Regional Workshop on e-Government Best Practices  
Amman, Jordan, 3-5 December 2013

Joint event convened by UNESCWA and UNDESA and hosted by the Jordanian Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MoICT).

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION NOTE

1. Background

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have had a significant impact on modern public administration and governance. Government electronic services have been developed not only to simplify government procedures and improve interaction with citizens, but also to create new governance models that would empower citizens and involve them in the decision-making process as well as establish transparency in government dealings.

E-government programmes implementations vary between countries and regions. The United Nations E-Government Survey 2012 prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) showed continued progress in the delivery of online services in most countries around the world. The survey findings revealed that many countries have put in place e-government initiatives aiming at enhancing public sector efficiencies, streamlining governance systems and supporting sustainable development. Differences in the maturity levels of e-government initiatives and applications have highlighted the digital divide between countries of the same region, making regional integration difficult to achieve. Governments must place greater emphasis on institutional linkages to create the synergy needed for inclusive sustainable development. The integration of e-government applications into existing knowledge frameworks with well developed enterprise architecture practices would result in more efficient governments and better governance models that would enable sustainable development at the social, economic and political fronts.

Many Arab countries have realized the importance of a well-conceived e-government strategy and have launched national e-government initiatives. The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) placed a high priority on the development of e-government programmes and mobilized human and financial resources for their implementation. In some Arab countries, the focus of e-government initiatives has shifted from the provision of services through one-stop-shop portals to more advanced concepts such as open data initiatives.

Additionally, there is a growing need for harmonizing cross-border e-government services towards interoperability between public administrations in the Arab region, and for realizing regional integration in this important development field. For example, developing and harmonizing e-government cross-border services, for individuals, customs and trade services, and other services, constitutes an area of work requiring the joint efforts and collaboration amongst all stakeholders in the region.

ESCWA has within its core mandate the responsibility to promote regional and interregional cooperation and collaboration by providing member countries with capacity-building and sharing experiences as a means for strengthening ties between countries and networking capabilities. The work of ESCWA takes into consideration the outcome of the 2009 High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation that calls upon the U.N. programmes and agencies to continue their support towards the development of cooperation programmes, strengthening regional capacities, and identifying the areas of highest impact of South-South cooperation. The priorities of work include encouraging member countries to develop and implement national ICT/information society strategies. In this regard, ESCWA and UNDESA can share and build on their experiences in the area e-government towards promoting technical cooperation and sharing of existing knowledge. The potential participants will include high-level representatives from...
ICT ministries and national e-government programmes, administrative development/reform offices, public and private sector organizations and NGOs as well as government chief information officers.

2. Objectives

The main objectives of the Workshop are to:

a) Introduce the best e-government practices and experiences from several parts of the world to ESCWA member countries towards further development of their e-government frameworks;

b) Overview the e-government achievements of Arab countries and areas for enhancement, and share best practices of the best e-government programmes from the world;

c) Identify areas for cooperation between the stakeholders and partners towards developing potential initiatives that rely on international best practices for the benefit of ESCWA member countries.

d) Fine-tune the existing mechanisms, roles and responsibilities towards effective cooperation on e-government processes in the region.

e) Deliberate on the establishment of a council of directors of Arab e-government programmes.

3. Topics and Format

The topics that the Workshop will discuss within its sessions are a combination of e-Government themes and/or applications, and include: e-Gov Programmes, Portals and Data Centres; e-Justice; e-Procurement; e-Elections; e-Health; e-Agriculture; e-Municipality; Mobile solutions; e-ID and e-Signature. The Workshop will include several working sessions and covering selected topics. Each topic will be addressed in one presentation and one group discussion.

4. Outcome

The expected outcome of the Workshop will be a collaboration framework in the addressed thematic areas of e-government.

5. Participants

Invited participants include high-level officials/experts responsible for national e-government programmes in the ESCWA region, and project managers of selected e-government applications, as well as senior experts from International and Regional Organizations and renowned relevant consulting firms. Participants also include officials nominated from ICT ministries, administrative development offices, public and private sector organizations and Non Governmental Organizations as well as government chief information officers.

Participants should complete the registration for the Workshop before Thursday 7 November 2013, and include the title of their proposed substantive contributions, if any, as part of the registration form, together with an abstract. Upon approval of the proposed contribution, participants should submit the full contribution one week before the Workshop date.

6. Organisation, venue and dates

The Regional Workshop on e-Government Best Practices is jointly organized by ESCWA and the UNDESA, and hosted by the Jordanian Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MoICT). It will be held from 3 to 5 December 2013, at the premises of the Royal Scientific Society, El Hassan Science City, Al-Jubaiha, Amman, Jordan.

7. Working language

English will be the working language of the Workshop, and there will be simultaneous translation between English and Arabic during the sessions.

8. Additional information

Latest information would be available through the meeting page http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=3233E. Submissions, inquiries and requests for additional information should be addressed to escwa-ictd@un.org.