eGovernment in

Ireland

Eire

January 2007

Version 7.0

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Country Profile

Basic Data and Indicators

Basic data..

Population (1.000): 4.209,0 inhabitants (2006)

GDP at market prices: 161.162,8 million Euro (2005)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standards, EU-25=100): 138,9 Euro (2005)

GDP growth rate: 5,5% (2005)

Inflation rate: 2,2% (2005)

Unemployment rate: 4,4% (2006)

Government debt/GDP: 27,4% (2005)

Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): 1,1% (2005)

Source: Eurostat

Area: 70.000 km^2

Capital city: Dublin

EU Official Language: English, Irish

Currency: Euro

Source: Europa Website

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

Ireland is a Parliamentary republic. The Parliament (**Oireachtas**) consists of two Houses: Dáil Éireann (the Lower House, 166 elected members) and Seanad Éireann (the Senate, 60 members appointed by the government). General elections to the Lower House are held every five years on the basis of a proportional system.

The Head of State is the **President** of the Irish Republic, elected directly by the people for a seven-year term renewable once. The President has an essentially representative role and does not have executive or policy-making powers. Executive power is exercised by the **Government**, led by a Prime Minister (**Taoiseach**) who is appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Lower House.

There is a two-tier system of local government in Ireland. The country comprises 29 County Councils, which have jurisdiction or control throughout their administrative areas. In some County Council administrative areas, local government functions are shared with City, Borough or Town Councils. There are currently 5 City Councils, 5 Borough Councils, and 75 Town Councils.

The Constitution of Ireland was approved by the people in 1937, and subsequent amendments have always been submitted to a referendum.

Ireland became a member of the European Union on 1 January 1973.The **Constitution of Ireland** was approved by the people in 1937, and subsequent amendments have always been submitted to a referendum.

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Current Head of State: President Mary McAleese (since 11 November 1997)

Current Head of Government: Taoiseach Bertie Ahern (since 26 June 1997)

Information Society indicators..

Percentage of households with Internet access: 50% (2006)

Percentage of enterprises with Internet access: 92% (2004)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet at least once a week: 44% (2006)

Percentage of households with a broadband connection: 13% (2006)

Percentage of enterprises with a broadband connection: 61% (2006)

Percentage of individuals having purchased/ordered online in the last three months: 21% (2006)

Percentage of enterprises having received orders online within the previous year: 23% (2006)

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

obtaining information 21,3%, downloading forms 19,0%, returning filled forms 14,3% (2006)

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

obtaining information 75% downloading forms 77%, returning filled forms 56% (2006)

Source: Eurostat

eGovernment History

Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: eGovernment News - Ireland

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

▸ Irish Minister of State, Tom Kitt, has announced the **allocation of €1,45 million to some 76 projects** around the country. The projects will benefit from funding under the Access, Skills and Content (ASC) initiative launched in 2006 as part of the government's eInclusion Fund. The ASC (Access, Skills and Content) Initiative was established to support the participation of late adopters of technology in an inclusive information society. It is specifically aimed at those who are at greatest risk of being left behind in the move to the information society – especially older people and people with disabilities.

▸ A new mobile mapping and information service, allowing easy access to a wealth of information on Dublin city, has recently been launched by Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi), in partnership with Fáilte Ireland (the National Tourism Development Authority). The service – called **OSi StreetSmart** – provides users with detailed street maps and information on hundreds of attractions and places to visit in Dublin, including museums, historic buildings, gardens, parks and visitor attractions. Each place of interest includes a phone number with a 'click-to-call' option, address and description.

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

The Courts Service in Ireland has unveiled the new **Small Claims Online** service aimed at making the small claims procedure easier and more accessible for claimants. A pilot scheme of the service is available to residents in 16 towns across the country, who can use it to access the legal system without the need to attend a court office in person. With the system, users can create online a small claim application, pay the corresponding fee on-line and check the status of their claim on the site.

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

▸ The Irish Passport Office has begun issuing electronic passports, or **ePassports**, for Irish citizens. The new documents feature a secure, contact-less electronic chip that can store encrypted digital information. The chip holds personal details pertaining to the holder, along with a digital image of the person's face. The chip technology allows the information stored on an ePassport to be read by special chip readers at close range. The chip also incorporates digital signature technology to verify the authenticity of the data stored on it. All passports issued from now on will be ePassports. Existing passports remain valid, but an ePassport will be issued at the time of renewal.

▸ The Irish government has unveiled a new website for its citizens. The Citizens Information site is run by Comhairle, Ireland's national agency responsible for providing information and advice on social services, and provides guidance on a range of subjects, including employment rights, buying a home, moving abroad and education. The wide range of subjects covered is divided into 14 categories so that users can readily access the topic relevant to them. Sourced from a wide variety of service providers and agencies, the information is backed up by case studies, supporting documentation and downloadable forms.

July 2006.......................................

The Irish government has paired up with one of the country's leading newspapers, The Irish Times, in order to digitise the daily's archives and enable the general public to reach back almost 150 years. The world wide web has become an almost immeasurable ocean of information. However, its time depth can sometimes be somewhat shallow as reference resources, such as libraries and encyclopedias, struggle to digitise their pre-digital content. In Ireland, project called '**Times of our lives**' has been launched to redress this situation. The government's Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has teamed up with The Irish Times to migrate the paper's content – which dates back to 1859 – into a digital archive. The project "will be available free of charge to the public and to students in Irish public libraries, and in schools through the Ask About Ireland website". The Irish Times will make its archive available to the public through the Changing Libraries Project, which Roche established in 2005 with a €2 million government grant. In addition to The Irish Times, the digitisation project will include other databases of national import, such as a State collection of Ordinance Survey of Ireland maps dating back to 1842.

February 2006...................................

The Irish eGovernment Awards 2006 took place on 16 February 2006, in Dublin. The Industrial Development Agency was top prize-winner on the night, taking home two of the main awards – overall eGovernment winner and best eGovernment website. Other winners included the Prime Minister's (Taoiseach) office for its eCabinet system and Cork City Council for its ePlanning service.

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

Successful year for Irish public eTendering site, as the Irish public sector electronic tendering site eTenders is proving a take-up success story. Figures released by the Irish Department of Finance – which manages the eTenders website – show that the average monthly visitor number has increased by 62% year-on-year and that the site had its best month of usage in July with over 96,000 visits. With a 35% rise in public authorities registered, **eTenders has now managed to attract almost all awarding authorities**. Developed as part of the Irish government's Information Society plan, the eTenders website is designed to be a central facility for all public sector contracting authorities to advertise procurement opportunities and award notices. The site is managed by the Department of Finance's National Public Procurement Policy Unit (NPPPU), which sets the policy on content and functionality.

October 2005.....................................

The Government introduces a **cross-departmental peer review process for major public sector IT projects**. The system will involve experts from across the public service assessing projects to prevent cost overruns and the development of systems that cannot be used. The peer review group will be based at the Department of Finance's Centre for Management and Organisation Development (CMOD), which will co-ordinate task groups examining every major ICT project at all stages of development and will review progress throughout implementation.

May 2005...

An enhanced version of the Irish eGovernment portal **reachservices** goes live, making use of the first phase of the **Public Services Broker (PSB)** system. The deployment of the PSB represents an important milestone for the development of Ireland's eGovernment infrastructure and the integration and improvement of its electronic service delivery. In this first phase, the PSB includes a single identification and authentication process and a single electronic payment facility. The Personal Public Service (PPS) numbers database is use for authenticating users.

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

The Irish Government announces the development of an **integrated smart card-based electronic**

ticketing system for all public transport services in the country. The Irish Railway Procurement Agency (RPA) has been given the responsibility to achieve the implementation of such a system, which would provide users with a single smart card allowing them to use the networks of all public transport providers and of certain private operators.

July 2004...

The Irish Government launches the **eCabinet initiative**, aimed at making Government work more efficient. Phase 1 of the project allows all Government departments to electronically manage all stages of the process of preparing, refining and circulating Cabinet documentation among departments. With the rolling out of further project phases, the entire Cabinet decision-making process will be e-enabled, from initial drafting to decision. Based on an XML infrastructure, the system will feature touch screen terminals at the Cabinet table itself, providing Ministers with, among other things, online access to the agenda and to an electronic archive.

June 2004...

The Irish Government establishes an expert group to introduce a standard framework for **Public Service Cards (PSC)**. Public Service Cards are cards used to identify individuals using public services (i.e. medical card, social services card, etc.). The task of the expert group is to draw up a standard framework for the development of the cards and to investigate the development of a single; multi-purpose public service card removing the need to hold multiple cards for dealing with different public services. The single card would be used in conjunction with the Personal Public Service (PPS) number, a unique identifier that is expected to become a feature of an ever-increasing number of Irish public services.

April 2004.......................................

▸ The Irish Government **cancels its plans to use electronic voting machines** countrywide for the June 2004 local and European elections. This cancellation follows the release of an interim report by the Government-appointed Commission on Electronic Voting which was unable to recommend the use of the chosen system because of secrecy, accuracy and testing issues.

▸ Publication of the **second progress report on the 'New Connections' Information Society action plan**. According to the report, progress in eGovernment has been particularly encouraging over the past year, and further qualitative and quantitative progress should be achieved with the upcoming launch of the Public Services Broker (PSB).

▸ Reach, the Government agency established to advance the eGovernment agenda in Ireland, announces that the **Public Services Broker (PSB)** finally enters development phase. The PSB, which procurement process has suffered long delays, is designed to provide the central infrastructure for the country's online government services. It will consist in a government-wide middleware layer and supporting infrastructure enablin seamless interoperation of government information systems and delivery of electronic services.

November 2003.................................

The Information Society Commission (ISC) published the report 'eGovernment - More than an automation of Government Services', calling for a re-orientation of the Irish eGovernment strategy. The report argues that Government must look beyond putting public services online: the use of ICT should be focused on the improvement of the overall public sector performance: more efficient internal administrative processes, better policy outcomes, higher quality services, and stronger engagement with citizens.

October 2003...................................

The Irish Government launches its new e-enabled civil registration system. Called 'eEnabling Life Event Data', the project aims at creating a national database of all life events - such as births, deaths, and

marriages - which will be available at any registrar's office. The new service will also include the automatic allocation of a Personal Public Services Number (PPS number) to a child as part of the birth registration process. Among other things, it will enable faster and more efficient processing of claims for child and social benefits recipients.

June 2003..

The Reach agency, in charge of piloting Ireland's eGovernment initiative, introduces the **Inter-Agency Messaging Service (IAMS)**, aimed at making communications and data exchange between government agencies easier and more secure and reliable, in order to provide integrated services to citizens and businesses. In the future, IAMS will eventually become part of the Public Services Broker, Ireland's central eGovernment infrastructure.

February 2003....................................

Publication of the **first progress report on the 'New Connections' Information Society action plan**. The report outlines progress in the seven policy strands set out in the Action Plan - Telecommunication Infrastructure, Legal & Regulatory Environment, eGovernment, eBusiness, R&D, Lifelong Learning and eInclusion.

December 2002..................................

The Information Society Commission presents its report **Building the Knowledge Society** to the Minister of State for the Information Society. The report outlines 60 recommendations to Government and contains the views and considerations of government, industry and representative bodies with regard to building the knowledge society in Ireland.

October 2002....................................

Following successful tests of electronic voting during the general election of May 2002 and the Referendum on the Nice Treaty in October 2002, the Cabinet

decides to **extend electronic voting throughout the country** for the Local and European elections in 2004. The estimated cost of introducing the voting machines nation-wide is €33m.

June 2002..

The National Disability Authority (NDA) launches the **Irish National Disability Authority IT Accessibility Guidelines**, which provide comprehensive guidance for making electronic services widely accessible to people with disabilities.

March 2002.......................................

Publication of the Irish Government's second Information Society Action Plan: **New Connections - A Strategy to realise the potential of the Information Society**. The document sets out the Government's strategy to ensure that the benefits of the Information Society are available to all in Ireland. It assesses progress to date, reviews priorities, and puts in place a new strategic framework to take the Information Society agenda forward.

December 2001..................................

Launch of the Irish public sector procurement portal **eTenders**, providing online access to public sector procurement opportunities.

November 2001..................................

The Taoiseach (Prime Minister) appoints a new **Information Society Commission** to help shape the evolving public policy framework for the Information Society in Ireland. The Commission acts as an independent advisory body to Government, reporting directly to the Taoiseach, for three years to end 2004, drawing on high-level representation from government, the business community, and social partners.

October 2001.....................................

Publication of the '**Strategy for the Implementation of eProcurement in the Irish Public Sector**'. This strategy emphasises the need for procurement management reform, and points out four aspects to implementation of eProcurement in Ireland: capacity building, training and education, aggregation, and development of eProcurement systems. The strategy contains a number of key targets to be achieved by the end of 2007.

May 2001..

Launch of **BASIS** (Business Access to State Information and Services), Ireland's eGovernment portal for businesses.

April 2001...

Launch of **OASIS** (Online Access to Services, Information and Support), Ireland's eGovernment portal for citizens.

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

▶ In September 2000, launch of the **REACH agency** takes place, in charge of delivering the Public Services Broker, a new system designed to provide greater public access to a wide range of integrated public services.

▶ In February 2000, the Government agrees to the **introduction of electronic direct vote recording and counting** at elections, and the drafting of the necessary enabling legislation, with a view to the use of electronic vote counting commencing at the European Parliament/Local Elections in 2004.

▶ In July 1999, the Government establishes an **Information Society Fund** to facilitate progression of initiatives set out in, or consistent with, the Government's Action Plan on the Information Society. Up to end-2002, over €154m is to be made available to support Information Society and eGovernment-related projects across a wide range of Departments and Agencies.

▶ In January 1999, publication of the Irish government's **first Action Plan on implementing the Information Society in Ireland** takes place. The document outlines the government's approach and timetable for the implementation of the Information Society in the country.

▶ Launch of the **Quality Customer Service Initiative** in May 1997. This Initiative sets out a series of principles for improving customer service in the public sector.

▶ Approval of the **Public Service Modernisation Act 1997**, underpinning government modernisation process with legislative provisions requiring, among other things, all Departments and Offices to produce Strategy Statements and Annual Reports.

▶ Publication of the report **Delivering Better Government** in 1996, setting down an integrated programme for the modernisation of the Civil Service.

▶ Launch of the **Strategic Management Initiative (SMI)** in 1994, a process to achieve excellence of service for the Government and for the public as customers and clients at all levels.

eGovernment Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles

The Irish eGovernment strategy is laid down in **New Connections - A Strategy to realise the potential of the Information Society**, which was presented in March 2002. The following paragraphs present the key eGovernment contents of the 'New Connections' strategy.

Vision...

The technologies of the Information Society present Government with new opportunities to reshape the delivery of government services around user needs, and on a 24x7 basis. They also provide a possible competitive advantage through reduced costs, higher efficiencies, better services and opportunities to allow Irish industry to develop new applications and content around the electronic government services.

Online services can be structured around life events and their business equivalents, and need not be constrained by traditional organisational boundaries. ICTs therefore make possible new connections – both within Government itself, and between Government and the citizen and Government and the business users of its services.

The development of eGovernment is also central to shaping how we evolve as an Information Society. Aside from the objectives of improved service delivery and internal efficiencies, Government business processes clearly serve as key stimulus to wider engagement with ICTs – both within the business community, and among the general public. Given its key infrastructural significance, progress with eGovernment is increasingly seen internationally as a key indicator of wider Information Society development, and a key determinant of national competitiveness.

Progress already achieved (1999-2002)

The first Information Society Action Plan in January 1999 set out a three-stranded approach to online delivery of public services:

- Strand 1 – information services: ensuring all public service information is available online through the websites of Departments and Agencies, and at the same time as it is delivered through traditional channels

- Strand 2 – interactive services: delivery of public services online, enabling complete transactions to be conducted through electronic channels

- Strand 3 – integrated services: rearrangement of information and service delivery around user needs, and available in an integrated manner through a single point of contact with government.

It is appropriate to recognise that progress with this agenda has been significant. In an EU benchmarking exercise carried out in November 2001 to measure progress with online delivery of public services, Ireland performed strongest of all Member States. The key developments towards the objectives set out in the first Action Plan have been as follows:

1. **Website standards** – Guidelines and standards for all public sector websites were produced in November 1999, building on best practice in relation to design, search facilities and accessibility guidelines.

2. **Reach** – The Reach Agency was established during 1999 to develop a strategy for the integration of public services and the implementation of eGovernment.

3. **eStrategies** – Beginning in 2000, all Departments were mandated to produce eStrategies for the delivery of public services online, and to report on progress with implementation in their Annual Reports.

4. **Public Services Broker** – In May 2000, Government agreed on the Public Services Broker model as the framework for the integrated delivery of public services through multiple channels, accessible from a single point of contact.

5. **OASIS and BASIS projects** – In the context of progressing central components of the Public Services Broker, the OASIS (Online Access to State Information and Services) and BASIS (Business Access to State Information and Services) projects were initiated during 2000: the OASIS website was launched in April 2001, providing an integrated online resource of public service information based around citizen-centred life events, and available through a single point of contact (**Oasis.gov.ie**); the BASIS website was launched in May 2001, providing an integrated online resource of public service information based around business-centred needs, and available through a single point of contact (**Basis.ie**).

6. **Information Society Fund** – The Information Society Fund was established by the Irish Government to enable prioritisation of projects in the 1999 Action Plan and other initiatives consistent with its objectives. Up to end-2001, €109m was made available to support approximately 150 projects across a wide range of Departments and Agencies. The Fund has been an important catalyst in promoting successful realisation of Information Society and eGovernment objectives. Its flexibility as a central fund has facilitated effective responsiveness to evolving needs, and will continue to be critical in responding to the challenges and objectives of the New Connections Action plan.

The following are among the key services, most of which have been supported through the Information Society Fund, that are now available online:

1. Revenue Online Service (ROS) – The Revenue Online Service (ROS) allows the secure and speedy electronic filing and payment of taxes as well as providing online access to customer account information. It is recognised as being to the forefront of eGovernment developments internationally (www.ros.ie).

2. FÁS eRecruitment – The FÁS eRecruitment system is being widely used by both businesses and applicants (www.fas.ie).

3. Land Registry – The Land Registry's EAS (Electronic Access Service) provides online access to an electronic database of property ownership records and also supports online applications for Land Registry services (www.landregistry.ie).

4. Examination results – From 2001, the Leaving and Junior Certificate examination results are being made available online at results time (www.examinations.ie).

5. CAO (Central Applications Office) – Applications for places in third level institutions are now supported online by the CAO (Central Applications Office), including the facility to view and accept course offers from colleges (www.cao.ie).

6. Driving tests – Applications for driving tests can now be made online (www.drivingtest.ie).

7. Government Contracts – As an initial step in developing a comprehensive and fully interactive eProcurement system, procurement opportunities with public sector agencies can now be accessed online through a dedicated website (www.etenders.gov.ie).

8. Public Service Recruitment – Applications for vacancies filled through the Civil Service Commission and the Local Appointments Commission are now facilitated online (www.publicjobs.ie).

9. National Sheep Identification System (NSIS) – A sheep tag ordering system has been made available online for selected companies.

10. eForms – The Local Government Computer Services Board has an electronic forms platform to facilitate online application for a range of public services (www.eforms.gov.ie).

11. Welfare.ie – A dedicated website enables downloading of the main leaflets and forms in

respect all social welfare schemes, including online notification of unemployment (www.welfare.ie).

12. Libraries – A complete online guide to Ireland's local authority library catalogues is available through a single website (www.elibs.gov.ie).

13. Infrastructure.ie – The Infrastructure.ie website provides details of physical and social infrastructures in key industrial development locations throughout the country, including local water supply and treatment, landfill sites, electricity and gas supplies, telecommunications and transport infrastructures, hospital facilities, demographics, and third-level education facilities. This information service for business is also available through BASIS.

14. Farmer IT Training – Teagasc have developed online curriculum and associated resource materials to ensure consistency and high quality in the provision of IT skills training for farmers (www.client.teagasc.ie).

Priorities for Service Delivery (2002-2005)...

The Irish Government was committed to the objective of having all public services that are capable of electronic delivery available online, through a single point of contact, by 2005.

This objective was a central focus for all Departments and Agencies through their Statements of Strategy under the Public Services Management Act, resulting in the eGovernment agenda being clearly integrated with mainstream business strategy and objectives.

Government was also committed to ensuring that the benefits of integrated services will not depend on having direct access to the electronic delivery channel. Intermediated access to the Public Services Broker will be a key feature and will be facilitated through both telephone contact centres and one-stop-shops.

1. **Public Services Broker** – Delivery of all public services will be progressed through the framework of the Public Services Broker, the key features of which are as follows:

   ‣ Integration – The Broker will provide integrated access to all services of central and local government through a single point of contact.

   ‣ Multiple Access Channels – The Broker will make services available through multiple access channels, including online self-service, and intermediated service through both telephone contact centres and one-stop-shops.

   ‣ Data Security – The Broker will provide protected data vaults for secure storage of the personal or business information necessary to facilitate access to public services, while making available to public service agencies only the information that is strictly necessary for the delivery of specific individual services. Provision of data to the Broker will be managed and controlled by the individual or business to whom the data relates, and will, beyond certain core basic data, be on a voluntary basis.

2. **Reach** – Reach will be the focal point for the delivery of integrated public services through the Public Services Broker. Its mission is to radically improve the quality of service to personal and business customers of Government and to develop and deploy the Public Services Broker to help agencies achieve that improvement.

3. **Reach Services Portal** – As a key step towards the delivery of a single point of contact for citizen and business users of public services, the Reach Services portal is available online since April 2002. It delivers the facilities to:

   ‣ Provide citizen and business oriented information on public services,

   ‣ Register as an authenticated personaluser of online public services,

   ‣ Make applications for and avail of public services online,

- Accept payments for services online using debit and credit cards.

4. **Reach Architecture, Components and Timelines** – Reach will develop and publish the Public Services Broker architecture and functionality, a complete programme delivery plan with timelines, and any required enabling legislation.

5. **Integrated Services** – Best practice guidelines for the deployment of services nationally through the Public Services Broker will be developed.

6. **Flagship Services to Citizens** – The following flagship citizen-centred services have been prioritized and progressed since 2002, consistent with the principles underpinning integrated delivery of services through the Public Services Broker: Motor Tax, Driving Licences, Road Haulage Licences, Passports, Birth, Death and Marriage certificates, Local Authority Housing (including provision for online self-assessment of eligibility), Planning Applications, Court Fines, Electoral Register, Child Benefit, Adult Education Guidance, Agriculture grants and services (area aid applications, disease eradication schemes, etc.).

7. **Flagship Services to Business** – The following flagship business-centred services have been prioritised and progressed since 2002, consistent with the principles underpinning integrated delivery of services through the Public Services Broker: Revenue (all returns and payments), Statistical Returns, payment of Commercial Rates, Public Procurement (integrated access to all procurement opportunities, evolving towards supporting all stages of the procurement process online), Land Registration, Work Permits, filing of annual returns to the Companies Registration Office, renewal of Patents and Trademarks, application for mining prospecting licence and operation, application for forestry grants, application for vessel registration and fishing licences,

notification of a change of ownership of a vehicle.

8. **eHealth** – The future National Health Information Strategy will include an information framework to support the achievement of the goals and objectives as set out in the National Health Strategy. Consistent with the principles underpinning delivery of the Public Services Broker, this will include prioritisation of a number of pilot eHealth projects.

9. **Departmental Projects** – The services being delivered through departmental projects will be progressed in the context of the overall objectives set out in this Action Plan, and consistent with the principles underpinning the integrated delivery of services through the Public Services Broker.

10. **Monitoring arrangements** – To ensure the necessary momentum, progress by Departments and Agencies towards electronic service delivery targets will be the subject of quarterly reports to the Cabinet Committee on the Information Society. An eGovernment Implementation Group will monitor and promote the implementation of eGovernment across the Public Sector. The remit of the Implementation Group will include the development of a communications strategy for the eGovernment process both internally and externally.

Priorities for Government Modernisation.....................................

Developments in eGovernment closely support the Government modernisation programme, and will be central to issues such as further deepening of the Quality Customer Service initiative, devolving more decision-making closer to the customer, improved financial information systems, and effective mechanisms for addressing cross-cutting policy issues. A key challenge will to ensure that the full synergies between eGovernment and the wider modernization process are realised.

Building on the work that is being progressed in delivering integrated services through the Public Services Broker, there is growing acceptance of the need for a greater internal eGovernment focus on streamlining background processes, facilitating cross-organisational collaboration, continuing to develop an organisational culture with a user-centric focus, and achieving the full benefits from the substantial investments in technology across the public service. Further development of the SMI process, including the Strategy Statement and Business Planning process, the Quality Customer Service initiative and reforms in relation to HR management and financial management, is essential to ensure that the public sector is positioned to rise to these new challenges.

The implications of this are significant for staff and management at all levels – for what they actually do, for taking ownership, for the way they work, the organisational structures within which they work, and the way they share knowledge. There are also implications for citizens, corporate citizens and other stakeholders, all of which need to be addressed.

1. **eEnabling the Public Service** – Work towards eEnablement of particular processes, including the business of Government itself through the eCabinet project, is already underway. In support of these cross-agency initiatives, the parallel creation of a knowledge-basedorganisation is a natural extension of the eGovernment process. It will necessitate a re-configuration of the ICT infrastructures across the public service to provide for greater use of intranets and extranets and a greater emphasis on sharing of services and common automated processes using web technologies. It also means a new approach to IT governance, organization and development, human resource management, leadership and support. The Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Finance has progressed further proposals since 2002 to shape developments in this area in the context of the unfolding modernisation process.

2. **eCabinet Project** – The eCabinet project will bring the application of new technologies to the Cabinet process. In particular it focuses on:

▸ Electronic distribution and management of Cabinet papers

▸ Use of technologies to improve presentation of complex issues at Cabinet

▸ Use of technologies in direct support of Cabinet meetings

▸ Creation of new information resources.

3. **eLegislation Project** – Proposals are being progressed to support eEnablement of the process governing the preparation of legislation, contributing to an efficient, accurate, cost-effective and seamless delivery of Bills to Government.

4. **eProcurement Project** – The Irish public sector procurement portal was launched in December 2001 providing online access to public sector procurement opportunities (eTenders.gov.ie). Information is updated on a daily basis and is provided free of charge to all registered users. A facility enabling suppliers to reply to tenders electronically is available since April 2002 as a further phase in a process that is underway towards fully integrated electronic procurement procedures across the public sector.

5. **Department of Finance** – Progress is underway towards eEnabling the processes through which Departments and Agencies interact with the Department of Finance in relation to the administration of the public finances, including the Estimates process and the ongoing monitoring of public expenditure.

6. **Planning Applications** – In addition to the citizen-focused aspects of the planning process, this project will facilitate electronic integration and dissemination of planning files with third party organisations and partners who contribute to the planning process. The heritage aspects of the planning process carried out by Dúchas will be included as part of this facility.

7. **Integrated Housing Package** – The exchange of information between local authorities and the Department of the Environment and Local Government will be

automated through this project, which will be implemented in all housing authorities over the next three years.

8. **Communications Infrastructure** – A new VPN (Virtual Private Network) will be progressed during 2002 to enhance existing infrastructure for communications between Departments and Agencies and to support the delivery of the Public Services Broker and the eGovernment process.

9. **Electronic Payments Strategy** – Work towards establishing a comprehensive framework for transferring value electronically throughout the economy will be progressed during 2002 through a Steering Group under the aegis of the Department of the Taoiseach.

10. **National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)** – Work towards establishing a National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) has been progressed since 2002 as a strategic priority in the context of the overall development of the eGovernment process. The key focus will be the integration of spatial data (or geographically referenced information) with all wider information-management processes across Government, consistent with the principles underpinning integrated delivery of services through the Public Services Broker.

eGovernment Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eGovernment

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

There is currently no overall eGovernment legislation in Ireland.

Freedom of Information legislation.......

Freedom of Information Act (1997)

The Freedom of Information Act was approved in 1997 and went into effect in April 1998. The Act creates a broad presumption that the public can access all information held by government bodies. Under the Act, any person can request any record held by a public body. The Act lists the government departments and bodies it covers. The Minister of Finance can by regulation add more bodies and has been slowly expanding the scope of the legislation to new organisations. The Act does not apply to the Garda Síochána (police) and a number of other bodies, including the Health and Safety Authority, the Central Bank, Financial Services Authority, Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority, and National Treasury Management Agency.

Government bodies must respond within four weeks and justify why information is withheld. It also requires that agencies provide a written explanation to individuals of decisions that affect their interests. The Act only applies to documents created after April 1998, unless they contain personal information or are necessary to understand other documents covered under the Act. There are a number of exemptions and exclusions with different harm and public interest tests. Public bodies are required to publish information relating to their structure, functions, duties, descriptions of records, and the internal rules, procedures, practices, guidelines, and interpretations of the agency. The Office of the Information Commissioner oversees and enforces the Act. Decisions of the Commissioner are binding and can be appealed only on a point of law. The Freedom of

Information (Amendment) Act 2003 introduced a number of amendments notably in relation to fees.

Data Protection/Privacy legislation.......

Data Protection Act (1988)

The Data Protection Act was amended in 2003 to ensure full compliance with the EU Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC) The aim of the Directive is to establish common standards of data protection across Member States in order to protect personal privacy and ensure the smooth operation of the internal market, and to ensure adequate levels of data protection in countries outside the European Economic Area in order to facilitate and encourage international trade (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform). The Data Protection Commissioner oversees and enforces the Act.

Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000

This Act effects a total reform of Irish copyright and related rights law, bringing it fully into line with the requirements of EU and international law in this area. It places Ireland among world leaders in terms of standards for copyright protection.

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

Electronic Commerce Act (2000)

The Electronic Commerce Act 2000, which became law on 20 September 2000, implements the Electronic Signatures Directive (1999/93/EC) and, in part, the Electronic Commerce Directive (2000/31/EC). The Act provides (with some exceptions) for the legal recognition of electronic signatures, electronic writing and electronic contracts. It authorises the use of encryption and sets the rights and obligations of Certification Service Providers (CSPs). On 26 February 2003 the Minister of Enterprise Trade & Employment

signed the European Communities (Directive 2000/31/EC) Regulations 2003 to give effect to those remaining provisions of the E-Commerce Directive (2001/31/EC) not transposed into Irish law by the Electronic Commerce Act 2000.

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

Communications Regulation Act (2002)

Ireland has transposed all the Directives under the new EU regulatory framework for electronic communications, by means of the Communications Regulation Act 2002 and of secondary legislation (a number of Statutory Instruments).

eSignatures legislation.......................

Electronic Commerce Act (2000)

The Electronic Commerce Act 2000, which became law on 20 September 2000, implements the Electronic Signatures Directive (1999/93/EC). The Act provides (with some exceptions) for the legal recognition of electronic signatures, electronic writing and electronic contracts. It authorises the use of encryption and sets the rights and obligations of Certification Service Providers (CSPs).

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

European Communities (Award of Public Authorities' Contracts) Regulations 2006

Ireland implemented on 29 June 2006 the EU Directive 2004/18/EC into Irish law with the enactment of the European Communities (Award of Public Authorities' Contracts) Regulations 2006 (SI 329 of 2006).

European Communities (Award of Contracts by Public Utilities) Regulations 2006

A set of Draft Regulations, implementing the revised utilities sector procurement EU Directive (2004/17/EC) has been prepared and is expected to be submitted for signature shortly.

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

European Communities (Re-Use of Public Sector Information) Regulations 2005

This statutory instrument (secondary legislation, S.I. No. 279 of 2005) transposes the EU Directive 2003/98/EC of 17 November 2003 on the re-use of public sector information (PSI) into Irish Law. It came into effect on 1 July 2005.

eGovernment Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

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

Policy/Strategy

Department of the Taoiseach

The Department of the Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) is directly in charge of the Information Society and eGovernment policy/strategy. Within the Department, a Minister of State has specific responsibility for advancing the Information Society and eGovernment agenda across Government. The **Minister for the Information Society** is responsible for co-ordinating policy to ensure the continued development of the Information Society in Ireland, promoting and monitoring the implementation of national policies in this area, and representing the country at European and other international fora on Information Society issues. The Minister is assisted in this role by the **Cabinet Committee on the Information Society**, which defines, approves and monitors the Information Society strategy. The committee is convened by the Minister for the Information Society, chaired by the Taoiseach and comprised of several Ministers. The work of the Cabinet Committee on the Information Society is complemented by that of the **eStrategy Group of Secretaries General**, which addresses national eStrategy issues. Secretariat for the Cabinet

Committee on the Information Society and for the eStrategy Group of Secretaries General is provided by the **Information Society Policy Unit (ISPU)** in the Department of the Taoiseach.

Coordination

1. **Minister with responsibility for the Information Society** (within the Department of the Taoiseach)

2. **Information Society Policy Unit (ISPU)**

   The Information Society Policy unit (ISPU), part of the Department of the Taoiseach, has overall responsibility for developing, co-ordinating and driving implementation of the Information Society agenda.

3. **Cabinet Committee on the Information Society**

   Coordination at Ministers level.

4. **eStrategy Group of Secretaries General**

   Coordination at department Secretaries General level.

5. **Assistant Secretaries eGovernment Implementation Group**

   Coordination at department Assistant Secretaries level.

Implementation

1. **Reach**

   The Reach Agency was established by Government decision in 1999 and, in May of 2000, was mandated by Government to build or procure the Public Services Broker. Since then, Reach has been defining the architectures and principles underlying the operation of the Broker and is now leading its development. In other words, Reach is

an agency established by the Government of Ireland to develop a strategy for the integration of public services and to develop and implement the framework for electronic government.

2. **Government Departments and Agencies** for departmental projects.

Support

1. **Reach**
2. **Information Society Policy Unit (ISPU)**

Audit/Assurance

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

The role of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General is to audit and report on the accounts of public bodies, establish that transactions of public bodies are in accordance with the legal authorities governing them and that funds are applied for the purposes intended, provide assurance on the system of internal financial control put in place by each body, examine whether each body administers its resources economically and efficiently and has mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of operations.

Data Protection

Data Protection Commissioner

The Data Protection Commissioner is responsible for upholding the rights of individuals as set out in the Data Protection Act, and enforcing the obligations upon data controllers. The Commissioner is appointed by Government and is independent in the exercise of his or her functions.

Other

Office of the Information Commissioner

The main functions of the Information Commissioner are to review the decisions of public bodies in relation to Freedom of Information Act requests and, where necessary, the making of binding, new decisions; the review of the operation of the FOI Act to ensure that public bodies comply with its provisions; the fostering of an attitude of openness among public bodies by the encouragement of the voluntary publication of information above and beyond the minimum requirements of the Act; the preparation and publication of commentaries on the practical operation of the Act.

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

Strategy

Local Councils

Implementation

Local Councils

Support

Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB)

The LGCSB is a public sector organisation, closely aligned with local government in Ireland. Its job is to provide local authorities with the best possible solutions to meet all their Information and Communications Technologies needs, to help local authorities develop appropriate strategies to underpin their business needs and to help them implement appropriate solutions.

Audit/Assurance

Local Government Audit Service (LGAS)

The Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) is an external audit service providing independent credibility to the financial stewardship function of local authorities and other bodies.

eGovernment Who's Who

Main eGovernment decision-makers and executives

Minister responsible for eGovernment...

Name: Tom Kitt

Job title: Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach (with special responsibility as Government Chief Whip and for the Information Society)

Picture:

Contact details:

Department of the Taoiseach

Government Buildings

Upper Merrion Street

Dublin 2

Tel.: +353 1 619 4585

E-mail: tomkitt@tomkitttd.ie

Source: Department of the Taoiseach

Head of eGovernment

Name: Colm Butler

[19]

Job title: Director of Information Society Policy Unit, Department of the Taoiseach

Picture:

Contact details:

Department of the Taoiseach

Information Society Policy Unit

Government Buildings

Upper Merrion Street

Dublin 2

Tel.: +353 1 6194405 / 6194310

E-mail: colm.butler@taoiseach.gov.ie

Source: Department of the Taoiseach

Head of eGovernment

Other eGovernment executives

Name: Oliver Ryan

Job title: Director of the Reach Agency

Picture:

Contact details:

Reach

Floor 2, Shelbourne House

Shelbourne Rd

Dublin 4

Ireland

Tel.: +353 1 614 1500

E-mail: info@reach.ie

Source: Reach Agency

Other eGovernment executives

eGovernment Infrastructure

Main eGovernment infrastructure components

Portal...

Reachservices

Reachservices is Ireland's eGovernment portal, providing a single point of access to informational, interactive and transactional public services. The Reachservices portal is the user-facing interface of the Public Services Broker (PSB), Ireland's central eGovernment infrastructure. The portal includes a single identification and authentication process and a single electronic payment facility. Thus, the enhanced version of the portal allows registered users to conduct transactions with government from one central access point at any time.

BASIS (Business Access to State Information and Services)

The BASIS Project is a Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment initiative aimed at improving the electronic delivery of Government information and services to the business community. The website is to deliver Government information and services to business 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from a single access point and with a consistent look and feel. Information on the website is structured around the 'life events' of a business, e.g. business start-up and development, paying taxes and employing staff.

Citizens Information Portal

The Citizens Information Portal was originally established under the Government's first action plan for the Information Society. It provides comprehensive information on all aspects of Public Services and entitlements for citizens in Ireland in an easy-to-understand way.

Network...

Irish Government's Virtual Private Network (GVPN)

To improve existing infrastructure for communications between Departments and Agencies, the Irish Government has built a VPN, which will also support the delivery of the Public Services Broker and the eGovernment process.

eIdentification infrastructure...............

Public Services Broker and Personal Public Service Number

At the heart of the Irish eGovernment, the Public Services Broker is meant to act as an enabler or assistant between customers and public service agencies. It provides a single mechanism for access to public services to improve service delivery through traditional means (in person and over the phone) as well as through a self-service electronic channel (the Reachservices portal). Among other things, the PSB provides identification/authentication services for online public services. To this end, the PSB makes use of the Personal Public Service Number (PPSN), a common identification number for taxation and social welfare purposes, which is gradually being extended across the public service in the interest of improving customer service. In June 2004 the Irish Government established an expert group to introduce a standard framework for **Public Service Cards (PSC)**, making use of the PPS number and that could be used for electronic identification and authentication purposes.

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

eTenders

eTenders is the central government procurement portal. It provides information and tools for electronic public procurement and advertises notices for EU and sub-EU threshold contracts for the Irish public sector including central government, local authorities, Health Boards and hospitals, universities and schools. Recent developments include an electronic 'post-box' to facilitate the electronic transmission of tenders by suppliers; site forums for the different sectors involved in public procurement such as central government, local government, health and education; and more comprehensive guidance material. Other features planned for the duration of the current contract include a pilot online tender evaluation system; and a facility to conduct tender clarifications/discussions between buyers and vendors online. Ireland recently became the first EU Member State to have 'national' eSender status. The eTenders website indeed has a facility for the online creation and submission of OJEU notices.

Knowledge Management infrastructure

There is currently no central knowledge management infrastructure in Ireland.

eAuthentication infrastructure..............

The Irish Government's electronic identity management structure is built around two core concepts: the Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) and the Public Services Broker (PSB). PPSN is a unique identifier which is now mandatory assigned to every Irish child at birth. The PSB function is an electronic broker/helper/assistant for any new electronic public service. It provides an interface between beneficiary and public service. An enhanced version of the Irish eGovernment portal reachservices went live in May 2005, making use of the first phase of the Public Services Broker (PSB) system. The rollout of a Public Service Card (PSC), using the PPSN is also planned, which will bundle the functions of several cards, like a medical card, social services card, etc.

Other...

Inter-Agency Messaging Service (IAMS)

The Inter-Agency Messaging Service (IAMS), developed by Reach agency, is a centralized reliable messaging service, which brokers the exchange of customer-related information between agencies on the GVPN. The IAMS initially allowed the exchange of birth registration data between the GRO and the Department of Social and Family Affairs' Client Identity Services Section (CIS), and between the GRO and the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The IAMS has since been extended is now available to all public service qualifying agencies.

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, Revenue Commissioners

Website: http://www.ros.ie/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Only self-assessment taxpayers, typically self-employed individuals and/or individuals with non-PAYE (Pay as you earn) income such as rental income or investment income etc., are subject to the Pay and File system. They can file their income tax return/accounts information and pay their liability on-line. Taxpayers can also view details of their Revenue account including details of returns and payments online.

2. Job search services by labour offices

Responsibility: Central Government, National Training and Employment Authority (FAS)

Website: http://www.fas.ie/

Sophistication stage: 3/3

Description: The website of the National Training and Employment Authority (FAS) provides a number of services for jobseekers (job search, interactive career choices advice, training services, etc.) and for employers (searching for staff, publication of vacancies, etc.).

3. Social security benefits

a. Unemployment benefits

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Social and Family Affairs

Website: http://www.welfare.ie/schemes/unemp/

Sophistication stage: 3/4

Description: Provides details on the main unemployment payments available from the Department. Allows users to notify unemployment and benefit claims online.

b. Family allowances

Responsibility:	Central Government, Department of Social and Family Affairs
Website:	http://www.welfare.ie/schemes/families/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Provides details on a range of family support schemes. Allows users to introduce requests for some benefits online.

c. Medical costs (reimbursement or direct settlement)

Responsibility:	N/A
Website:	N/A
Sophistication stage:	N/A
Description:	This service is not relevant for Ireland, where healthcare is free at the point of delivery in pubic health services. Persons insured for public health in Ireland receive a medical card issued by the Health Service Executive (HSE) Area, which gives them access to a number of health services either free of charge or subsidised: GP (family doctor) services; prescribed drugs and medicines (with some exceptions); in-patient public hospital services; out-patient services; dental, optical and aural services; medical appliances; maternity and infant care services.

d. Student grants

Responsibility:	Central Government/Local Government, Department of Education and Science
Website:	http://www.education.ie/
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	Information concerning various support schemes for students, and downloadable forms. Applications are managed by local authorities.

4.   Personal documents (passport and driving licence)

a. Passport

Responsibility:	Central Government, Department of Foreign Affairs, Passport Office
Website:	http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/home/index.aspx?id=253
Sophistication stage:	2/3
Description:	Information on passport application process and online facility to request application forms. The Passport Office has appointed a supplier to provide a full automation of the passport application process. Irish citizens will be able to file their passport applications online shortly.

b. Driving license

Responsibility:	Central Government (Department of Transport)/Local Government
Website:	http://www.transport.ie/viewitem.asp?id=2709&lang=ENG&loc=1233
Sophistication stage:	2/3
Description:	Information and forms to download. An online driving test application is also available.

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

Responsibility:	Central Government, Revenue Commissioners
Website:	http://www.revenue.ie/
Sophistication stage:	3/4
Description:	Information and downloadable forms. An online quotation tool makes it possible to calculate vehicle tax payable.

6. Application for building/planning permission

Responsibility:	Local Government
Website:	https://www.reachservices.ie/
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	Information only. Most local authorities' websites offer downloadable application forms for planning and building permission.

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

Responsibility:	Central Government, National Police Service
Website:	http://www.garda.ie/
Sophistication stage:	2/3
Description:	Information and Incident report form to download.

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

Responsibility: Central Government/Local Government, The Library Council

Website: http://www.elibs.gov.ie/

Sophistication stage: 2-3/3

Description: Access to library catalogues and information on availability and location of books. No online requests available at the moment.

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

Responsibility: Central Government, Department of Health and Children, General Register Office

Website: http://www.groireland.ie/

Sophistication stage: 2/3

Description: Information and application forms to download.

10. Enrolment in higher education/university

Responsibility: Higher education institutions, Central Applications Office (CAO)

Website: http://www.cao.ie/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Online application system, including submission and payment of application fees, confirmation, and offers. CAO has been delegated by higher education institutions in Ireland the task of centrally processing applications to their first year undergraduate courses. The participating institutions retain the function of making decisions on admissions.

11. Announcement of moving (change of address)

Responsibility: N/A

Website: N/A

Sophistication stage: N/A

Description: This service is not relevant for Ireland, where there is no obligation to inform the authorities of a change of address.

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

Responsibility:	Central Government, Department of Health and Children
Website:	http://www.oasis.gov.ie/health/
Sophistication stage:	1/4
Description:	Information only. An interactive health services portal is currently under development (project HealthIreland.ie).

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, Revenue Commissioners

Website: http://www.ros.ie/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Online submission and payment of contributions for employees (Requires prior registration).

2. Corporation tax: declaration, notification

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners

Website: http://www.ros.ie/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Online information and services for companies and professionals (including corporate tax declaration and payment).

3. VAT: declaration, notification

Responsibility: Central Government, Revenue Commissioners

Website: http://www.ros.ie/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Online declaration and payment of VAT.

4. Registration of a new company

Responsibility: Central Government, Companies Registration Office

Website: http://www.cro.ie/

Sophistication stage: 2/4

Description: Information and forms to download.

5.   Submission of data to statistical offices

Responsibility:	Central Government, Central Statistics Office (CSO)
Website:	http://www.cso.ie/
Sophistication stage:	3/3
Description:	Submission of data to the statistical office can be made electronically.

6.   Customs declarations

Responsibility:	Central Government, Revenue Commissioners
Website:	http://www.ros.ie/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Customs declarations can be made online.

7.   Environment-related permits (incl. reporting)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Environmental Protection Agency
Websites:	http://www.epa.ie/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Online submission of requests for environment-related permits.

8.	Public procurement
Responsibility:	Central Government, Department of Finance
Website:	http://www.e-tenders.gov.ie/
Sophistication stage:	3/4
Description:	E-Tenders is the central government procurement portal. It provides information and tools for electronic public procurement and advertises notices for EU and sub-EU threshold contracts for the Irish public sector including central government, local authorities, Health Boards and hospitals, universities and schools. Recent developments include an electronic "post-box" to facilitate the electronic transmission of tenders by suppliers; site forums for the different sectors involved in public procurement such as central government, local government, health and education; and more comprehensive guidance material. Other features planned for the duration of the current contract include a pilot online tender evaluation system; and a facility to conduct tender clarifications/discussions between buyers and vendors online.

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