IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT

Moving to new enabling foundations will involve government continuing to make the shift from ‘provider’ to ‘commissioner’. Government will continue to set outcomes; frame and set policy. It will focus on commissioning effective public services and will need to create the legal and regulatory framework in which other parties can start to provide services which government provides today. Enabling third parties to provide Government services electronically offers the prospect of substantially reducing costs and allowing other parties to provide services which traditionally would be only acquirable from a Government building or site. The seamless enabling of agents will deliver the value of e-Government in the core of our villages, and other hubs of community activity in our country. This will contribute towards the sustainability of distributed over-the-counter facilities, ensuring an inclusive Government where citizens with no access to ICT will be in a position to have their service requirements fulfilled.

This shift will require:

- Changes to the policy and regulatory framework to allow the private sector to provide what are currently government run functions, increasing competition, reducing costs and offering the possibility of smaller government, which in turn will boost National competitiveness.
- Clear governance and central programme management to identify the services and orchestrate the transformation and coherent delivery of this change.
- Convergence of government functions to achieve a critical mass, enabled through unifying technology so that costs can be substantially reduced.
- A unifying, enterprise wide, technology architecture to support the deployment of rich, secure, and user centric eGovernment services.

Our vision is built on a strong overarching principle: to make public services efficient and effective; to realise a real step-change in Malta’s public services and to contribute to the achievement of the EU Digital Agenda.

Personalisation

Through the evolution of a secure identity management framework we shall be in a position to tailor the services to each individual citizen’s needs and service delivery profile around life events. The Government to Business context will similarly be enabled to enable the clustering of services relevant to key interactions with Government. With the growth in diversity of services and online experience, the context of each citizen experience needs to be enabled to provide a personalized user experience over multiple service delivery channels, both in terms of technology, including mobile and TV as well as location. As the Public Sector shifts from ‘provider’ to ‘commissioner’, opportunities increase for the delivery of public services to be modelled and packaged around their consumer.

Agent Enabling

Trusted public and private sector organizations and/or individuals will be in a position to offer a number of services which traditionally would be only acquirable from a Government building or site. The seamless enabling of agents will deliver the value of e-Government in the core of our villages, and other hubs of community activity in our country. This will contribute towards the sustainability of distributed over-the-counter facilities, ensuring an inclusive Government where citizens with no access to ICT will be in a position to have their service requirements fulfilled.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

Malta’s first steps in electronic Government were made back in 2000. Our initial steps were successful and matured rapidly. We have measured up very well against the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2010. Our progress has also been recognized internationally. Different eGovernment Services have been included amongst the finalists in EU eGovernment Awards at every event since 2003. Successes include mGOV - a mobile phone interface to eGovernment notifications, eVERA - that enables on line interaction around the life events related to vehicle ownership, MEPA eApplications - which provides an online presence for interaction and participation in the regulation of development, and e-ID4MT - which allows for electronic submission of income tax declarations and payment, and which is now used for filing by over 95% of businesses in Malta.

Our vision for a sustainable, borderless, interoperable eGovernment is reflected in Malta’s programme for ICT in the public sector, one which provides a shift in the way public administrative services are delivered to business and citizen. Our aspiration is to contribute towards the enhancement and quality improvement of a broad spectrum of these services – adding value and empowering eCitizens across Europe.

The 2009 benchmark saw Malta scoring 100% in both sophistication and availability of public services, and the report recognises that “Malta confirms the steep upward trend in its performance... and now leads the benchmark, jointly with Portugal.”

We are not stopping at basic public services. Neither are we stopping at availability and sophistication. We are intent on assisting the transformation of the way Government Administrative Services are delivered. This transformation will facilitate the development of a society with the best quality of life that can be offered to the public in general together with an administration that is lean and flexible. The next generation of our e-Government has to stand out as a beacon of transformation wherein the application of ICTs in public administration is used intelligently to deliver added value to citizens, businesses and the administration itself.

A unifying, enterprise wide, technology architecture to support the deployment of rich, secure, and user centric eGovernment services.

A Citizen Centric eGovernment

The general approach to providing Government services today is largely based on vertically structured departmental services which still require the public and businesses to sequentially approach largely independent service providers, whether through existing eGovernment services or through actual physical visits to Government departments. The opportunity to take a different look at providing services in a manner which brings Government to the citizen has become a compelling choice enabled by a mature ICT infrastructure that has already given valued eGovernment services.

Information and communications technology have provided the opportunity for developing sophisticated social and business networks which are now driving the change in our everyday lives. We increasingly consume services, interact socially, and work in any location that offers internet connectivity. This offers the opportunity for Government to evolve the way it interacts with citizens and businesses, adapting and transforming the way it works to realise the value of this enabling societal shift.

The customer now expects to be able to access multiple services online with sophisticated information and secure transactional services. To meet these expectations, Government needs to transform its services to change the way it uses technology to enable a radical shift in the interactions and in how we will design and operate Public Administrative services. To meet these expectations, Government needs to transform its services to change the way it uses technology to enable a radical shift in the way it interacts with citizens and businesses, adapting and transforming the way it works to realise the value of this enabling societal shift.

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One Face to Government

The citizen centric pillar will need to be underpinned by evolving the current diversity of eGovernment websites towards a coherent user interface to simplify use and avoid citizen disengagement as the quality and diversity of the experience increases. As we apply this concept to multiple services we see the benefit to Govt. of moving over the tipping point, and the aggregate value that emerges from our vision enabling us to meet the challenges of a competitive future.

Citizen Participation

The value of broad public consultation is now widely accepted as an integral part of the democratic process. The increasing participation in policy development and service delivery is now a valued component in the wider government and societal context. The take up of Web 2.0 technologies, and the propensity of the public to participate widely in the social networking opportunities this offers, is a clear indicator of the possibility of taking citizen participation to a higher level of interaction with Government. The citizen-centric “me” model will benefit from greater public participation in government policy and operations in order to set the priorities that the public value and to ensure that public services meet the needs of the citizen. This involves a fundamental change in culture, open upfront consultation and co-production of public services. Open participation will enable interaction around policy-shaping and service delivery enhancement.

The evolution of eGovernment has always considered technology as an enabler of efficiency and effectiveness, continuously seeking opportunities to provide faster, better and cheaper services that are more convenient for citizens and businesses.

Both pillars of the vision deliver a fundamentally transformed customer experience. An experience that is based on greater transparency; a slimmer government, and service design based on customer life-events.