services to both health professionals, the general public and the government: health-related information and advice for citizens, secure electronic communication between health professionals and between citizens and healthcare institutions and organisations, collection of health-related data (e.g. spending, statistics, etc.).

Source: Sophistication ratings quoted in "Online Availability of Public Services: How Is Europe Progressing?", Web Based Survey on Electronic Public Services, by Capgemini, funded by the European Commission, June 2006.

eGovernment Services for Businesses

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Businesses

The information in this section is based on the common list of 20 basic public services (12 for citizens, 8 for businesses) adopted by the Council of the EU in March 2001, and on the methodology used to assess their level of online availability and sophistication in the eEurope benchmarking exercises (see: *eGovernment indicators for benchmarking eEurope*).

The 8 services for businesses are as follows:

1. Social security contributions for employees

2. Corporation Tax: declaration, notification

3. VAT: declaration, notification

4. Registration of a new company

5. Submission of data to statistical offices

6. Customs declaration

7. Environment-related permits

8. Public procurement

For each service, the sophistication stage reached is indicated, with reference to the maximum stage possible for the service.

▸ Stage 1 - Information: online information about public services

▸ Stage 2 - Interaction: downloading of forms

▸ Stage 3 - Two-way interaction: processing of forms, including authentication

▸ Stage 4 - Transaction: full case handling, decision and delivery (payment)

1.   Social contribution for employees

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Social Security
Website:	https://www.socialsecurity.be/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Belgian companies or their representatives can carry out eighteen electronic transactions from application to application or online via the social security portal. Since 1/1/2003 all Belgian employers must submit their quarterly declaration of wages and working times electronically to the National Office for Social Security. All authorised social security institutions can access the submitted data.

2.   Corporation tax: declaration, notification

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Finance
Website:	http://www.minfin.fgov.be/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Information and 'intelligent' forms (Finform application, http://www.finform.fgov.be) that can be digitally signed and submitted electronically.

3.   VAT: declaration, notification

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Finance
Website:	http://www.minfin.fgov.be/portail1/fr/intervat/welcomeintervatfr.html
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	InterVAT enables electronic submission of VAT declarations. Another application called EdiVAT allows submission based on EDI (Electronic Data Interchange)

4.   Registration of a new company

Responsibility: Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, Crossroads Bank for Enterprises

Website: http://mineco.fgov.be/enterprises/crossroads_bank/home_fr.htm

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Since 1/7/2003 the Commerce Registry administered by the Federal Public Service Justice has been replaced by a Crossroads Bank for Enterprises and a series of 10 Enterprise Counters providing one-sop shop services for businesses. These Enterprise Counters are administered by accredited private organisations. (e.g. chambers of commerce). Most of them make it possible to register a business online. Since 1 June 2006, a company can be created within 3 days (instead of 67 days originally) thanks to the **electronic registration desk** through which the data required for the company registration can be electronically exchanged at the notary's.

5.   Submission of data to statistical offices

Responsibility: Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, Statistics Division

Website: http://www.statbel.fgov.be/

Sophistication stage: 3/3

Description: Businesses and public authorities are able to transmit statistical data electronically.

6.   Customs declarations

Responsibility: Central Government (Federal), Federal Public Service Finance, Customs and Excise Administration

Website: http://fiscus.fgov.be/interfdafr/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: An electronic Customs Declaration system has been in operation in Belgium since 1982, called SADBEL (*Système Automatisé de Dédouanement pour la BElgique et le Luxembourg*). The system enables businesses to submit their declarations by communicating directly with the central computer of the Customs and Excise Administration by modem/telephone line. In the course of February 2007, this system will be replaced with a new web-based application called "Paperless Customs and Excise". Electronic declarations will become mandatory in 2008. The Customs and Excise Administration has also developed a web-based application called WEB - N.C.T.S. for managing transit operations, based on the EU's New Computerised Transit System (NCTS).

7. Environment-related permits (incl. reporting)

Responsibility:	Regional Government and Local Government (Communes)
Websites:	http://www.vmm.be/ (Flanders), http://environnement.wallonie.be/ (Wallonia), http://www.ibgebim.be/ (Brussels Region)
Sophistication stage:	3/4
Description:	Regional website provide information and online forms for permit requests. Applications are handled by municipalities.

8. Public procurement

Responsibility:	Central Government (Federal), Federal eProcurement Service within the Federal Public Service Staff and Organisation, Directorate of the Official Journal (Belgian Monitor), Bulletin of Adjudications (BDA)
Website:	http://www.jepp.be/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	eTendering portal for the eDissemination of federal public tenders. The JEPP eTendering portal, which only covers the publication phase of eProcurement, forms part of a wider Public Electronic Procurement programme. Other parts of this programme cover further eProcurement phases such as eSubmission of bids and eCatalogues. All projects are developed under the responsibility of the Federal eProcurement Service) and supervised by an eProcurement Interdepartmental Federal Steering Group.

Source: Sophistication ratings quoted in "Online Availability of Public Services: How Is Europe Progressing?", Web Based Survey on Electronic Public Services, by Capgemini, funded by the European Commission, June 2006.

European Commission