An OECD Expert Group Meeting on “The Business Case for E-Government” took place on 17 September, in London at the invitation of the UK Cabinet Office and the Department of Trade and Industry. The objective of this expert group meeting was to provide countries with a forum for open discussion so as to share concrete experiences methodologies with regard to the business case for e-government, and to collect information and feedback from countries for Chapter 5 of the report “E-Government for Better Government”. The meeting brought together 34 participants representing 16 countries and the European Commission.

For further information, please contact Edwin Lau, Tel: +33 1 45 24 80 36, e-mail: edwin.lau@oecd.org
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The draft chapter was written for the OECD by Professor Paul Foley and Shazad Ghani (United-Kingdom). It examines the costs and benefits of e-government initiatives, and considers the development of a business case to justify e-government expenditure. This work focuses primarily on 5-6 countries with well developed business cases for e-government, but it also considers the experiences of other OECD countries.

The meeting, “The Business Case for E-Government”, looked at how governments can better analyse the quality of and return on their e-government investments, and included sessions on:

- Government analysis of the business case for e-government (e.g. the methods that countries are currently using for the justification of their e-government investments).
- Case studies on the benefits and return on investment for e-government projects (e.g. the main findings of studies that have been carried out to date).
- A cost/benefit checklist (e.g. the costs and benefits that need to be considered in such analysis).
- Cross country comparisons (e.g. how a methodology might be developed that could allow for business case comparisons from one country to the next).
- Refining the draft chapter on the business case for e-government for the report “E-Government for Better Government”.
- Conclusions and next steps for the OECD

Some key conclusions of the meeting:

- The development of an analytical methodology for evaluating the costs and benefits of e-government investments is one of the factors that separate high performers from low performers. While countries have significantly different approaches to cost/benefit analysis,
much of the methodological tools can be usefully shared from one country to the next. Because this work is relatively new, the OECD plays a key role in bringing together different ideas, and synthesising them into a coherent framework.

- **While there is yet little concrete data to support the theory that e-government transformation leads to the greatest benefits to governments and users (e.g. citizens and businesses), the data that does exist supports this idea and many e-government leaders feel that it matches with their own experiences.** However there are many other factors beyond the e-government maturity model that are essential to success (e.g. the political environment, understanding of the evaluation method across government, project management, business and technology alignment, framework for cost sharing across joint projects, etc.) and the maturity model only serves as a guide – not an instruction manual or a deterministic path. More data is needed to better demonstrate the link between transformation and benefits, and the OECD could usefully continue to analyse this data as it becomes available.

- **An OECD endorsed checklist for cost/benefit analysis (as refined in the expert meeting) could provide a useful tool for some governments, however the list is a lowest common denominator that is insufficient for broader externalities and does not take into account political factors.** The refined checklist is included as an annex to this summary. The checklist, as is, is a useful starting point for countries to develop their own list if they have not already done so, focusing on the elements most relevant to their situation and providing more detail, tailored to their needs. The participants felt that the checklist could usefully provide additional examples to illustrate how some countries have put the concepts into practice. They also felt that, in addition to looking at benefits to users and to governments, further work on the checklist should look at ‘public benefits’ that accrue to everyone, for example cross-cutting services that enable the delivery of other on-line services.

- **International comparisons of business cases for e-government present numerous challenges, but the benefits are such that it would be useful to begin this work on a small scale.** It would be useful for the OECD to begin work through two types of case studies: 1) comparison of a relatively common service or procedure (e.g. job searches), which would allow a basic comparison of countries’ business case methodologies and/or 2) comparison of a cross-cutting service shared by multiple government agencies (e.g. identity management), which are more difficult to analyse, but which would allow countries to improve their understanding of the benefits of services with many stakeholders, but diffuse benefits, as well as how to allocate costs among participating agencies.

- **It would be useful to countries for the OECD to continue work on the business case for e-government in 2005-2006.** In particular, countries agreed that work could be organised around 3 potential sets of activities: 1) The OECD could usefully extend the work that has been done so far on the development of methods so as to make it more usable for a broader practitioner audience (e.g. diffusion of examples of good practice and methodologies); 2) The OECD could develop work on international comparisons of a common, generic service or procedure and/or a more cross-cutting service or procedure (as outlined above); 3) OECD could provide analysis on the impact of e-government on the broader economy. As this work would be very resource intensive, any work that is done on this option should be done in collaboration with the European Commission, which is also launching work on this topic. The OECD will provide countries with a concrete proposal on these 3 options, and countries were supportive to the idea of providing voluntary contributions to support further work in this area.
ANNEX A: REFINED COST/BENEFIT CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST OF COSTS TO GOVERNMENT

1. Market Planning and Development
   Business Planning and Options Analysis
   Market Research
   Due Diligence / Plan Audit
   Tendering

2. System Planning and Development
   Hardware
   Software Licence Fees
   Development Support
   • Programme Management
   • System Engineering Architecture Design
   • Change Management and Risk Assessment
   • Requirement Definition and Data Architecture
   • Test and Evaluation
   Design Studies
   • Customer Interface / Usability
   • Transformation / Business Process Redesign
   • System Security
   • User Accessibility
   • Data Architecture
   • Network Architecture

   Other development phase costs
   • Facilities – offices, office equipment, etc
   • Travel

3. System Acquisition and Implementation
   Procurement
   • Hardware
   • Software
   • Customised Software
   • Web hosting
   Personnel
   • Additional Programme Management
   • Internal Communications
   • Process Redesign
   • System Integration
   • System Engineering
   • Test and Evaluation
   • Data Cleaning and Conversion

   IT Training
4. System Operations and Maintenance

**Hardware**
- Maintenance
- Upgrades and Replacement

**Software**
- Maintenance
- Upgrades
- Licence Fees

**Telecoms Network Charges**

**Operations and Management Support**
- Programme Management
- Operations
- Back-up and Security
- IT Helpdesk

**On-going Training**

**On-going Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Other Operations and Maintenance**

5. Financing Costs

6. Market and Process Implementation

**Personnel**
- Internal Communications
- Training
- Redeployment
- Customer Helpdesk
- Call Centres

**Marketing and Communications**

**Customer Inducements / Rebates**

**Legal advice**
CHECKLIST OF COSTS TO USERS

Direct costs

- Computer hardware and software
- Computer operations and maintenance
- Telecoms and web access charges
- IT training and support
- Digital signature setup
- Printing forms and information

Time Factors

- Web search
- Reading time
- Email / form completion
- Phone time

CHECKLIST OF BENEFITS TO GOVERNMENT

Direct cash benefits

Greater tax collection / revenue
Reduced fraud
Reduced travel costs / field force expenditure
Reduced publication & distribution costs
Lower fines to government from international bodies
Additional revenue from greater use of commercial services / data (e.g. use of electoral roll data)
Additional revenue from newly available services / newly charged for services
Reduced need for benefits – e.g. through faster job searches
Reduced costs through the need for reduced physical presence
Efficiency savings (monetisable benefits)

Time savings:
- Reduced processing through common standards for data and processes
- Time saving of public servants
- Reduced error rates / re-work / complaint numbers
- Reduced need for multiple collections of data from single customers
- Enable more flexible working hours

Information benefits
- More accurate / up to date / cleaner data / reliable information
- Capacity for greater information sharing across government

Risk benefits
- Improved risk management
- Improved security / fewer security breaches

Future cost avoidance
- Lower costs for future projects through shared infrastructure / valuable knowledge
- Reduced demand for service (through better information provision) – e.g. Health
- Reduced need for future government capacity expansion
- Encourage increased take-up of other e-services

Resource efficiency
- Reduced redundancy through integrated systems
- More effective use of existing (e and non-e) infrastructure / reduced capacity wastage

Other benefits non-monetisable

Improved Service Delivery
- Enhanced customer service
- Improved service consistency and equality
- Improved user satisfaction
- Improved communication
- Greater take-up of entitlements
- Improved reputation / increase user trust and confidence
- Integrated view of customer

**Enhancements to policy process**
- Enhanced policy alignment and outcomes
- Better information to facilitate policy making

**Enhancements to democracy**
- Increased user involvement / participation / contribution and transparency

**Allows more / greater / new data to be collected**

**Improved security**

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**CHECKLIST OF BENEFITS TO USERS**

**Monetary Benefits**
- Price reduction of charged-for service / avoidance of future price increases
- Reduced cost of transmitting information – phone, post, paperless interactions etc.
- Reduced travel costs
- Reduced associated costs (e.g. professional advice, software tools, equipment etc., predominantly for businesses)
- Revenue generating opportunities for citizens, businesses and intermediaries

**Time based non-monetary Benefits**
- Reduced user time (hours saving)
- Reduced need for multiple submission of data for different services / events
- Reduced travel time
- Reduced user time (hours savings)

**Value based non-monetary Benefits**
- Quicker response
  - Reduced application processing time (elapsed time saving)
  - Improved response time to events
  - Improved interactive communication, particularly between government and remote communities
- Improved information
  - More reliable / up-to-date
- Faster / easier access
- Transparency (e.g. status of ‘live’ applications)
- Can be live / real time
- Enhanced democracy and empowerment

- Improved reliability
  - Reduced error rates
  - Greater confidence / certainty of transaction
  - Service consistency
  - Overall reliability

- Choice and convenience
  - Range of access channels – increased choice & ease of access
  - Greater user convenience (24/7 service delivery)
  - Decrease in abandoned transactions and complaints

- Premium service
  - Extra tools / functionality for users
  - Improved customer service
  - Personalised service
  - Service integration
## Checklist of Business Impact Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on business processes (includes changed processes)</th>
<th>The impact that the project will have on the organisation (during development and after implementation).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Government services at implementation.</td>
<td>The impact that the project will have outside the organisation, for example on other agencies, the public and businesses during development and after implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on other projects and changes.</td>
<td>The degree to which the project is dependent on and connected to other projects and changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Checklist of Technological Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technological dependence.</th>
<th>Dependence on new technology or new methods.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of innovation.</td>
<td>The extent to which the project involves innovative solutions and staff experience to deal with innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact and integrity with legacy systems.</td>
<td>The degree to which the project will need to develop interfaces to existing systems and data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>The robustness of physical and technological security controls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of IT supply.</td>
<td>The extent of IT consultant and supplier activity, support and maintenance; now and in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Checklist of Change and Uncertainty Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change management</th>
<th>Uncertainty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture change required (e.g. working practices)</td>
<td>Inexperience in dealing with third party suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership direction</td>
<td>Dependence on third party suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management resistance</td>
<td>Use of untried methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of staff experience and inadequate training to accommodate change.</td>
<td>Time constraints and critical deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation</td>
<td>Economic or market changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor communication with appropriate staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of responsiveness to change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX B. AGENDA

Background

The Public Governance Committee’s Programme of Work for 2003-2004 includes the preparation of a synthesis report on e-government, “Solutions for Seamless Services” (provisional title) for completion by the end of 2004. The report will provide member countries with practical advice and examples of good practice on how to achieve the vision laid out in the previous OECD publication, “The e-government Imperative”. It will provide a comprehensive view of the steps needed to transform public administrations with the help of ICT into more efficient and service-oriented organisations that are focused on meeting the needs of businesses and citizens.

The synthesis report will begin by looking at how governments have internally structured their e-government initiatives (chapters 1 and 2) in order to achieve their policy objectives; how they have measured the costs and benefits of specific e-government projects (chapter 3); how they deliver services electronically to citizens and businesses (chapter 4 and 5) and how they ensure that the overall vision is properly implemented (chapter 6). A final annex will look at some of the current quantitative e-government indicators available.

Objective of the meeting

The objective of this expert group meeting is to provide countries with a forum for open discussion so as to share success and challenges with regard to the business case for e-government, and to collect information and feedback from countries for Chapter 3 of the report “The Business Case for E-Government: Justifying and holding accountable ICT investments”, so as to finalise it for the synthesis report.

This chapter has been drafted for the OECD by Professor Paul Foley and Shazad Ghani (United Kingdom), and is attached as the report “Evaluating e-government: Developing Methods and Identifying Benefits”. It examines the costs and benefits of e-government initiatives, and considers the development of a business case to justify e-government expenditure. This work focuses primarily on 5-6 countries with well developed business cases for e-government, but it also considers the experiences of other OECD countries.

The primary focus of this work is:

- Sharing frameworks and processes for business case development and approval.
- Case studies of actual benefits realisation
- A cost/benefit checklist, which can provide a framework for analysis of business cases in OECD countries
An exploratory discussion of potential services and/or processes for potential international comparison.

The chapter provides a review of the processes used by member countries to develop and approve business cases balanced against government structure in each country, and the key elements of an effective approval process. This may provide the basis for further work on the development of an aggregate (whole-of-government) business case for e-government.

Agenda

Welcome cocktail – Thursday 16 September

20h00 Welcome cocktail at the kind invitation of the United Kingdom Authorities, Thistle Hotel Victoria, Buckingham Palace Road.

Morning - Friday 17 September

09:00-09:10 Introduction

Opening remarks by Mr. Chris Parker, United Kingdom

Opening remarks by the OECD

09:10-09:45 Presentation of the business case draft report “Evaluating e-government: Developing Methods and Identifying Benefits” by Paul Foley and Shazad Ghani.

09:45-10:30 Session 1: Governments' Analysis of the Business Case for e-government

Opening remarks: Mr. Carsten Loesch, Ministry of Finance, Denmark

Follow up: Mr. Christian Rupp, Federal Chancellery, Austria

Questions for discussion:

- What are the drivers for the business case for e-government?
- What are the various country approaches to business case development?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of economic assessment methods (cost/benefit analysis, ROI, etc.) and non-economic assessment methods (key performance indicators, benchmarking, etc.)?

10:30-11:00 Coffee break and group photo

11:00-12:00 Session 2: Case studies on the Benefits/Return on Investment of e-government Projects

Opening remarks: Mr. Hugh McPhail, Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet, New Zealand
Follow up: Dr Louis Tinselboer, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, The Netherlands

Questions for discussion:

- What evidence exists to date supporting investment in e-government?
- Do you agree with the e-government project maturity model of user benefits and government benefits at the various stages of e-government development? Do you have any data that could be used to support the model?
- How to evaluate and weigh failed projects?

12:00-13:30 Lunch will be provided at the Conference Centre.

Afternoon

13:30-15:00 Session 3: Break-out discussion sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A: Cost/benefit checklist</th>
<th>Group B: Cross-country comparisons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any costs and benefits to government that should be added to the checklist?</td>
<td>• Do you think it would be useful to compare business cases for a few key services and/or processes across countries in a subsequent step?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any costs and benefits to users that should be added to the checklist?</td>
<td>• Which services and/or processes are best suited for potential international comparisons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any additional elements that should be modified?</td>
<td>• How can the OECD take into account country specific elements when making cross-country comparisons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How can this type of checklist be made more useful to governments?</td>
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</table>

15:00-15:30 Coffee break

15:30-16:00 Rapporteurs from the break-out sessions report back to the plenary session

16:00-17:30 Session 4: Discussion on refining the draft report “Evaluating e-government: Development Methods and Identifying Benefits”

Opening remarks: Mr. Seppo Kurkinen, Ministry of Finance, Finland

Follow up: Mr. Jean-Séverin Lair, Premier Ministre Agence pour le Développement de l’administration électronique, France

Questions for discussion:

- Do you have any specific examples from your country which could be usefully incorporated into the report?
- Do you have any suggestions/comments on specific sections of the report?
• Are there any additional elements that you think could be usefully added to the report – taking into account the time restraints on the OECD? (The chapter needs to be finalised by end September.)

17:30-18:00  
**Session 5: Conclusions and next steps (if any) for the OECD**

Opening remarks: United Kingdom

Follow up: Andreas Reisen, Federal Ministry of the Interior (IT Directorate), Germany

Follow up: European Commission

Questions for discussion:

• Do you think it would be useful for the OECD to continue work on the economic impact of e-government in 2005-2006?

• Are you prepared to support and participate in this work?

18:00  
**Close of the meeting**
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</tbody>
</table>
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