

# Draft guidance document to support EU funds managers and public administrations/implementers

*- Helping to ensure that the envisaged eGovernment investment is in line with the principles and priorities set out in the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 -*

## Financing the implementation of the Action Plan

The Action Plan does not have a dedicated budget or funding instrument; it aims however to serve as a catalyst to coordinate public sector modernisation efforts, funding resources and accompanying measures that are available to Member States through different EU programmes, such as for example the CEF Telecom, ISA<sup>2</sup> programme, Horizon 2020, ESI Funds, the EU Justice Programme and the upcoming Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP).

This overview aims at explaining how policy under the eGovernment Action Plan and funding can match better and which different funding instruments are available to support the implementation of the eGovernment Action Plan. The alignment of all possible funding towards the same policy goals and greater synergies among them will increase the impact of support and contribute to the envisaged acceleration of the digital transformation of governments in the EU.

## Available Funding instruments

The available funding instruments have different dimensions depending on the maturity level of the results which can be achieved with the funding.

However, for better usability, funding can also be categorised according the actual demand that should be accommodated with the funding:

- Funding for Hands-on advice and exchanges with practitioners
- Funding for experimentation with new e-government approaches and development of new tools
- Funding for the take-up of existing tools and trans-national interoperability
- Sector specific funding
- Guidance and good practice examples

The last category is not necessarily pointing to monetary funds, but these accompanying measures can provide assistance for choosing the right instruments and areas for starting the implementation of eGovernment.

The following instruments are available in the above mentioned categories of funding:

### **1. Funding for Hands-on advice and exchanges with practitioners**

#### a. [TAIEX REGIO PEER 2 PEER](#)

TAIEX REGIO PEER 2 PEER is not an investment instrument and, therefore, does not provide direct funding for the implementation of eGovernment. The instrument is designed to share expertise between bodies that manage funding under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund. It is an instrument that is meant to help Member States, local authorities and regions to exchange experience on various topics related to cohesion policy funding, including, for example, eGovernment and ICT. As in total a large volume of money is invested in eGovernment in various Member States, with many projects being

implemented, other authorities could learn from the experience. Three types of actions are possible: Expert Missions, Study Visits and Workshops. The tool is open to public sector officials/institutions responsible for the management of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund.

b. [Structural Reform Support Programme](#)

The Structural Reform Support Service helps EU countries to design and carry out structural reforms as part of their efforts to support job creation and sustainable growth.

The aim is to coordinate and provide tailor-made technical support to EU Member States, in cooperation with the relevant Commission services. The objective of providing such support to Member States is to help build more effective institutions, stronger governance frameworks and efficient public administrations. This would, in turn, underpin the institutional and administrative capacity that is needed to design and implement policies to support job creation and sustainable growth, including also eGovernment.

The Structural Reform Support Programme would allow for the provision of tailor-made assistance to Member States, upon their request, to support them in the design and implementation of institutional, administrative and structural reforms, and in this context, also help them make an efficient and effective use of relevant Union funds.

A proposal for a on the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme with an envisaged budget of €142.8 million for the period 2017 to 2020 has been adopted by the European Commission on 26 November 2015. The programme is currently being discussed at the Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers) and European Parliament before adoption.

c. [ESF Transnational Platform 'governance and public administration'](#)

The European Commission has set up the European Social Fund (ESF) Transnational Platform to support stakeholders' willingness to cooperate beyond frontiers. The Platform runs the Thematic Networks and facilitates coordinated calls for proposals. It publishes articles, a newsletter and technical dossiers. It is also organising seminars and conferences.

One of the nine thematic networks (each of them is run by one Member State) is dedicated to 'governance and public administration'. With regard to eGovernment, these networks would enable mutual learning among countries and stakeholders and facilitate coordinated ESF calls for proposals.

A [Leaflet](#) on transnational cooperation in the European social fund is [available](#).

**2. Funding for experimentation with new e-government approaches and development of new tools**

a. [Horizon 2020, Societal Challenge 6](#)

Horizon 2020 Pillar 3, Societal Challenges, supports research and innovation in areas of major concern to the citizens in Europe and those elsewhere in order to develop breakthrough solutions. The priorities funded under this pillar are the most relevant for eGovernment, also for local and regional authorities.

Challenge 6, 'Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective societies' is the relevant challenge for eGovernment funding in local and regional authorities: In responding to this challenge, funded research and innovation actions will focus on fostering a greater understanding of Europe by providing solutions and supporting inclusive, innovative and reflective European societies with an innovative public sector in a context of unprecedented transformations and growing global interdependencies. In line with the present challenges, the 2016-2017 Work Programme focusses on the modernisation of public administrations and innovative public services, on tackling inequalities and radicalisation within Europe, on empowering the younger generation, in particular with regard to their digital skills, on strengthening Europe's position in the global context, and on promoting the European public and cultural space. With regard to eGovernment the related activities are:

- Applied co-creation to deliver public services
- Co-creation between public administrations: once-only principle
- Policy-development in the age of big data: data-driven policy-making, policy-modelling and policy-implementation
- Understanding the transformation of European public administrations
- New business models for inclusive, innovative and reflective societies

The call topics are very much in line with the eGovernment Action Plan in terms of Open Data, Open Process and Open Service for joined-up government, with an accent on participation, collaboration and transparency. These principles also apply to the eGovernment projects that are already running. These projects range from reflective academic projects to testing of concrete ideas in an operational environment. With what we are doing in Horizon 2020, the Commission is also building upon on the previous framework contract, in which a lot of eParticipation projects are finishing or have recently finished.

Of the eGovernment pilot projects, almost half are at local level, with the national level accounting for over a third. The regional level accounts for 15.2% and European – 3.4%. The projects at the local and regional level target youth, students, senior citizens, academics and the culture and tourism sector.

Three [calls are currently open](#). The deadline for application is 2 February 2017.

b. [The Urban Agenda](#) for the EU; [Urban Innovative Actions](#); and [URBACT](#)

An **Urban Agenda for the EU** is important because 70% of the EU population lives in cities; 70% of EU legislation is implemented by cities at the end of the chain; 55% of EU funds are spent by cities; and 85% of European GDP is generated in cities. However, until now the European Union has not been working with cities – it has been working mainly with Member States. But, in light of these figures, it is logical to work more on urban matters, to work more with cities and to ask more from cities.

The Urban Agenda for the EU has identified 12 priority topics, and the digital transition is one of these which also cover eGovernment.

One important source of funding is the **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)**. There is about EUR 100 billion of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and EUR 15 billion of the European Social Fund (ESF) which is spent in cities. For the ERDF, of the EUR

100 billion spent in cities, there is EUR 15 billion spent by the cities themselves – where they can choose the projects they want to implement.

The second important funding instrument is the **Urban Innovative Actions (UIA)**. This new instrument is also managed by the European Commission. The idea is not to finance 'classical' projects but to experiment with new ideas and to test them in the real world, with real people and real problems. For this we take a real project – every project has an ERDF contribution of EUR 5 million – the co-financing rate is 80% and the duration of each project is three years. The UIA 2nd Call for Proposals is now open! It will remain open from 16 December 2016 until 14 April 2017 (14:00 CET).

Every year there will be one call, and each call will be EUR 50 million. The project holders will be cities, and there is no need to have partners in other countries.

Finally, **URBACT** is a networking programme worth about EUR 100 million. Here the idea is for a group of cities to come together on an issue, which could also be eGovernment, to exchange and try to build on each other's experience to develop pragmatic solutions.

A current initiative tries to pool the available sources for funding in a one-stop-shop on the Europa website.

### **3. Funding for the take-up of existing tools and trans-national interoperability**

#### **a. [Connecting Europe Facility \(CEF\) - Digital Service Infrastructures \(DSIs\)](#)**

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) aims, amongst others, at enhancing Europe's digital and telecom infrastructure.

In the Telecommunications sector the CEF supports projects of common interest aiming to:

- • Bolster economic growth and support the completion and functioning of the internal market with a view to increase the competitiveness of the European economy, including with regard to SMEs;
- • Introduce improvements in daily life for citizens, businesses and public authorities at every level through the promotion of fast and ultrafast broadband networks, the interconnection and interoperability of national, regional and local broadband networks, and by providing non-discriminatory access to such networks and ensuring digital inclusion.

CEF-Telecoms funding will be provided for digital services and broadband infrastructure, which are essential for the achievement of a well-functioning Digital Single Market in Europe. More concretely, in 2016 the Connecting Europe Facility will support activities related to Safer Internet, Europeana, eIdentification and eSignature, eDelivery, eInvoicing, Public Open Data, Automated Translation, Cyber Security and eProcurement. Reuse of these building blocks results in performance gains of 40-50% and cost savings of 20-40%.

This is being accomplished through two sets of actions. One is to put these core service portals online so that citizens can consult them. Secondly, we give grants to cities, regions and Member States to make available the access points to these services in the Member States – interconnecting the services by making them available through EU-wide portals. Stakeholders can benefit from funding by making their services part of these EU-wide networks.

An individual work programme for each of the three sectors covered by the CEF gives details on the foreseen actions, as well as on the indicative budget allocation and timetable.

b. [Interreg A - Cross-border cooperation](#)

European Cross-Border cooperation, known as Interreg A, supports cooperation between NUTS III regions<sup>1</sup> from at least two different Member States lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them. It aims to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas, while enhancing the cooperation process for the purposes of the overall harmonious development of the Union.

There are 60 cooperation programmes for the period 2007-2013 with an allocation of EUR 6 billion (60% of which have been spent already), are involved in a wide variety of activities linked to the maturity of border cooperation.

The cross-border cooperation programmes are managed by joint structures, situated in one of the countries, responsible for the whole programme.

As regards the funding opportunities for eGovernment under Interreg, interested parties should look at the programmes that cover the regions where they are located.

c. [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#)

In the current programming period (2014-2020), there is no explicit eGovernment funding provided by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). Funding opportunities are included in a number of thematic objectives and funding categories. The European Structural and Investment Funds have 11 thematic objectives for 2014-2020. The one of interest in the context of eGovernment is Thematic Objective No. 2 – ICT. Investment priorities have been set for the ERDF. One of these is to enhance access to, and the use and quality of, ICT by strengthening ICT applications for eGovernment, eLearning, eInclusion, eCulture and eHealth.

The following funding categories are important with regard to eGovernment: The first relates to institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration and public services. The second relates to access to public sector information and the third – to eGovernment services and applications.

In order to make sure that ESIF investments achieve maximum impact, Member States and regions that wish to use funding for ICT-related projects have been required to put in place a strategic policy framework for digital growth and a next generation network plan.

For the purpose of collecting successful good practices and measures that could help managing authorities and public administration in the design and effective implementation of ESIF ICT investments, a [guide](#) is available:

[Support to the implementation of the ERDF investment priority – Enhancing access to, and the use and quality of ICT: successful good practice and measures.](#)

For more information the [Smart Specialisation Platform](#) (S3 Platform) is also available.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/overview>

d. [European Social Fund \(ESF\)](#)

Similar to the ERDF, under ESF financial envelopes which could support eGovernment are Thematic Objective 2 – Enhancing access to, and use and quality of information and communication technologies; and Thematic Objective 11 – Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities. There are different rationales and different entry logic behind the two envelopes.

Funding under Thematic Objective 11 is not available to all Member States because of its focus on institutional capacity building; it is available to countries with at least one least developed region. Of these, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Croatia, Italy and Portugal have specifically indicated a commitment to provide support to local and regional administrations with regard to eGovernment.

Both ESIF (ERDF and ESF) can provide funding at regional and local level for the development of CEF-DSIs enabled cross-border digital services (see above) that will be linked to the national and EU infrastructures.

An overview of what the ESF can do for [transparent and effective public services](#) is also [available](#).

For more information the [Smart Specialisation Platform](#) (S3 Platform) is also available.

e. [Interoperability solutions for public administrations, businesses and citizens \(ISA<sup>2</sup>\)](#)

The ISA2 programme, particularly the instruments created to support public administrations in sharing and reusing IT solutions in the public sector, aims at funding the creation of common tools, common specifications and common services to help administrations exchange information with each other in an interoperable way.

ISA works by central procurement – Member States make proposals on the common solutions that could be developed to help administrations at the European level, and then ISA develops these proposals using central procurement. The results are offered to all public administrations, including the European institutions, for re-use.

ISA believes that the sharing and reuse of solutions is a good approach to better interoperability, to better growth. It also helps administrations to modernise their services and to collaborate at the national and cross-border level, and results in increased standardisation.

f. [ICT Innovation Vouchers Scheme for Regions](#)

The ICT innovation vouchers' scheme is a useful instrument to include in strategies for innovation and growth implemented at local and regional levels. It enables regional and national authorities to facilitate SMEs' access to digital know-how and technology by giving them the incentive to connect with ICT knowledge and service providers.

The other way round, regarding eGovernment the instrument could also initiate the development of new eGovernment solutions by SMEs.

g. [INNOVOUCHER](#)

The main objective of INNOVOUCHER is to develop a new model of innovation voucher programme supporting the transnational exchange of innovation services in Europe. The project aims to help European regions and national governments to face their innovation challenges and achieve their goals in their innovation support to companies by putting into place a collaborative framework across Europe. This way, regions and enterprises can take advantage of the globalization benefits and Europe can promote competitiveness and cooperation in an effective and cross-national way.

Similar to the ICT Innovation Vouchers Scheme for Regions (see above), regarding eGovernment the instrument could also initiate the development of new eGovernment solutions.

**4. Sector specific funding**

a. [EU Justice Programme](#)

The EU Justice Programme 2014-2020 has a budget of EUR 378 million. This funds procurement activities, which is money spent by the Commission itself, and also provides grants to fund initiatives in the Member States. The programme aims to promote the further development of a European area of justice based on mutual recognition and mutual trust. All Member States are participating, with the exception of the United Kingdom and Denmark.

The types of actions funded include training activities, awareness-raising, support for main actors and analytical activities. In the area of eJustice, in terms of funding, each year there is an annual call for proposals, and up to 80% of eligible costs are funded. Funding is available to national authorities and other competent bodies. The calls are open to regions, too.

The annual budget varies, but is about EUR 3-3.5 million per year and the call is competitive. On average 50% of applications are awarded. In terms of the specifics of the proposals, EU added value is a must, funding is not available for national capacity building. Projects should also have a cross-border aspect and should benefit more than one Member State.

**5. Guidance and good practice examples**

a. [European Capital of Innovation Award](#)

This is supporting the [Innovation Union](#) initiative, which aims to turn European research into new and better services and products in order to remain competitive in the global marketplace and improve the quality of life in Europe.

For the 2016 European Capital of Innovation Award all of the nine finalists this year made reference to the use of digital solutions – both as part of smart city strategies and open government strategies.

To maximise the impact of the award in 2017, it will focus more on experimentation and how cities are placing themselves as test-beds for innovative activities and services, and to what extent they develop open co-creation models. It will also look at citizen engagement to increase uptake of innovation, efforts to increase outreach, and cities as role models for others to maximise impact of local actions.

Next year's content will open in March 2017, and the winners will be announced at the end of the year and will receive a cash prize of EUR 1 million, with the two runners-up receiving EUR 100,000 each.

b. [RegioStars awards](#)

The objective of the RegioStars Awards is to identify good practices in regional development and to highlight original and innovative projects which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions.

The 2017 edition has not yet been announced.

c. [European Public Sector Award \(EPSA\)](#)

The EPSA brings together the best, most innovative and efficient performers from the European public sector. Outstanding administrative performances are, after all, produced under different conditions within Europe.

The EPSA usually takes place biennial. The last edition was the [EPSA 2015](#). However, the 2017 edition has not yet been announced.

d. [Seal for Excellence initiative](#)

The Seal of Excellence is a quality label awarded to projects submitted to Horizon 2020 which were deemed to deserve funding but did not receive it due to budget limits.

The Seal of Excellence aims to build synergies between EU funds to maximize quantity, quality and impact of R&I investments for jobs and growth. These R&I investments also include eGovernment, and the digital solutions that can be used to advance a modernised public administration. The framework conditions exist to exploit synergies between the two funding programmes – Horizon 2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

The Seal of Excellence recognises the value of the proposals that do not get funded. It recognises the investment carried out by the company in preparing the proposal, it valorises the Commission's spending on evaluating the project and, at the same time, we believe that Member States that are interested in this type of project will invest in projects that are certified as being of good quality.

SMEs do not receive any assurances that they will receive funding, but we tell them to knock on the doors of those who could potentially be interested. To funding bodies also, we consistently state that these are good proposals and represent a great opportunity to exploit the Horizon 2020 evaluation system.

A Community of Practice has been set up for public authorities interested in investing in Seal of Excellence projects, where they can exchange practices and address bottlenecks. Already around 200 Seal of Excellence project have been funded and we are constantly receiving information about new schemes being set up, so it appears that momentum has been created.



Useful links to platforms, 'hands-on' advice, best practices:

1. [JoinUp](#)
2. [Observatory of Public Sector Innovation](#)
3. [Toolbox for Quality public administrations](#)

Do's and Don'ts for funding:

The following chapter provides some slogans to highlight underlying principles, in addition to those from the eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020, basic ideas and experiences to remember when setting up eGovernment projects. In some funding programs/mechanisms they could also be part or can become part of the selection criteria.



Overall guidelines:

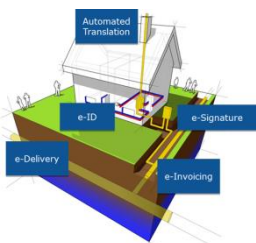
- Focus on delivering value added and societal outcomes over across-the-board cost cutting.
- Value agile, capacitated and adaptive administration over rigid maintenance of the status quo.
- Prefer transparent, accountable and open government over secrecy and elite capture

Digital enablers built on strong analogue foundation

- Prefer user-centric and co-created digital services, based on integrated and streamlined processes over fragmented provisions and a merely "digitised bureaucracy"
- Streamline processes (simplification)
- Build on the institutional capacity (objectives, values, management systems and structures)
- Don't forget regulatory and administrative reforms (changing laws and management practices)
- Improve the skills of your colleagues and personnel (cognitive, social & behavioural and technical)
- Set up a monitoring mechanism

*"It is not a matter of realising building blocks. It implies another way of working."*

From silos to joined-up and open government



- Value coordination and collaboration across sectors and entities over a "silo mentality" and individual institutions defending their territory
- Re-use existing building block digital service infrastructures (see the [CEF](#))
- Move to shared internal services where appropriate, to increase efficiency;
- Consider breaking down business processes and tasks into fundamental (modular) services that can be re-used coupled with other services in different contexts (start small, agile, flexible)
- Consider (business) life events (see [eGovernment Benchmarking](#))
- Enhance transparency and openness and make data available for development of better products and services
- Consider the role of (open/big) data (accountability & collect, connect, analyse)

- Build analytical capacity, a better evidence base, and applying data analytics & behavioural insights to policy making;
- Engage civic society in co-creation & participatory policy making;
- Collaborate with other public administrations and launch joint actions

#### From availability to take-up

- Respect the principles of the [eGovernment Action Plan](#) (Digital by Default, Once only principle, Inclusiveness and accessibility, Openness & transparency, Cross-border by default, Interoperability by default and Trustworthiness & Security) and the principles of the European Interoperability Framework and Strategy in the cross-border dimension
- Encourage citizens and civil society organisations to use their insights as service users to engage in co-creation and co-production with public administrations (Customer Journey, understand needs, raise awareness, facilitation services, feedback mechanism, etc.)
- Customise solutions to facilitate improvement in a specific cultural context over out-of-context copy-pasting of perceived "best practices"
- Understand what citizens, businesses and other administrations need and expect from public services, using surveys, panels, mystery shopping, customer journey mapping, life events analysis & other techniques;
- Deliver services at a time, place and pace that suits users best, including offering multi-channel options;
- Use the processing & networking power of ICT to put information and transactions online, enable 'once-only' registration and 'no-stop' shops (services delivered automatically based on entitlement), offer clouds of public services that enable users to assemble their own e-service packages, and move towards digital by default;
- Set standards through service charters and measuring satisfaction;



#### DO's¶

- → Do finance projects which have a clear policy goal and are in line with a national (if existing) and with the Digital Single Market Strategy / [eGovernment Action Plan](#) as well as with the identified principles¶
- → Do encourage collaboration across administrative silos and borders¶
- → Do re-use existing building block digital service infrastructures (see the CEF)¶
- → Do consider breaking down business processes and tasks into fundamental (modular) services that can be re-used in different contexts¶
- → Do think in life events (see Benchmarking) and consider One-stop-shops¶
- → Do consider the role of (open/big) data¶
- → Do finance projects with a clear sustainability strategy¶
- → Do apply innovation procurement principles¶

#### DONT's¶

- → Don't finance just digitalisation (hardware) without business process re-organisation¶
- → Don't finance projects for developing basic services which are already available (e.g. CEF building blocks)¶
- → Don't delegate down eGovernment projects (leadership is key)¶
- → Don't forget the legal and regulatory framework¶