



European
Commission

eGovernment Benchmark Method

An update for a new cycle 2016-2019



Update method paper

A note prepared for the European Commission DG
Communications Networks, Content and Technology

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1 Introduction

1.1 Objective of updating the eGovernment Benchmark and preconditions

The key for any quantitative measurement is to provide insights that help make better decisions. In the case of the eGovernment Benchmark this implies supporting policy makers in their work to contribute to public value.

For the eGovernment Benchmark to remain relevant, it is necessary to consider new elements on regular basis. Having concluded a full cycle in the period 2012-2015, now is the appropriate timing to consider innovations in the method.

The European Commission, Member States and stakeholders have been working on a new eGovernment Action Plan. The underlying principles of this plan comprehend the main trends in public service delivery, and are therefore an appropriate starting point for updating the eGovernment Benchmark method.

Besides updating the method in conjunction with the new eGovernment Action plan, there are a few more preconditions taken into account:

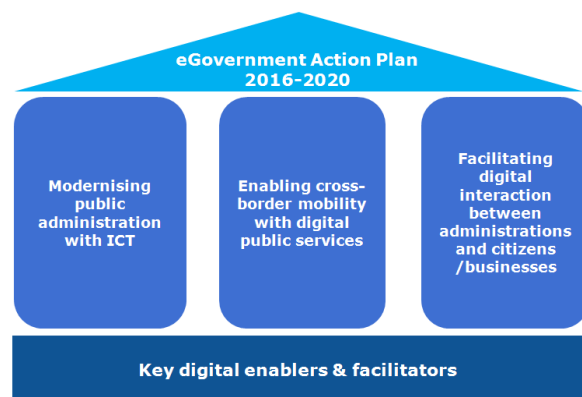
- Countries should be consulted about the changes in the method;
- Updates should be relatively easy to implement (no complications in implementation should be expected). Experimental updates should be positioned as such (eg Proof of Concept) and piloted first;
- Update should be balanced in terms of workload for countries (no unnecessary extra burden) and consortium (controlling costs of the exercise);

1.2 Towards the launch of the eGovernment Action plan 2016-2020

The Action plan is **evolving, dynamic action plan**. It will take input from stakeholders into account on a yearly basis. Through an online platform stakeholders are encouraged to propose new ideas for the future action plan.

The Action plan envisions digital, border-less and open public administrations:

- **User-friendly, digital service delivery** to reduce administrative burden;
- **Connecting public administrations across Europe** to facilitate seamless cross-border service delivery and re-use of successful technologies;
- **Opening government data, services and processes** to engage third-parties to create better or new services and help improve policies.



The following set of principles is supportive in determining the actions:

- **Digital-by-default:** actions should privilege online delivery of services while still enabling other channels for those who are disconnected by choice or necessity, to ensure inclusiveness
- **Cross-border by default:** actions should not create new barriers to the internal market
- **Once-only principle:** actions should require citizen / business data/information only if not yet in possession of an administration
- **Inclusive by default:** actions should enable all citizens and businesses to interact with the administration
- **Privacy & data protection:** all digital public services must be designed with full respect for the protection of personal data as a fundamental right
- **Open & transparency by default:** actions should be open for reuse or transparency

1.3 The relevancy of the devised changes in this note

Several updates in the method are illustrated in the following section, each one related to one or more of the aforementioned principles.

Table 1: Overview of updates in eGovernment Benchmark for 2016 - 2019

Action plan principle	Method update	Paragr.
Facilitating digital interaction with citizens – digital by default, once-only, transparency by default, and cross-border by default.	New life event on ‘Family life’ that will be assessed for the top-level benchmarks on user centricity, transparency, cross-border mobility and key enablers.	Par. 2.1
Facilitating digital interaction with citizens – user centricity	Include indicator ‘Mobile friendliness’ in user centricity benchmark	Par. 2.2
Facilitating digital interaction with citizens - Inclusive by default	Landscape development around Citizen Access Points	Par. 2.2
Modernising public administrations - Privacy & data protection	Include question that assesses whether citizens can monitor who consulted their personal data and for what purpose	Par. 2.3
Enabling cross-border mobility - key digital enablers, Cross-border by default	Expand assessment of availability of eID and eDocuments in cross-border services	Par. 2.4
Key digital enablers	Expand eID assessment and include a new enabler ‘Digital Post’	Par 2.5
Key digital enablers, once-only, cross-border	Expand qualitative landscaping on (use of) the key enabler Authentic sources	Par 2.5

Besides these method updates, there will also be one small pilot that concerns Authentic Sources.

Key digital enablers, once-only	Pilot a Proof-of-Concept indicator on quantitative benefits of Authentic sources	Par 2.6
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2 Description of 2016 method updates

This section lists the methodology's improvements in the mystery shopping exercise and preceding landscaping phase which are going to be applied from the 2016 data collection.

2.1 Life event selection

In the previous cycle of eGovernment benchmarking, seven life events were evaluated on a biennial basis. With aim to increase the number of local services, and to include an important age group interacting with administrations, the following life event will be included in the upcoming measurement:

- a. **'Family life'**: including services that are typical for young families, such as: marriage (or other partnerships), birth and related (financial) rights, renovating a house, and also looking forward to your financial situation at a later age.

The model is kept concise. Compared to the proposal discussed at the Member States workshop, the 'Moving' life event remains intact in 2017 and these services are not included in 'Family Life' as originally proposed. The few services related to retiring are included in 'Family Life' and not as a separate life event to keep the update as efficient as possible. This leads to the overview below.

Figure 2: Overview of life events under assessment in 2016 - 2019

	2016 / 2018	2017 / 2019
Business life events	Starting a business and early trading operations	Regular business operations
Citizen life events	Losing and finding a Job Studying Family life	Starting a small claims procedure Owning and driving a car Moving

The **annex A** reveal the services to be included, and their typology into basic and extended services.

2.2 User centricity

There are two updates as regards the user centricity benchmark – apart from the new life event that will be assessed also for this indicator:

- a. A **qualitative assessment of developments regarding the set-up of Public Access Points** that provide inclusive access to digital services for citizens. This refers to physical locations where citizens can access internet, usually with support from public officers or other experts (sometimes even volunteers) in order to (learn to) access public services. It is usually part of a multichannel approach to eGov delivery, where not all citizens are able to use the online channel. The objective would be to better understand:

- if this development takes place in a country (or is foreseen to start, or is being considered, or has no priority at the moment, eg multiple choice with room for countries to motivate)
- how big this development is (numbers and locations and how many citizens are served)
- in the positive case: if there is user feedback and/or other data available that reveal impact of these initiatives.

This would not be scored as an indicator, but would provide qualitative information on how European countries deal with inclusive online service delivery, and provide balance to the assessment of mandatory online services (already part of the questionnaire).

The assessment would be part of the landscaping phase, as a separate set of questions that would require input from the participating countries.

- b. An important part of user centricity of public websites relates to if people are able to easily find and access information, and also through devices of their choice. It is therefore suggested to **integrate the assessment of 'mobile friendliness'** of public websites as indicator in the computation of user centricity. Revised calculation is included in annex B.

The European Commission believes that Public Services need to connect with users where they are, now mostly in a mobile world. Mobile technology is becoming an increasing part of citizens' platforms to find government information and communicate with their government. eGovernment services should be tuned towards this demand. Citizens expect government sites to be accessible and readable on their mobile device.

Mobile friendliness is defined as the ability to provide services through a mobile-friendly interface; an interface that is 'adopted' to the mobile device. Digital services are provided through one platform that detects the users device and automatically scales to the correct information depth and graphical properties (width, high) of the mobile device regardless of the brand, platform, size or type of device. Mobile responsiveness makes the information readable on any device.

Similar to 2014 and 2015 a tool will be used that assesses each url to check if possible barriers prevent an user friendly access and use of a website on a mobile device. These five barriers are:

- Text too small to read
- Use of incompatible plugins
- Links too close together
- Mobile viewport not set
- Content wider than screen

2.3 Transparency

As a general right, and counterbalancing the fact that public administrations will increasingly re-use personal data for personalisation purposes, citizens should be allowed to view who has used their data and for what purpose.

- a. In this regard one question will be added to the **transparency of personal data** indicator (section D in the questionnaire):

D5 Can you monitor who has consulted your personal data and for what purpose? Monitoring in this case refers to the situation where the citizen himself/herself can see – online - who else has consulted personal data and for what purpose. Eg a civil servant looked up personal data for the purpose of answering a certain application.

2.4 Cross-border services / Key enablers

With the release of the Digital Single Market strategy, and cross-border service delivery being a key part of the new eGovernment Action plan, two improvements are introduced to also assess the availability of two key enablers in cross- border service delivery:

- a. **Availability of the eID key enabler in cross-border assessment** of basic services¹, concerning two questions that will be part of a new section 'I' in the questionnaire:

I1 Is any kind of (online/offline) authentication needed to access or apply for the cross-border service? (no score is attributed to this question, the question intends to landscape for how many/which process steps an eID is required)

I2 If an authentication is needed for a cross-border service, is it possible to authenticate online using your national eID?

This² would also require to assess from a cross-border perspective the existing service '1.3 Register the new address in municipality register' in the 'Moving' life event.

- b. **Availability of the eDocument key enabler also in cross-border assessment** of basic services, concerning two questions that will be part of a new section 'I' in the questionnaire:

I3 Is any kind of documentation needed to access or apply for the cross-border service? (no score is attributed to this question, the question intends to landscape for how many/which process steps an eDocument is relevant)

I4_1 Is it possible for the user to *submit* the document that is required by the foreign service provider to complete procedures and formalities necessary to establish or to carry out a process step online (certificate, diploma, proof of registration etc) in an electronic form?

OR

I4_2 Is it possible to *obtain* the document that is to be provided by the foreign service provider to the service recipient when completing procedures and formalities necessary to establish or to carry out a process step online (certificate, diploma, proof of registration etc) in an electronic form?

¹ It's true that during eIDAS-transition period there is no obligation for MSs to accept eID from other MSs' notified eID but we are aware that there are already some bilateral agreements between some MSs for mutual recognition of eIDs. We would like to capture also the baseline before the full entry into force of the regulation. We will check if this scoring constitutes an important part of the overall cross-border score and if this is the case we will consider suspending the8 score for this sub-item for the Benchmarks before 2018.

² This service was piloted under the STORK project:

https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/community/cef/og_page/catalogue-building-blocks

2.5 Key enablers

Based on the importance of the once-only principle and developments as regards the eIDAS standard, some improvements are necessary for this assessment to remain up-to-date and relevant.

- a. **Expansion of the eID key enabler**, by adding two questions:
- F4 If it is possible to authenticate online for a service, is it also possible to access another service in this life event (but provided by a different service provider) without re-authenticating?
(if there is only 1 service provider in a life event, this question is redundant)
- F5 If it is possible to authenticate online for a service, can one also decide to use a private eID (like eBanking token)?
This question would not be scored, but aims to increase insights into the use of various electronic identification tools.
- b. **A new Key Enabler on 'Digital Post'**(domain level) that assesses whether public authorities allow citizens to receive communications digitally only, and hence reducing paper mailings. Digital Post refers to the possibility that governments communicate electronically-only with citizens or entrepreneurs through eg personal mailboxes or other digital post solutions. This is often possible in cases of personal mailboxes or MyPages, perhaps other solutions are also in place.
- F10 Is it possible for citizens and businesses to receive communication from the central government digitally only (eg by personal mailbox or MyPage)?
- F11 Is it possible for citizens and businesses to receive communication from local governments digitally only (eg by personal mailbox or MyPage)?
This questions will be assessed for each life event, based on the 2-3 most dominant service providers in that life event – in a similar way as for the former eSafe and SSO enablers.
- c. **A qualitative assessment of use of authentic sources.** The third change in the key enablers section aims to gain better qualitative insights on the use of authentic sources, and to generate data that relates to modernisation of public authorities. It would be implemented by adding two questions as part of the landscaping phase, to be asked per life event:
- What authentic source(s) is/are used in this life event?
 - Can data from established national authentic sources (such as Register of Personal Data) also be re-used to pre-fill forms for foreign (EU) users?
(in other words: do governments share data of citizens across borders?)

Counterbalancing the extra work as regards the above indicators, ***the enablers SSO and eSafe will be dropped*** from the measurement.

2.6 Proof-of-Concept quantitative benefits of Authentic sources

Besides the aforementioned method updates, there will also be one small pilot that concerns Authentic Sources. We include a short description here for your convenience.

The current method already provides insight into re-use of personal data in public service delivery, by assessing whether data is pre-filled into online forms. This is a great example of how data can be re-used to make service delivery more efficient and user friendly. The current method does not determine what is exactly pre-filled nor is estimated what the actual savings for users are.

Mystery shoppers go online to evaluate this for every basic service in the life events under evaluation. They could hence also assess in more detail how much information is/could be pre-filled, and estimate the actual savings that could occur for users.

Therefore a small case study will be deployed concerning benefits of Authentic Sources that will:

- Measure the potential savings from applying the once-only principle (i.e. # of duplicated data items) and actual % of pre-filling of these duplicate items.
- Measure the number of actual information requirements for each service (i.e. # of data items, bits) and/or for the whole life event.

This proof-of-concept will not be part of the eGovernment benchmark reporting, but serves internal purposes.

3 Implementation of method update

3.1 Planning

The aforementioned changes will be implemented as follows:

Paragr.	Method update	Planning
2.1 a	New life event on 'Family Life'	2016, and repeated in 2018
2.2 a	Include indicator 'Mobile friendliness' in user centricity benchmark	From 2016, every year for the life events evaluated in that year
2.2 b	Landscape development around Citizen Access Points	In 2016 only
2.3	Include question that assesses whether citizens can monitor who consulted their personal data and for what purpose	From 2016, every year for the life events evaluated in that year
2.4	Expand assessment of availability of eID and eDocuments in cross-border services	From 2016, every year for the life events evaluated in that year
2.5 a	Expand eID assessment and include a new enabler 'Digital Post'	From 2016, every year for the life events evaluated in that year
2.5 b	Expand qualitative landscaping on (use of) the key enabler Authentic sources	From 2016, every year for the life events evaluated in that year
2.6 c	<i>Pilot a Proof-of-Concept indicator on quantitative benefits of Authentic sources</i>	<i>In 2016 only – not for eGov report</i>

Annex A. Process model 'Family Life'

Family Life				
This life event concerns services relevant for young families		Definition	Basic or Extended	National (NAT), Cross Border (CB)
Birth				
1.1	Obtain information on parental leave	General information about paid/unpaid maternity and paternity leaves available in a country and information about entitlement, eligibility and the claim procedure and requirements.	Extended	NAT
1.2	To acknowledge a natural child with public administration	Registration of birth with responsible public authority	Basic	NAT
1.3	Obtain birth certificate	The application for a (copy of the) birth certificate (other than the version obtained at moment of registration)	Basic	NAT
1.4	Obtain parental authority (e.g. with court in case not married)	The process of applying for parental responsibility for the father, eg in case mother and father are not married. In most countries one needs to apply to court to get parental responsibility.	Basic	NAT
1.5	Obtain child allowance	Child benefit is money from the government towards the expenses of raising a child.	Basic	NAT
1.6	Obtain passport	Passport to identify ones nationality.	Basic	NAT
Marriage				
1.7	(pre-)Register with civil/local registry in order to get married or to close a civil partnership	Giving notice at a local register office about the intended marriage or partnership (including information about the procedure, eg requirements)	Basic	NAT + CB
Retiring				
1.8	Obtain information about future pensions through simulation / self-assessment tools	Besides general information about pensions, it is particularly relevant for any citizen to make an estimation of the State pension he is entitled to – at any age. The service is hence about simulation or self-assessment tools that allow one to calculate the estimated pension allowance.	Extended	NAT
1.9	Apply for one's pension	The actual step to claim one's state pension	Basic	NAT
1.10	Obtain information about entitlement to a state when moving abroad	Information about the situation of claiming a state pension when living abroad, eg entitlement, process requirements.	Extended	NAT

1.11	Apply for disabled facilities grant or similar benefit to cover for costs for making changes to a house in order to allow to continue living at one's property independently	Application for a grant in case one needs to make changes to ones home due to a disability (widening doors, access improvements such as lifts and such)	Basic	NAT

Annex B. Updated calculation User Centricity benchmark

USER CENTRICITY INDICATORS						
Compound indicator	Online availability of basic services	Online availability of extended services	Usability of services-support & feedback	Ease of use of Life Event	Speed of use of Life Event	Mobile friendliness of basic and extended services
Calculation service	Sum of 'process step scores' per subphase; Divided by number of relevant steps. 'Process step scores' are calculated on a semantic scale: 0 for not online; 0.25 for information online via portal; 0.50 for information online via portal; 0.75 for online 1.0 for online via portal and for automated;	Sum of 'process step scores' per subphase; Divided by number of relevant steps. 'Process step scores' are calculated on a semantic scale: 0 for not online; 0.25 for information online via portal; 0.50 for information online via portal; 0.75 for online 1.0 for online via portal and for automated;	Binary yes/no answers. Average score of all the questions, where all yes = 100% availability. Automated services reach 100% usability per definition	Score from 1 (negative rating) to 5 (neutral rating) to 10 (best possible positive rating), converted into 100% scale. Automated services reach 100% usability per definition	Score from 1 (negative rating) to 5 (neutral rating) to 10 (best possible positive rating), converted into 100% scale. Automated services reach 100% usability per definition	Binary yes/no answers, after assessment of 5 key barriers to mobile friendliness (pass all barriers = yes). Average score of all services in a life event. Automated services reach 100% usability per definition
Calculation Life event	Average score of all services in a life event.	Average score of all services in a life event.	Average score of all services in a life event.	Average score of all services in a life event.	Average score of all services in a life event.	Average score of all services in a life event.
Country Indicator	Average of Life Event scores	Average of Life Event scores	Average of Life Event scores	Average of Life Event scores	Average of Life Event scores	Average of Life Event scores
EU Indicator	Average of Country indicators	Average of Country indicators	Average of Country indicators	Average of Country indicators	Average of Country indicators	Average of Country indicators
Synthetic indicator	Online Availability of Life Event		Online Usability of Life Event			Mobile Friendliness of Life event
Calculation	Average of basic services online availability and extended services online availability indicators (weights: 80% basic, 20% extended)		Average of usability, ease of use and speed of use indicators (weights: 50% usability, 25% ease, 25% speed)			Average score of all services in a life event.
Level	EU + MS		EU + MS			EU + MS
Synthetic indicator	Online Availability of all Life Events		Online Usability of all Life events			Mobile Friendliness of all Life events
Calculation	Average of Online Availability of Life Event indicators		Average of Online Usability of Life Event indicators			Average of M.F of all LEs
Level	EU + MS		EU + MS			EU + MS
Top level benchmark / User empowerment	User-centric government					

