

ICA COUNTRY REPORT

Cyprus

1. Introduction

This report is giving the progress made in the field of e-Government and e-Commerce with emphasis in two areas, which constitute the most important activities of our revised Information Systems Strategy.

The first is the provision of services to citizens via the Internet and so we will deal with “Web enabled Systems” and the Government Internet node and the second is the interoperability and inter-connection of systems which is related also with the Government Data Network and the Government Data Model.

All the above will be viewed in the context of e-Government.

2. e-Government

The Information Systems Strategy of the Republic of Cyprus, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers early in 1998, was a revised version of the Government Computerisation Plan which was prepared in 1988. Currently we have made some minor revisions to the ISS to provide for Web-enabled systems and the requirements of e-Europe+ action plan.

We have almost completed the development of the strategic projects that were defined in our Information Systems Strategy (ISS) and we are now in the process of moving them on the web so as to provide our citizens with the facility to get services from anywhere.

In order to achieve this we proceed with the interconnection of government systems over the Government Data Network and provide for the creation of secure gateway on the web.

A summary of the Information Systems Strategy of the Republic of Cyprus and a list of the completed projects are shown in Appendix “A” and our vision for e-Government implementation is shown on Appendix B.

It must be noted that the first e-Government system has already been released by the government and is serving the public over internet, in this case the community of traders since it is the Automated Customs System called THESEAS. For a brief description please see Appendix C.

2.1 Interconnection of Systems / Web Enabled

The core systems (Civil Registry, Lands and Surveys, Registrar of Companies) that own data required by other ministries/departments, have been completed. Now it is both possible and required to interrelate these systems.

The completion of the infrastructure projects (i.e. Office Automation, Government Data Network (GDN) and Government Internet Node (GIN)) facilitates the above target.

1. The rollout of the Office Automation, which handles automated procedures for office work, has already started and the system is successfully installed in the following government departments according to a prioritisation plan:

- Department of IT Services
- Ministry of Finance
- Secretariat of the Council of Ministers
- Permanent Mission of Cyprus in Brussels
- Central Information Service

In order to complete the rollout of OAS we have to install it in about 50 other Ministries/departments/services, the most important of which are:

- District Courts and High Court
- Law Office of the Republic
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Press and Information Office
- Ombudsman
- Police
- House of Representatives
- State Archives
- Public Administration and Personnel Services

2. The GDN which is related with the connectivity of all government ministries/departments using ATM technology with a backbond of 622 Mbs speed has been completed and its rollout started.
3. The Third infrastructure project, which is the building of a Government Internet Node (GIN), was completed and the rollout started. The aim now is to provide secure access to all government employees by the end of this year. All civil servants will have an e-mail connection and an access to internet by the end of 2003. The government web site was released in the year 2001 (<http://www.cyprus.gov.cy>) and there is a plan that by the end of this year all government departments will have an informative [www.site](#) so as to comply with EU requirements resulting out of e-Europe+ (level 1 basic information on the web for citizens, level 2 downloading of forms and level 3 interaction).

In addition, a Data Management Strategy has been drafted since 1997, which provides an integrated information structure capable of supporting its requirements for strategic and tactical management information systems as well as operational systems. This is an essential component for the interconnection of our information systems as well as for the creation of a central Government Data Warehouse.

To be effective, data integration must rely on the different applications underlying with the meaning of the data that is being shared or interchanged. Thus a key factor is the availability and use of a common model, which clearly defines the meaning of the data held in the different applications. This common model was provided through the medium of the Government Data Model (GDM), which defined all Government strategic data. The strategic data for the Government of Cyprus (i.e. that data which is used by more than one operational information system) is based on the data models of the Civil Registry, Lands and Surveys, Registrar of Companies.

Furthermore a strategy for e-government has been prepared (see Appendix B for more details) which provides inter-alia for the following:

- Creation of a government portal based on an event life cycle approach
- Creation of a government secure gateway which will be responsible for authentication, security, encryption and web workflow
- Interconnection of all existing systems via the gateway and the provision of services to the public over internet using GDN, GIN and the portal.

This year will be devoted mainly to the following:

- a. Transform completed information systems into web-enabled systems in order to give information and services to citizens and businesses eg.
 - Submission of Income Tax and VAT returns via the web
 - Enrollment of unemployed people and placement in work via the web
 - Submission of Applications via the web for child allowances
 - Social Security functions via the web
- b. Draft a Data Warehouse strategy after the approval of the Computerisation Executive Board.

Give government information services to the public via internet.

3. Organisation to manage e-Government

The new government has recently decided to set up a Programme Management Unit at the level of the Ministry of Finance, outside DITS which is the department responsible for the implementation of the strategy, to monitor the progress of the programme, prepare suggestions to the Minister of Finance for the of the strategy etc. This unit will be headed by a Programme Manager and assisted by two Project Management Consultants. All of them will be recruited from the open market through international tenders.

4. e-Commerce

In this context the Government of Cyprus has established a **Ministerial Committee** for the promotion of the Information Society in Cyprus. This committee has delegated authority to the Planning Bureau of the Republic to deal with e-Commerce in Cyprus. Planning Bureau has already awarded a Tender and a firm of consultants started the preparation of a study for e-Commerce in Cyprus, which will include the following:

- Assessment of the existing legal framework and suggestions for changes
- Provide the necessary assistance in the formulation of a strategy and a plan of action to encourage and support the exploitation of e-Commerce activities in Cyprus
- Complement the Planning Bureau mission directorate for Economic Relations with EU
 - Following up the developments in EU
 - Evaluation of the implications on the Cyprus economy
 - Preparation of studies, policy positions and recommendations
- Development of a legal and institutional infrastructure that will form the framework for the promotion and operation of e-Commerce in Cyprus.

In parallel, legislation has been prepared for the protection of personal data and for digital signatures. The first bill has already been enacted by the Parliament.

The consultants delivered the study in July this year and the implementation of their suggestions has already started.

Appendix A

1. SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS STRATEGY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Objectives

- Improve Quality of Service to Public and Commerce
- Enforce Legislation
- Strengthen Internal Controls
- Reduce Costs
- Support Accession to the European Union
- Increase Revenue Opportunities
- Support e-Europe+ 2003 – Government online

Critical Success Factors

- Quality of Information
- Speed and availability of Services
- Management information
- Inter-communication and Inter-operability
- Flexibility
- Harmonization with EU Systems

The Vision

The creation of an efficient and effective public service, which will be able to provide high quality services to the public with the least possible expenditure and, where possible, without the need of visiting any Government Department to obtain such services.

Achievement of the Vision

- One Terminal per Desk
- Intelligent Citizen's Identity Cards
- Paperless Office
- Distributed Services to Public and Commerce
- Reduction in Bureaucracy (quick response)
- Common Data Maintained in One Place
- Global Communication

Projects under current ISS

A. Completed

- Inland Revenue
- VAT
- Social Insurance
- Social Welfare
- Civil Registry
- Lands and Surveys (Registration of land, mortgages, mapping, GIS etc)
- Registry of Motor Vehicles
- Registrar of Companies
- Registrar of Co-op societies
- Factory Inspectorate
- Candidates placement to work
- Hospital Information System (under review of new system)
- Office Automation System
- Government Data Network
- Government Internet Node

B. To be completed in 2003

- Customs System (Phase A EU requirements)
- Merchant Shipping
- Central Accounting System
- Portal of the Government of Cyprus

C. To be delivered in 2004

- Customs System (Phase B and C)
- Legal Information System
- Courts Administration
- Government Gateway

The existing GDN and GIN will provide the connectivity between Government Departments both for internet and integration of systems.

Appendix B

E-GOVERNMENT.GOV.CY

Vision

"To enable citizens to interact via the web or otherwise with Government by the year 2004".

- In achieving this vision an internet based web site that aggregates all government information and services in one place is to be designed, implemented and given to the public. It is intended to be the primary place where citizens will seek information about government services and to transact with Government on-line.
- Essential components needed to give effect to the above mentioned vision are the following:
 - a. Portal of the Government based on life-events-cycle,
 - b. A gateway for security/authentication of all those accessing the web-site providing inter-alia with the use of work-flow the interconnectivity of all the legacy systems communicating via XML.
- The primary objective of "**eGovernment.gov.cy**" is to provide citizens with a simple, secure and fast way of accessing a wide range of joined up government services on-line.

Architectural frameworks

The framework below positions "**eGovernment.gov.cy**" in relation to government. It also presents the "route-map" of infrastructure, which will enable the coherent integration of government to join up services to meet the needs of the citizens.

- (i) At the "front end" the principal entry point will be "**eGovernment.gov.cy**" i.e. the Government portal.
- (ii) The "middleware", the tier that enables government to join up in a coherent way is "Government Gateway".
- (iii) The "back-end" consists of government departments, and other systems and

Appendix C

THESEAS – COMPUTERISED CUSTOMS SYSTEM

Overview

The THESEAS system is the first fully integrated and web enabled Customs system in Europe at this time. The system is currently in production and is fully in line with the requirements for EU Accession, some 9 months in advance of the Accession date.

Is designed for the traders to connect to the system via the Internet for the electronic submission of cargo and import declarations. Furthermore, the system is also designed for the electronic payment of customs duties through the banks. All customs stations are connected to the system via Intranet operating over the Government Data Network. An interface exists with the Cyprus Ports Authority for the electronic submission of cargo manifests and a standard XML development has been made available to the traders for bulk input to the system.

The system is designed to enable the interface with the Customs systems of the EU and specific modules have been developed to ensure the interoperability with the systems of DG TAXUD.

Aims of the THESEAS Project

The overall aim of this project is to reform and modernise the Customs and Excise department. In addition, the programme aims to support the accession of Cyprus to the European Union through the harmonisation of legislation and procedures supported by the use of Information Systems.

The project contains a number of administrative reform and trade facilitation components aimed at examining current practices and procedures within the Customs and Excise Department in order to take appropriate action for the introduction of reforms aimed at improving efficiency of operation and simplifying official formalities and documentation.

Scope of the THESEAS Project

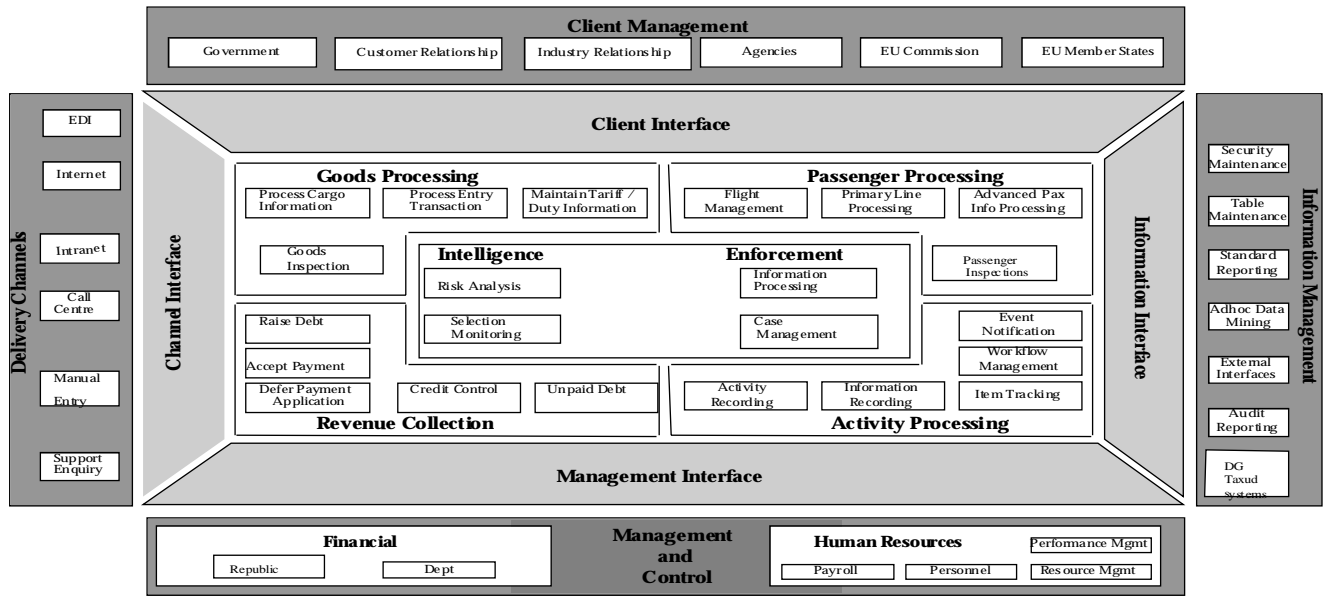
The scope of the project covers the following operating modules:

- Intelligence modules
- Goods processing modules
- Revenue Collection and Accounting modules
- Passenger processing modules
- Enforcement modules
- Activity processing modules (Management Information System)

The external interfaces of the system are the following:

- Channel interface handling the diverse media for accessing the system
- Information interface with the data repositories in use in the public sector
- Management interface with the processes in charge of the operation of the Department
- Client interface with the diverse partners of the system

The following chart shows the scope of the requirement specification of the THESEAS project.



Technical Architecture

We have defined three environments for the project in order to have a smooth transition of project developments, namely:

- Development and Integration,
- Test and Training
- Production

The overall production architecture can be summarised as follows:

