

September 2006

eGovernment in

Norway



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- Country Profile
 - History
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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 Norway. 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): 4.606,4 inhabitants (2005)

GDP at market prices: 237.706,8 million Euros (2005)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (purchasing Power Standards, EU-25=100): 164,5 (2005)

GDP growth rate: 2,3% (2005)

Inflation rate: 1,5% (2005)

Unemployment rate: 4,6% (2005)

Government debt/GDP: 46,5% (2004)

Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): 11,5% (2004)

Source: Eurostat

Area: 385.155 km²

Capital city: Oslo

Language (official): Norwegian (Bokmål and Nynorsk) and Sámi in some districts

Currency: Norwegian kroner (NOK)

Source: [Norway official website](#)

Political Structure.....

Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democratic system of governance. All citizens are able to participate in the "Storting" (Norwegian national assembly), county and municipal councils. The Government, in accordance with the original articles of the Constitution, derives its authority from the executive power vested in the King.

Both democratic governance and the monarchy were established in the Constitution of 1814. Parliamentarianism was introduced in 1884. Today, the King has little real political power, but fills an important symbolic function as the Head of State and

official representative of Norwegian society and industry.

State power is formally distributed between three institutions: the Storting (the legislative power), the Government (the executive power) and the courts (the judicial power). In addition, the public administration, which was designed to serve the needs of the political bodies, is sometimes viewed as a fourth state power, as it now takes independent action and can exert influence on the shaping of policies. There is also a geographical distribution of political power into state, county and municipal levels.

The participation of the people in the political sphere takes place both through direct elections and through their membership of organizations. The average Norwegian is a member of four organizations and approximately 70% of the adult population is a member of at least one organization. Election turnout is usually in the vicinity of 80%.

The Storting (Norwegian national assembly) has served as the highest political body in Norway since the introduction of Parliamentarianism in 1884. Elections to the Storting are held every fourth year, and mandates are distributed according to a system of proportional representation. The Government is selected on behalf of the King from within the Storting.

The Storting maintains formal control over the two most important tools of government: the enactment of legislation and approval of national budgets. The Storting comprises 165 elected representatives, all representing a party. It is a modified unicameral parliament; when exercising legislative functions it is divided into two chambers, the Odelsting (3/4) and the Lagting (1/4), each with relatively equal powers. Government bills are submitted first to the Odelsting and thereafter to the Lagting. State budgets and amendments to the Constitution are dealt with in the plenary assembly. Amendments to the Constitution require a two-thirds majority vote, but otherwise a simple majority is sufficient.

The Government serves as the executive power. Its most important functions are to submit bills and budget proposals to the Storting (Norwegian national assembly) and implement decisions through the Ministries. The Government is derived from the

Storting and is headed by the Prime Minister. Formally speaking, it is the King who asks the majority party to form a government or a viable coalition. Government decisions are formally taken by the King in Council (that is, jointly approved by the King and the Council of State) every Friday. All Royal Decrees must be signed by the King and countersigned by the Prime Minister.

Norway is characterized by a ministerial government, with a Minister serving as the political head of his or her Ministry. Closest to the Minister are the politically-appointed State Secretaries, akin to deputy ministers, and Political Advisors.

The Ministries are structured hierarchically, with a Secretary-General as the top-ranking administrative leader, followed successively by the Director General (ekspedisjonssjef) at a departmental level, the Assistant Director General (avdelingsdirektør) at a departmental or sectional level, Deputy Assistant Director General (underdirektør) at a sectional level, Head of Division (byråsjef) at a divisional level and a civil service comprising various grades of advisors, executive officers and clerical staff.

Norway is divided into 19 counties and 434 municipalities (2003). The powers of the county and municipal councils for self-government have been delegated from the State, and are set out in legislation, not in the Constitution.

Current Head of State: His Majesty [King Harald V of Norway](#) (since 17 January 1991)

Current Head of Government: Prime Minister [Jens Stoltenberg](#) (since 17 October 2005)

Information Society indicators.....

Percentage of households with Internet access: 64% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises with Internet access: 86% (2004)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet at least once a week: 74% (2004)

Percentage of households with a broadband connection: 41% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises with a broadband connection: 78% (2005)

Percentage of individuals having purchased/ordered online in the last three months: 35% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises having received orders online within the previous year: 26% (2005)

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

obtaining information 46,4%, downloading forms 23,8%, returning filled forms 20,6% (2005)

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

obtaining information 75%, downloading forms 71%, returning filled forms 59% (2005)

Source: [Eurostat](#)

eGovernment History

Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: [eGovernment News - Other European countries](#)

June 2006.....

[Norway](#) – the official site, which won the Norwegian Design Council's Award for Design Excellence last year, has now received the World Summit Award Norge in the eGovernment category.

May 2006.....

The [Norwegian Ministry of Government Administration and Reform](#) announces that it will be stepping up measures to increase the use of open-source software (OSS) in the public sector. The Norwegian Minister for Government Administration and Reform, Heidi Grande Røys, announced her Ministry's intention to reduce dependence on Microsoft by using more open-source programmes.

March 2006.....

The Norwegian Government releases its long awaited legal package (proposal to the Storting) with updated rules for future public procurement. The legal package consists of two parts: a proposal for certain changes in the current Norwegian [Public Procurement Act](#), and revised provisions of the current Act and the public utilities. The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform has set 1 January 2007 as their target date for implementation. The revised provisions allow for eProcurement as a fully accepted alternative to the traditional way of doing business.

November 2006.....

According to a press release by the Ministry of Modernisation, the launch of the Citizens' web portal "MyPage" is postponed for early in 2006. Even though

all technical solutions are to be ready before Christmas, a longer test period is needed before MyPage becomes open to the public. Final launch date is to be decided in the first half of January.

Prior to this announcement, the ministry launched two more initiatives to accompany the [eNorway 2009 plan](#):

- ▶ a coordination forum for eGovernment
- ▶ a common solution and portal for handling electronic IDs and electronic signatures

October 2005.....

The introduction of biometric passports in Norway on 3 October 2005 met with criticism. The [Norwegian Data Inspectorate](#) expressed serious concerns regarding the security of the new passports, and in particular the fact that the data stored on the RFID chips is not encrypted. The strategy document "[Strategy and actions for the use of electronic business processes and electronic procurement in the public sector](#)" is presented as a follow-up to the [eNorway 2009](#) plan.

June 2005.....

The new [eNorway 2009](#) action plan for a digital society heralds a process of major renewal and redefinition of electronic public services and government. It is based on three priorities:

- ▶ the individual in the digital Norway
- ▶ innovation and growth in business and industry
- ▶ a coordinated and user-adapted public sector

The intention to move to Open Source software is announced by the Minister of Modernisation, Morten Andreas Meyer, speaking at the [eNorge 2009 conference](#): "Proprietary formats will no longer be

acceptable in communication between citizens and government".

January 2005.....

A general, functional specification of the requirements applicable to the procurement of **PKI (Public Key Infrastructure)** for use in connection with electronic communication with and within the public sector is published. The availability of electronic ID and signature is increasingly seen as a prerequisite for efficient electronic interaction with citizens and the private sector.

October 2004.....

The [Ministry of Modernisation](#), is formally established as a spearhead for the Norwegian Government's efforts to modernise the public sector with responsibility for IT policy and eGovernment drive. It will also be responsible for the operation and management of the country's eGovernment portal, [Norge.no](#), which as of 1 January 2005 is to become a public agency subordinate to the Ministry. The Ministry will continue implementing the eNorway 2002-2005 action plan and the Strategy for ICT in the Public Sector 2003-2005.

June 2004.....

A resolution adopted by the Norwegian Government on 17 June, requires a common specification for electronic ID and signature to be formulated by 15 November 2004. The specification will in turn form the basis for common framework agreements for use by the public sector.

August 2004.....

The inter-ministerial working group appointed in June 2003 with the mandate to adopt recommendations regarding the implementation of the European Directive on the re-use of Public Sector Information ([PSI Directive](#)) in Norwegian law, submits its report to

government bodies and affected organisations for consultation. The recommendations of the working group and any suggestions resulting from the consultation will be considered in relation to the next revision of the Freedom of Information Act.

December 2003.....

The [Altinn](#) project is created as a net-based solution for reporting financial data from businesses to the Tax Directorate, the Brønnøysund Register Centre of Legal Entities and Statistics Norway.

July 2003.....

The Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry publishes a national strategy for securing ICT systems in the country. The strategy proposes 40 initiatives for improving eSecurity, such as establishing a coordination committee for ICT security and running campaigns to raise consciousness about challenges and problems related to the use of ICT systems.

May 2003.....

To better inform and help patients, their families and health personnel in regard to the patient's free choice of hospital, the Norwegian Ministry of Health launches, on the 8th of May 2003, a unique information service on the Internet called "[Free Hospital Choice](#)".

February 2003.....

The Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Government Administration publishes the 'Strategy for ICT in the Public Sector 2003-2005'. Major areas of focus are promoting user-oriented services, increased efficiency and simplification at the local level. The document is a supplement to the **eNorway 2005** action plan, itself inspired by the eEurope 2002 strategic plan.

April 2002.....

The **Norwegian Centre for Information Security (NorSIS)** is established by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, responsible for coordinating activities related to ICT security in Norway. The centre receives reports about security related incidents from companies and departments, and is working on obtaining an overall impression of threats towards Norwegian ICT systems.

June 2002.....

The **eNorway 2005** action plan on eGovernment and digital services is released by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. This is followed by the **Strategy for Electronic Content** and the action plan for **Simplifying Norway**.

July 2002.....

The government bill "**Regulation on Electronic Communication with and within the Public Administration**" prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, is ratified on 1 July. The regulation creates the legal framework for a secure and effective use of electronic communication. Also, the **KOSTRA** (Municipality-State-Reporting) system allowing municipalities to report to the state, which started in 1995, becomes fully operational.

2001.....

The strategy "**Step by Step – Programme for Innovation and Modernisation in the Public Sector**" is introduced by the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration. One of the proposed reforms is "**24/7 Public Administration**" aiming to provide constant availability of public information and services. The policy follow-up work is to be terminated later in the same year after a change of government. Another development is the **law on electronic signatures** coming into force. It contains detailed provisions for electronic identification of persons and gives qualified electronic signatures equal status to traditional signatures for administration purposes.

2000 and before.....

The Norwegian public sector started using ICT much earlier than the advent of what is today known as e-government. The main driver for ICT use was, and remains, internal efficiency through automation of administrative processes. The Ministry of Labour and Government Administration developed the first national IT policy in 1982 and presented it to the Storting (National Assembly) under the title: "**Decentralisation and Efficiency of Electronic Administrative Processes in the Public Administration**" (Report NO. 12, 1982-1983). Four years later, concern over the development of a coordinated policy/strategy led to the official report "**Computer Policy in Central Government in the 1990s**" (NOU 1988:40). Infrastructure development was boosted by the programme: "**National Infrastructure for Electronic Common Data Handling**" (1988-1992), which set out a framework for standardisation, electronic data exchange and information resource management.

Despite these, central government had played a limited role in developing ICT for its own use until late 1990s. Instead, ICT had been developed more or less autonomously by agencies, which have used it mainly to support their own internal administration and/or service delivery processes and to achieve technical goals, including output efficiency. Nonetheless, over the past 30 years, public sector reform has been a main driver of the development of eGovernment.

One of the early moves in this direction was the "**National Infrastructure for IT**" programme in 1990-92, aiming in easier and efficient information exchange between public administrators and businesses or citizens. This developed into various programmes carried out between 1999-2001 concerning electronic data exchange and reporting. These laid down the requirements for electronic handling of administrative processes. Previous objectives to make all official documents available in the government website were fulfilled in 1996 through the **Odin** website, which became the permanent government website after 1997. Norway's first government information policy was adopted in 1993 as a set of goals and principles for information

and communication activities in public administration. The policy had limited impact on the development of eGovernment services however and was later revised (2001).

In 1996, the **Public Administration Network** project was initiated by the government and the Association of Local and Regional Authorities, with a view to establishing a secure, trustworthy and effective communications infrastructure for the Norwegian public sector. The project was ended in 2001 with the change of government. On a different note, the **KOSTRA** (Municipality-State-Reporting) project for reporting to the state, which started in 1995, has become fully operational since July 2002.

The first comprehensive plan for cross-sector ICT co-ordination in the public sector was produced in 1999 and central government co-ordination reached its peak in 2001. A change in government then returned the focus to a decentralising agenda and the eGovernment co-ordination role of the centre was greatly curtailed. Nevertheless, the first plan to use ICT as a tool for public reform was initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration in 2000 and officially presented in 2001. At the same year (2000) the first version of the **eNorway** plan (version 1.0) for ICT

policy was released by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Set as a continually updated rolling plan, the second version "eNorway 2.0" was published in December 2000, followed by "eNorway 3.0" in the next year.

Regarding security, following the establishment of a "Vulnerability Commission" in 1999, the Ministry of Trade and Industry put forward in 2000 a "National Strategy for Information Security", thus prioritising a list of measures to be implemented.

General Source: Norway Assessment, OECD, OECD eGovernment Studies series, 2005.

eGovernment Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles



eGovernment development in Norway has been strongly influenced by EU initiatives. Even though it is not an EU member, Norway followed closely European developments in this area: the eNorway 2005 action plan was strongly influenced and inspired by the eEurope 2002 strategic plan. Today, Norway seems to have taken a step forward in anticipating European developments in this area and integrating them in its strategy. At the level of eGovernment implementation, European-led initiatives have often acted as frameworks for inter-agency collaboration and as catalysts for individual organisations to implement eGovernment.

For a considerable period of time, the use of IT was perceived in Norway as a technical instrument to rationalise public administration and not as an object for political leadership. This approach has changed over time and IT has now been integrated as a tool in the policy-making process. Norway has a well-established eGovernment central vision (**eNorway**) and strategy, both of which build on the wider vision of modernisation of the public sector. However, when it comes to the implementation of eGovernment initiatives, an earlier plan, that provided an overarching concept of a 24/7 administration, seems to remain as a driving principle for agencies and ministries. The tenacity of this vision – based on a plan

no longer in effect – may be due to lack of alternative central guidance.

The Norwegian approach to organising eGovernment generally reflects the government structure and the decentralised budgeting responsibilities. At the ministerial level, the amount of ICT co-ordination varies and is linked to the level of centralisation / decentralisation of the structure of responsibilities within each ministry. While each ministry is constitutionally responsible to the Parliament for its sector of activity, ministers differ greatly in terms of their administrative style and co-ordination approach vis-à-vis the agencies under them. The main tool that ministries have for guiding the direction of eGovernment in the agencies under them is the annual budget negotiation process. The Ministry of Finance, however, does not have a hand in using the budget as a tool to achieve overall eGovernment policy goals.

The Norwegian new eGovernment strategy was launched 27 June 2005 under the title "[eNorway 2009 – the digital leap](#)". It is a comprehensive ICT action plan spanning all fields of government. The new strategy acknowledges the need for clear targets and better coordination. If the digital development is to continue, the different areas of the public sector have to be regarded as a single unit, the strategy says. A review of previous strategies made in 2004 pointed out the need for better coordination in areas such as technological standards, IT architecture and national IT projects. In those areas, there is a need for more centralised initiatives.

The main targets set in the new strategy are as follows:

- ▶ Full use of www.norge.no/, the gateway to the public sector in Norway, i.e. a personalised and secure version of a one-stop services portal, already available to all citizens since the end of 2005.

- ▶ Before the end of 2007, all communication between authorities and citizens is to be electronic for those who wish to do so.
- ▶ By 2009, all relevant public services to the citizens are to be available on the Internet.
- ▶ Before the end of 2009, all information that is not too sensitive is to be communicated electronically within the public sector. For ministries, the deadline is 2007.
- ▶ All reports from businesses to the public sector should include an electronic submission option by 2008.
- ▶ Access to public data should be made easier by the end of 2008, with free access as the basic principle.
- ▶ Computer systems in the public sector are to be based on open standards: "Proprietary formats will no longer be acceptable in communication between citizens and government", as declared by the ex Minister of Modernisation Morten Andreas Meyer.
- ▶ Before the end of 2009, all authorities must make arrangements for enabling citizens to retrieve their own personal data in a simple and secure way.

Progress on each target will be monitored and reported on a yearly basis, and the results will be made available on the Internet. The strategy will be the basis for political initiatives at national level, and will also serve as a guideline for municipalities. The [Ministry of Government Administration and Reform](#) is

in charge of promoting coordination and cooperation. The responsibility for realising projects and initiatives will lie with the different ministries, authorities and local authorities under the corresponding local and regional authority plan "**eMunicipality 2009 – the digital leap**".

The strategy document "[Strategy and actions for the use of electronic business processes and electronic procurement in the public sector](#)" and the increasing success of the eProcurement portal [eHandel.no](#) shows the government's commitment to eGovernment. Despite this, and in contrast to other Nordic countries, in Norway there are relatively few central government projects to improve citizen online consultation and participation in policy making. Most of the eGovernment initiatives are targeted to providing information to citizens, rather than engaging them in **eConsultation** or **eParticipation**. In a fashion similar to most other OECD countries, seemingly little civil society mobilisation is focused on eGovernment issues, despite the increase in use of ICT and the Internet.

eGovernment Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eGovernment



Norway has succeeded in establishing a good environment for implementation of eGovernment. One positive aspect is the legislative and regulatory environment, which has been updated to account for many of the legal requirements related to the operation of government in the digital environment.

[Lovdata](#) has information regarding laws and legal authorities in Norway. In cooperation with the University of Oslo's Faculty of Law, Lovdata has also published a collection of [translated Norwegian legislation](#).

eGovernment legislation.....

In terms of regulations covering the conduct of public administration, there are few regulatory barriers to eGovernment in Norway. The government has taken an active role in setting up a framework for implementation by breaking up legal and regulatory barriers to the provision on online services. Legal issues in new policy areas such as public key infrastructure (PKI) for electronic authentication have been addressed through intergovernmental working groups. These initiatives anticipate the needs of the information society and provide for legislative simplification without loss of rigour aiming to reduce

administrative burdens imposed on citizens and businesses. The resulting regulatory environment enables rather than impedes eGovernment action. In general, the law now establishes a **formal equivalence between paper and electronic processes**, although this fact has not been fully exploited yet.

Freedom of Information legislation.....

There is a [Freedom of Information Act](#) in the legal form of Act on 20 June 2003 no. 45, Ministry of Foreign Affairs amending Act of 19 June 1970 No. 69. The Act regulates the right of any person to obtain publicly disclosable contents of documents in a specific case. A new version of the Act will consider implementation of the [PSI Directive](#) (see below).

Data Protection/Privacy legislation.....

The regulations on the Processing of personal data ([Personal Data Regulations](#)) were laid down by the Royal Decree of 15 December 2000 pursuant to the Act of 14 April 2000 No. 31 on the processing of personal data (Personal Data Act), sections 3, 4, 12, 13, 14, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33, 41, 43, 44, 48 and 51. They were amended on 23 December 2003 (No. 1798 as the Personal Data Regulations).

eCommerce legislation.....

Norway's [eCommerce Act](#) (23.5, 2003 No. 35) implements the relevant EU directive.

eCommunications legislation.....

The government bill "**Regulation on Electronic Communication with and within the Public Administration**" prepared by the Ministry of Labour

and Government Administration, was ratified on 1 July 2002. The regulation created the legal framework for a secure and effective use of electronic communication.

eSignatures/eIdentity legislation.....

The law on electronic signatures (2001) contains detailed provisions for electronic identification of persons and gives qualified electronic signatures equal status to traditional signatures for administration purposes. The law implements the relevant EU directive. Of relevance here is also the sub-regulation on "Electronic Communication with and within the Public Administration" (see above). The government has taken a pragmatic approach to PKI by establishing the regulatory and policy framework as well as technical requirements for the introduction of a common PKI solution for the public sector. By avoiding playing the pioneer when it comes to the use of new technologies and waiting for market actors such as Telenor or the banks to act, the government has avoided taking the risk in developing and supplying solutions that are not aligned with the market. Development of common PKI specifications has been completed and the introduction of PKI is imminent.

eProcurement legislation.....

The Norwegian Government released its long awaited legal package (proposal to the Storting) with updated rules for future public procurement in March 2006. The legal package consists of two parts: a proposal for certain changes in the current Norwegian [Public Procurement Act](#), and revised provisions of the current Act and the public utilities. The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform has set 1 January 2007 as their target date for implementation. The revised provisions allow for eProcurement as a fully accepted alternative to the traditional way of doing business. The eProcurement Secretariat is currently testing different tools, promotes eBusiness and participates in a Northern Europe cooperation to deploy eInvoices.

New provisions oblige public bodies to register all important steps and decisions throughout the

procurement process for contracts to the value of NOK 100000 and above.

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

Much of the collaboration among agencies in Norway is based on the joint exchange of information contained on individual **data registers**. Some large agencies have developed large central registers and have used them as a basis for the delivery of service to citizens and business (e.g. the Population Register developed and owned by the Tax Inspectorate). A prerequisite and a target in Norway for eGovernment, however, has been the existence of a comprehensive central data registers system to allow increased and better use of data contained in these registers. This need has forced the government to assign inter-ministerial and inter-agency working groups with responsibilities to find common solutions in the area of **re-use, standardisation and pricing of public data**.

An important infrastructure offering significant amounts of public sector information is the cooperation around geographic data called [Digital Norway](#). Established in 2005, it is the administration and technical support site for the www.geonorge.no geo-portal, the focal point for content overview of available data and services supported by the infrastructure. Data is disseminated as web map services and is available on standard formats. Municipalities and regional organisations are important providers and users, along with businesses which can create value through geo-data services. As mentioned in the [eNorway 2009](#) plan, the Government wants all public bodies with responsibility for geo-data, or which are major users, to collaborate in the establishment, operation and maintenance of this common national spatial data infrastructure (NSDI).

In relation to the European Directive on re-use of Public Sector Information ([PSI Directive](#)), an inter-ministerial working group was appointed in June 2003 with the mandate to adopt recommendations regarding implementation in Norwegian law. The working group submitted its report on 30 August 2004. The report has been forwarded to government bodies and affected organisations for consultation. The

deadline for submitting comments was 1 December 2004. The recommendations of the working group and any suggestions resulting from the consultative round will be considered in relation to the current revision of the [Freedom of Information Act](#). The directive will in all likelihood primarily be implemented in the new Freedom of Information Act, but will also necessitate changes in other legislative acts regulating access to public information on specific areas (such as the Act Relating to Environmental Information, 9 May 2003 no. 31, the Planning and Building Act, 14 June 1985 no.

77, The Personal Health Data Filing System Act, 18 May 2001 no. 24, the Regulation Relating to Public Archives, 11 December 1998 no. 1193 and others).

(Source: Europa: [PSI Implementation Status](#)).

eGovernment Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

National eGovernment.....

Policy/Strategy

At the political level, high level co-ordination is ensured by the **State Secretaries' Committee** on ICT, supported by an eContact group composed of senior eGovernment officials in central ministries. In addition, there are various bodies which co-ordinate development and implementation of eGovernment initiatives. In particular, the **Co-ordinating Body for eGovernment**, under the [Norwegian Ministry of Government Administration and Reform](#), is responsible for initiatives in certain areas (e.g. common technical requirements, PKI and re-use of public data).

The general approach to eGovernment in Norway is decentralised.

Coordination

The Norwegian approach to organising eGovernment generally reflects the government structure and the decentralised budgeting responsibilities.

Central co-ordination of eGovernment belongs to the [Ministry of Government Administration and Reform](#) and its **Department of IT Policy** coordinates the IT policy of the government, including electronic public services for citizens and businesses, infrastructure for electronic IDs and signatures, IT security, broadband policy and the production of the "eNorway" plans.

Central co-ordination of eGovernment has varied over time in line with shifts toward or away from decentralisation of eGovernment development. The first comprehensive plan for cross-sectoral ICT co-ordination in the public sector was produced in 1999 and central government co-ordination reached its peak in 2001. A change in government then returned the focus to a decentralising agenda and the eGovernment co-ordination role of the centre was greatly curtailed. The government has since recognised the importance

of strengthening co-ordinating efforts in certain areas in order to guide the overall decentralised implementation of eGovernment. Progress has been achieved for example in the area of developing common infrastructure; the inter-ministerial co-ordinating body for PKI was instrumental in breaking down barriers and establishing the framework conditions for its introduction. The newly created "Co-ordinating Body for eGovernment" within the then Ministry of Modernisation and currently Ministry of Government Administration and Reform seems to have gone in the direction of strengthening government's co-ordination capacity.

Implementation and support

The [Government Administration Services](#) provide **Odin**, available through the web, and offering other Internet services including common archives and case handling systems for the entire public sector.

The Norwegian Centre for Information Security ([NorSIS](#)) is responsible for coordinating activities related to ICT security in Norway. The centre receives reports about security related incidents from companies and departments, and is working on obtaining an overall impression of threats towards Norwegian ICT systems.

The establishment of the centre is part of a strategy for reducing the society's vulnerability to information and communication technology (ICT) recommended by The Vulnerability Committee in June 2000 (NOU 2000:24).

The [Data Inspectorate](#) is an independent administrative body which is entrusted with the application of the data protection laws. It verifies organisations' compliance on processing of personal data, regulates processing of sensitive data through licenses and advises on matters of privacy protection.

The **eProcurement Secretariat**, which is reporting directly to the Ministry of Government Administration

and Reform, now puts much of its capacity into the deployment of electronic invoice handling in the public sector. If they succeed, **eInvoice** can be the standard payment-device in the Norwegian public sector by the end of 2008.

Regional & Local eGovernment.....

Norway is divided into 19 counties and 434 municipalities (2003). The powers of the county and municipal councils for self-government have been delegated from the State, and are set out in legislation, not in the Constitution. The State is directly represented at a local level through the County Governors' offices.

The municipalities are the most important units of local government administration. They are responsible for primary and lower secondary education, social services, municipal roads, water and sewerage and zoning regulation. Upper secondary schools and a number of technical services are administered at the county level. Local administrations receive part of their revenues through local taxation, fees and local business management, and partly from allocations from the central authorities and other public institutions.

The 18 county administrations (Oslo is not defined as a traditional county) were established in 1975 to provide an administrative level between the State and the municipalities. Since the major amalgamation reform of 1967, the number of municipalities has stabilized at a figure around 420-440.

Implementation and support

Local administrations provide two-thirds of public services in Norway. Attracting political support for eGovernment initiatives remains a major challenge at local level. The establishment of municipal **one-stop shops** in 1992 in seven municipalities has led to the establishment of similar shops by all municipalities, starting in 1999.

Within individual organisations, eGovernment leadership is, again, decentralised and often driven from the bottom up. Strategic guidance, planning and co-ordinating functions are sometimes too dispersed and not well-linked. Innovative solutions are often pushed by small groups of IT people, and are not entirely shared within or between organisations.

eGovernment Who's Who

Main eGovernment decision-makers and executives

Minister responsible for eGovernment.....

Name: Heidi Grande Røys

Job title: Minister of Government Administration and Reform

Picture:



Contact details:

The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform

P.O Box 8004 Dep,

N-0030 Oslo,

Norway

Tel.: 22 24 46 00

E-mail: postmottak@mod.dep.no

Other key eGovernment executives.....

Name: Hugo Parr

Job title: Department Manager

Picture: No picture available

Contact details:

Department of IT Policy

The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform

P.O Box 8004 Dep,

N-0030 Oslo,

Norway

Tel.: 22 24 66 00 (913 41 346, mobile)

E-mail: postmottak@mod.dep.no

Name: Ivar Gammelmo

Job title: Director

Picture: No picture available

Contact details:

Government Administration Services

Einar Gerhardsens pl. 3,

Pb. 8129 Dep.,

0032 Oslo

Norway

Tel: 22 24 90 90

E-mail: postmottak@dss.dep.no

eGovernment Infrastructure

Main eGovernment infrastructure components



eGovernment Service Delivery.....

Following the UN classification of eServices into five stages, Norway appears as having the following utilisation rates for 2005 (ref: United Nations: "Global eGovernment Readiness Report 2005"):

Stage of eService	Percent utilisation (%)
I: Emerging	100
II: Enhanced	99
III: Interactive	85
IV: Transactional	39
V: Networked	48
TOTAL	75.55

These rates amount to a global rank of 15 out of a total of 191 countries, placing it behind countries such as the US (1), Singapore (2), UK (3), Sweden (9) and New Zealand (14). These figures are supplemented by a global eGovernment Readiness ranking¹ of 10 out of 179 countries, placing it behind the US (1), Denmark (2), Sweden (3), Finland (9) and ahead of Germany (11), Austria (16) and France (23).

One reason as to why Norway has succeeded in establishing a good environment for implementation of eGovernment is the existence of some common ICT infrastructure, standards and applications (most notably the system of public registers, in place for a long time), which has made many internal electronic transactions commonplace and well-accepted.

Portal.....

The one stop services portal www.norge.no (or www.norway.no in English) is a gateway to the public sector in Norway, made available to all citizens since the end of 2005. Since this year, the portal has been managed by a public agency titled "Norway.no". The original conception of such a portal first appeared as a project in 1999 under the government programme called "A Simpler Norway" and was launched in January 2000 in cooperation with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities.

In addition to information and services through Internet, Norway.no features a citizen's help desk contacted by telephone, SMS, fax, post, e-mail and chat modes. The desk can direct users to other public agencies as well. Norway.no itself has recently been given further responsibilities on information policy in the public sector, national evaluations of public web sites, supervision of conformance to accessibility guidelines and categorisation systems for public information.

Previous objectives to make all official documents available in the government website were fulfilled in 1996 through the [Odin](http://www.odin.no) website, which became the permanent government website after 1997.

The **eProcurement portal** and marketplace for government eCommerce is [eHandel.no](http://www.ehandel.no) and was established in 2002. Its purpose is to give public sector entities and their suppliers' fully online easy access to a user-friendly and affordable tool for operational eProcurement with each other.

Other portals offer specific information and are accessible through www.norge.no. A recent example is [Digital Norway](http://www.digitalnorway.no) and the www.geonorge.no Geo-portal which supplies online geographic information on all Norway.

Network.....

Norway has an adequate infrastructure for telecommunications networks, services and eGovernment, which allows for system interoperability and data interchange between administrations. The UN Telecommunication Infrastructure Index for 2005 amounts to 0,682, which is worldwide ahead of countries such as Finland (0,652), Germany (0,623) and Singapore (0,645) and behind countries such as Sweden (0,840), Iceland (0,770) and the US (0,749) (ref: United Nations: "Global eGovernment Readiness Report 2005").

In some areas the government has taken the initiative to support the creation of specific infrastructure as exemplified in the **National Health Network** which links five regional networks and provides a single information exchange platform in the health and social sector. Similarly, data sharing communications services connect ministries. The Government Administration Service provides [Odin](#) available through the web and offers other Internet services including common archives and case handling systems.

eIdentification infrastructure.....

An 11-digit personal identification number (personnummer/fødselsnummer) can be acquired by any individual in Norway by registering with the [National Register](#), via the [Local Tax Assessment Office \(likningskontor\)](#). Following the publication of common PKI specifications (January 2005), several commercial actors provide eSignature solutions as well. The main ones are Telenor ("Telenor Mobile Smartpay", using mobile phone technology) and the banks, through bank cards and a transactional model on a pay-per-service basis.

eProcurement infrastructure.....

The government has developed a solid eProcurement solution, the National eProcurement System. The eProcurement portal and marketplace for government eCommerce is [eHandel.no](#) and was established in 2002. Its purpose is to give public sector entities and their suppliers' easy access to a user-friendly and

affordable tool for operational eProcurement with each other. The current throughput on eHandel.no exceeds 586 million NOK during the last twelve months. The comparative period for the previous the year showed a corresponding throughput of 350 million NOK. The actual service delivery and access to the operational eProcurement tools are provided by a private operator selected through an international competition.

It must be noted that despite the development effort made by the government, take-up of eProcurement at ministry and central agency level has been slower than expected (ref: "*OECD eGovernment Studies, Norway*", OECD Publishing, 31 August 2005). Instead, progress has been faster at local and regional authority level.

Following the adoption of the new law which establishes eProcurement (refer to the History section), the government expects that by 2009, 25 percent of the volume of public sector operational procurement will be wholly or partly achieved through competition based on electronic processes for coordination with businesses.

Knowledge Management infrastructure

Information about everyone living in Norway is gathered for tax, electoral and population analyses by local tax assessment offices. This information is registered in the [National Register](#) (Folkeregisteret), and is overseen by the Directorate of Taxes (Skattedirektoratet). Information from the [National Register](#) (e.g. names, addresses, citizenship, identification numbers, employment and civil status of individuals) is only accessible by authorised public sector offices. However, members of the public may apply for access to information from the National Registry for legal purposes. Applications for information from the National Registry are processed by [local tax assessment offices](#) and the [Office of the National Registrar](#).

Also, the [KOSTRA](#) (Municipality-State-Reporting) system allowing municipalities to report to the state, which started in 1995, has become fully operational since July 2002.

The [Tax Directorate](#), the [The Brønnøysund Register Centre](#), and [Statistics Norway](#), in partnership with Accenture, developed Altinn, a new reporting channel

for businesses. Altinn offers seamless services to ease the reporting burden imposed by government agencies. It is a solution to develop and maintain forms and work processes as well as a reporting solution to facilitate information flow from business to government. Companies file their reporting information to Altinn either through an Internet portal Web site or by using their own internal information systems or software packages, such as a salary and accounting system or yearly settlement package. Individuals can also file their personal income tax electronically through Altinn.

Altinn is built on the Microsoft Windows Server System™ integrated server software, including Microsoft BizTalk® Server 2004, in order to handle communications with both the government agencies' back-end systems and businesses' third-party systems. XML-based Web services allow software vendors to produce Altinn integrated products using the XML Altinn-interface specification defined by the National Register.

Support for **learning networks and communities of practice** within the Norwegian public sector is exemplified by the Kunnskapsnettverk.no portal. It is a web-based solution focusing on building horizontal knowledge and learning networks across Norway's municipalities. Private and virtual workspaces which integrate the knowledge base with the cooperation environment are provided so as to make human

capital visible and accessible. The portal includes more than 60 knowledge networks connecting participants across municipalities, ministries and many government agencies and authorities.

Centralised public register systems are well catered for in Norway. Due to the decentralised approach which has relied on agencies and local entities as being the driving forces, certain major agencies, which are dependent on database registers, have developed complex systems the traditional way within their respective policy sector. Interaction and exchange of information between systems has been made possible by unique identity definitions for individual persons and business entities. Examples of such agencies which have developed centralised database register information in this manner are the [Tax Directorate](#), the [National Insurance Administration](#), the [Brønnøysund Register Centre](#) and the Norwegian Land Information System developed by the [Ministry of the Environment](#) and the [Ministry of Justice](#).

The [National Archives](#) of Norway have provided **common standards and specifications** for digital archiving, which are now used by most public organisations in the country. It should be noted however that compatibility between large public databases remains relatively limited.

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:	Tax Directorate , Local tax assessment offices
Website:	http://www.skatteetaten.no/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	The Norwegian Tax Administration or Tax Directorate has online brochures outlining tax payment and tax return procedures in Norway. Citizens' transactions are carried out through the local tax assessment office (likningskontor) in Norway. Online services are fully interactive and can also be accessed through the Altinn portal.

2. Job search services by labour offices

Responsibility:	Central Government, Department of Labour, "Aetat Servicesenter" (ASS)
Website:	http://www.arbeidsdirektoratet.no/cgi-bin/aetat/imaker?id=106 , http://www.aetat.no
Sophistication stage:	3/3
Description:	Fully functional job search online service. Vacancies are automatically published in the European Employment Services (EURES) Job Mobility Portal.

3. Social security benefits

a. Unemployment benefits

Responsibility:	Central Government, National Insurance Administration, Local social security offices, "Aetat Servicesenter" (ASS, Employment Offices)
Website:	http://www.trygdeetaten.no , http://app.norway.no/styresmakter/kvaliste.asp?id=45596 , http://www.aetat.no
Sophistication stage:	4 /4
Description:	Specific information about unemployment benefits and entitlements can be found at the description of the National Insurance Scheme . Full online registration and interaction.

b. Family allowances

Responsibility:	Central Government, National Insurance Administration, Local social security offices
Website:	http://www.trygdeetaten.no , http://app.norway.no/styresmakter/kvaliste.asp?id=45596
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	Specific information about child support and alimony payments, on the National Insurance Administration's web site (Trygdeetaten), or by contacting the local social security office . The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) is responsible for providing services for children, young people and families in need of assistance and support, for example: family counselling, foster home services, child welfare and adoption. For employment guidelines about maternity and paternity leave, the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority can supply information. Online sophistication is limited to information and downloadable forms for manual submission.

c. Medical costs (reimbursement or direct settlement)

Responsibility:	Central Government, National Insurance Administration, Local social security offices
Website:	http://www.trygdeetaten.no , http://app.norway.no/styresmakter/kvaliste.asp?id=45596
Sophistication stage:	N/A
Description:	The service rating is not applicable. Patients' treatment is free of charge and hospitals are directly reimbursed by the National Insurance Administration . The local social security office can supply information on national insurance matters.

d. Student grants

Responsibility:	Central Government, Ministry of Education, State Educational Loans Fund
Website:	http://www.lanekassen.no
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	There entire process from the initial application to the payment of student loans and grants is supported electronically and is based on an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform. Application, data control and payment are handled electronically. Electronic signatures through PKI using the Altinn system enable students to sign electronically.

4. Personal documents (passport and driving licence)

a. Passport

Responsibility:	National Police Directorate, Police Districts and Stations
Website:	http://www.politi.no
Sophistication stage:	2/3
Description:	Information and printable paper forms to be submitted enabling citizens to start the procedure to obtain a passport.

b. Driving license

Responsibility:	Central Government, Norwegian Public Roads Directorate
Website:	http://www.vegvesen.no
Sophistication stage:	2/3
Description:	Different rules apply to persons with a driving licence issued in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to those with a driving licence issued outside this area. The Norwegian Public Roads Administration (Statens Vegvesen) has published a document entitled Permission to drive in Norway - how? which outlines the new regulations concerning driving licences. Online information and forms to download are available, but no online submissions.

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

Responsibility:	Central Government, Norwegian Public Roads Directorate
Website:	http://www.vegvesen.no
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	The Norwegian Public Roads Directorate has published road safety guidelines: Donna Diesel - safe driving on their web site. For more information about driving in Norway, the nearest Road and Traffic Services office can be contacted. Norwegian Customs and Excise provides information concerning import and registration of motor vehicles .

6. Application for building/planning permission

Responsibility:	Municipalities
Website:	http://app.norway.no/styresmakter/kvaliste.asp?id=45691 , http://byggsok.no/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	e-application of building permissions has been implemented in Norway. ByggSøk Information (http://byggsok.no/) is a system for information required when preparing a plan or application. All 431 municipalities in Norway are offered the opportunity to publish information on a joint website related to zoning and building. ByggSøk Information provides general and municipality-specific information related to zoning plans and building applications. Building applications are registered via Internet. ByggSøk offers integration with map systems, and may also be used for automated checking against zoning rules and regulations through an integrated EDMmodelServer™. The applicant is guided through an application process customized to the matter concerned and receives assistance during the process. Once all information has been entered, content is checked. If the application is complete it can be printed or submitted electronically to the local authority. Applications will be more correct, saving local authorities and the applicant time and money.

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

Responsibility:	National Police Directorate, Police Districts and Stations
Website:	http://www.politi.no/
Sophistication stage:	2/3
Description:	Online information and forms to download for manual submission.

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

Responsibility:	Participating libraries (39)
Website:	http://biblioteksvar.no
Sophistication stage:	3/3
Description:	A local public library can be contacted by e-chat, e-mail or SMS through Biblioteksvar, the digital reference service, regarding availability of books on the shelf, reservations, or general questions about hours of business. Personnel from thirty-nine libraries throughout Norway will provide help in finding information.

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

Responsibility: Central Government, [National Register](#)

Website: <http://www.noreg.no/>

Sophistication stage: N/A

Description: Intention to get married in Norway, requires verification of entitlement in accordance with the Marriage Act. This verification is carried out by the [National Register](#) for population (Folkeregisteret), located in the [local tax assessment office](#) in the municipality of residence of either the bride-to-be or bridegroom-to-be. For non residents applications for verification are carried out by the [Office of the National Registrar \(Sentralkontor for folkeregistrering\)](#) in Oslo. Both the bride-to-be and bridegroom-to-be must complete a [Q-0150 declaration](#) for verification of compliance with conditions for marriage. In addition, the witnesses (forlover) for the couple to be married must each complete a [Q-0151 statement form](#). Procedure details are found on the reverse side of the Q-0150 declaration form. These forms and all other required documentation should be submitted to the authority responsible for the National Population Registry, either locally or centrally, as stated above. In compliance with the conditions for marriage, you will be sent a certificate of no impediment, which is valid for four months. Births are registered in a similar way through the [National Register](#). The existence of these procedures makes certificates non-existent as verification is automatic through access to the Register by the appropriate authorities.

10. Enrolment in higher education/university

Responsibility: Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS - Samordna opptak)

Website: <http://www.samordnaopptak.no>

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Provides forms which can be submitted online, although the process involves manual verification of qualifications.

11. Announcement of moving (change of address)

Responsibility:	Central Government, National Register
Website:	http://www.noreg.no/
Sophistication stage:	3/3
Description:	One must register a change of address with the National Registry. This is done by completing the relevant form (" Flyttemeldingsskjema ") and sending it to the local tax assessment office (Likningskontor). One should also notify the Norwegian postal service, Norway Post . All actions can be performed online.

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

Responsibility:	Central Government, Norwegian Ministry of Health, Directorate for Health and Social Affairs
Website:	http://www.shdir.no/
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	<p>The Norwegian government intends to improve the patient's right to choose in which hospital to receive treatment. Their rights are described in The Patients' Rights Act. The law decrees that a patient has the right to choose in which hospital or district psychiatric centre he/she is to be treated. The Internet "Free Hospital Choice" service The Internet service provides the following information and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private hospitals • Comparison of waiting times for the selected hospitals on 90 different treatments • Relevant information about patient rights, laws, free choice of hospitals, relevant news, help • Quality indicators for each of the participating hospitals. <p>Administrators and patient advisors have access to online administration tools, which provide waiting times, quality indicators and other factors updated on a daily basis. Patient advisors can be contacted through the telephone as well. Eventual admission is done through patient advisors and their primary physicians.</p>

Source: The online sophistication ratings are in agreement with the report '[Online Availability of Public Services: How is Europe Progressing?](#)' carried out for the European Commission in June 2006, with the exception of service no 12.

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, National Insurance Administration, Local social security offices
Website:	http://app.norway.no/styresmakter/kvaliste.asp?id=45596
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Declaration of social contributions for employees can be processed fully online.

2. Corporation tax: declaration, notification

Responsibility:	Tax Directorate , Local tax assessment offices
Website:	http://www.skatteetaten.no/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	The Norwegian Tax Directorate has online brochures outlining tax payment and tax return procedures. Bedin , which represents the Ministry of Trade and Industry, also provides business information on taxation. Online services are fully interactive. Online services are fully interactive and can also be accessed through the Altinn portal.

3. VAT: declaration, notification

Responsibility:	Tax Directorate , Local tax assessment offices
Website:	http://www.skatteetaten.no/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	The Norwegian Tax Directorate has online brochures outlining VAT payment and return claims. Bedin , which represents the Ministry of Trade and Industry, also provides business information on taxation. Online services are fully interactive and can also be accessed through the Altinn portal.

4. Registration of a new company

Responsibility:	Central Government, Ministry of Trade and Industry
Website:	http://odin.dep.no/nhd/norsk/bn.html
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	The Brønnøysund Register is the public administrative agency responsible for a number of national control, information and registration schemes in Norway and consists of national computerised registers . They provide online forms to register business enterprises.

5. Submission of data to statistical offices

Responsibility:	Statistics Norway Directorate
Website:	http://www.ssb.no/
Sophistication stage:	3/3
Description:	Altinn , the new reporting channel for businesses offers seamless services to ease the reporting burden imposed by government agencies. Companies file their reporting information to Altinn either through an Internet portal or by using their own internal information systems or software packages, such as a salary and accounting system or yearly settlement package.

6. Customs declarations

Responsibility:	Central Government, Directorate of Customs and Excise
Website:	http://www.toll.no
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	An interactive online service.

7. Environment-related permits (incl. reporting)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Ministry of the Environment
Websites:	http://odin.dep.no/md/norsk/bn.html
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	Information and forms to download.

8. Public procurement

Responsibility:	Central Government, Ministry of Government Administration and Reform, eProcurement Secretariat
Website:	http://www.ehandel.no/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	The eProcurement portal and marketplace for government eCommerce is eHandel.no and was established in 2002. Its purpose is to give public sector entities and their suppliers fully online easy access to a user-friendly and affordable tool for operational eProcurement with each other.

Sources used.

Source 1: The online sophistication ratings are in agreement with the report *['Online Availability of Public Services: How is Europe Progressing?'](#)* carried out for the European Commission in June 2006.

Source 2: OECD eGovernment Studies, Norway, OECD Publishing, 31 August 2005

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