

## ICA COUNTRY REPORT

### The Netherlands

#### Introduction

In our previous country report we informed you on significant changes in the Dutch political climate. Over the past year we witnessed another change of government. The new coalition consists of CDA (Christian Democrats), VVD (liberal) en D'66 (social democrats). This coalition (Balkenende II) has a new minister for governmental reform: Thom de Graaf (D'66) is now responsible for the co-ordination of all public information policies.

#### 1. Strategic and operational goals

The government-wide programme "Better Government for Citizens and Businesses" ended. The new Cabinet is outlining a new program for the further modernisation of the Dutch government. Some of its principles include: more involvement of citizens, more focus on implementational strength, tighter cooperation between public institutions and accountability. The programme is to be adopted this autumn. In the programme, ICT plays an important enabling role, but it will have a broader focus. Some e-government related issues are less administrative burden for citizens, single provision of data, authentic registrations, proactive services, and transparency.

#### 2. Organizing for e-Gov

#### 3. Funding

#### 4. Changing laws, regulations and policies

Legal developments are ongoing to formalise the legal status of all sorts of government service provision by electronic means.

Legal developments on the use of electronic signatures in transactions with the government is also ongoing.

#### 5. Identifying and building additional critical infrastructure

Work is ongoing on re-design, standardisation and simplification of governmental telecommunications infrastructure, both owned (secure) and through market parties.

#### 6. Communicating and marketing to the public

#### 7. Improving national portals

In March 2003 version 3.0 of the Dutch portal site 'www.overheid.nl' was released. Besides a completely new 'look and feel', an improved search engine, an entrance in English and a lot of new links, this latest version contains three major and new sources of information.

- The first is the complete Dutch legislation (wet- en regelgeving) which is now electronically available, free of any charge;
- Second is an electronic service counter (Overheidsloket) for all the services of the Dutch central government, including the application forms (if required).
- The third is an outline of all the Dutch governmental organisations including contact and background information regarding the organisation as well as the names and contact information regarding people up to a certain level in these organisations (governmental organizations).

The Dutch government portal provides access to all 1400 Dutch official government websites. More than 12,000 visitors a day use the information on this site and its links to other government bodies. It continues to be enhanced with new sources of data, such as the addresses and details of all government offices and staff as well as a reference guide to all the 2500 national government "products" provided for by law.

The Overheid.nl Monitor used to rank government websites by quality continued to operate in 2002. The ranking is updated daily and can be consulted at [www.advies.overheid.nl](http://www.advies.overheid.nl). This monitor is one of the criteria used to promote better government service online, in judging its annual "Webwijzer" Award for the government website which serves as an example to the rest.

**8. Converging service delivery channels. Also called multi-channel service delivery**

**9. Authentication procedures**

To realise a system in which reliable and secure communication between governmental organizations, citizens and enterprises (and vice versa) is made possible, the Dutch government designed a Public Key Infrastructure (PKI/overheid). With this system citizens and enterprises can reliably communicate with different governmental organisations using only one instrument (a PKI enabled smart card), thus preventing the necessity of different keys and methods.

This system provides 3 basic functions:

1. electronic identification
2. electronic signature
3. confidentiality

These functions are a necessary condition to make the step from the informational phase to the transactional phase. The central part of the PKI infrastructure has been realised and contains the Dutch State Root-certificate and the Program of Demands. The objective of the Program of Demands is to standardise the way in which PKI is used by the Dutch Government, thus creating interoperability and an equal security level.

The introduction of PKI to the end user is done in a step by step approach, focussing on the communication between governments and enterprises (and vice versa) and between governmental organisations.

**10. Developing gateways which will process certain applications for all agencies and ministries (e.g., authentication and bill payments)**

Generic tools to support service offerings services to civilians, e.g. authentication, identification, registrations, etc. are identified and in different stages of development.

Generic tools for communication processes between governmental back-offices are also being developed, and initiatives have been taken to promote, streamline and coordinate this development.

**11. Developing governmentwide architecture and standards**

The Dutch government has, over the past year, initiated two programmes in this field.

The programme OSSOS aims to measure up possibilities for the use of open source software and open standards in government environments, and its possibilities for the society. Standards are evaluated, formalised and promoted.

Also a programme for the development of a unified platform for intra-government services, and the promotion of standardised back-office architectures throughout the government, was started. Its aim is not to design a total re-make of governmental ICT-architectures according to one underlying framework, but instead focuses on interoperability of existing architectures and convergence of future developments.

**12. Training senior managers and policy officials to think and act intergovernmental**

**13. Organizing and managing information for sharing across the government**

The Dutch government-wide intranet (RYX) has been available for several years now. It features access to a wide range of databases and information, and offers cooperation and groupware functionalities to promote interdepartmental activities. Work on improvements and new features is ongoing.

**14. Developing Government Without Boundaries (GWoB) systems that cross program, office, department, and agency/ministry lines. XML and Open Source Software (OSS) initiatives can be reported in this building block**

The importance of back-office transparency throughout the different government organisations is underlined by the initiatives taken by the Dutch government.

As mentioned earlier, the OSSOS programme aims to measure up possibilities for the use of open source software and open standards in government environments, and its possibilities for the society. Standards are evaluated, formalised and promoted.

In the field of interoperability and the modelling and improvement of interdependent processes involving many government bodies, the programme “architecture of e-government” will develop necessary initiatives

**15. Measuring results**

In the Netherlands the progress in the field of e-Government is monitored since 2000. The key indicator is the availability of electronic service delivery (ESD) on government websites. In 2002 the percentage of ESD is 34% to citizens (18% in 2000) and 30% to companies (19% in 2000). Other indicators include web presence, availability of agendas, reports and other public documents of representative bodies.

In 2003 the monitoring instrument will be updated. Instead of only focusing on the supply of electronic public services the monitor will also measure the use of ESD by citizens and companies and the quality of public service delivery through the internet.

**16. Obtaining feedback from the public**

Burger@overheid is a tool set up by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) in April 2002. The aim is to improve the quality of Dutch e-government initiatives by translating experiences of citizens into practical advice and recommendations to be used by responsible government bodies. Burger@overheid actively involves citizens in the process of developing and improving e-government solutions.

**17. E-governance including E-voting and obtaining comments on proposed laws and regulations**

Investigations into e-voting techniques opportunities and challenges are in progress. Currently these are focusing on expatriates, where e-voting trials are envisaged, depending on positive test results.

Several studies are undertaken to get more grip on possibilities to enhance the democratic process. The government is actively supporting initiatives on local democracy.

**18. What new and/or innovative activity not outlined above is under consideration.**

No

## Fifteen Questions when considering current Priority Areas in e-Gov

1. **If your country is developing a gateway to process authentication, bill payments, and other applications for all agencies/ministries, how will it relate to the national portal?**

The aim is to develop supporting tools that can be applied within the national portal as well as in other government services.

2. **What level of uptake by the citizens is being achieved for your country's e-Gov services?**

During the period November 2001 – November 2002 40% of the Dutch citizens used e-government services. In compare with other EU countries this is mediocre (CBS, De Digitale Economie 2003)

3. **Which three or so on-line services are most popular with the public?**

Via the national portal [overheid.nl](http://www.overheid.nl) most popular requests for information are about:

- Passports
- Transfer Tax (for example houses)
- Residence permit
- Building permit
- Compensation for damage caused by planning

(See <http://www.overheid.nl>)

4. **Are integrated transactions being processed successfully at this time?**

Yes, and the number is rising.

5. **Which integrated transactions are most popular with the public?**

Fluctuating.

6. **What functions will your national portal perform beyond providing a search engine and linking to other sites?**

Preparations for a major expansion of the portal began in 2002. This was rolled out during the first quarter of 2003.

- The finishing touches are now put to an online legislation database which will be available free of charge to all.
- Overheid.nl is to incorporate a reference guide to all the 2500 "products" of the national government, including those devolved to other agencies or levels of government. By "products" are meant grants and subsidies, benefits, permits and licences, taxes, levies and other legal obligations of and to the government.
- An advanced search engine is to be added to [www.overheid.nl](http://www.overheid.nl). This will make it much easier to find the right document from the huge number now available on more than 1400 official websites.

7. **How are cross-government systems being funded?**

Through contributions of the main benefactors, and through topic-related stimulation programmes.

8. **Are service delivery channels (Internet, ATM, etc.) being brought together into one access point? Which channels? When will the single access point be available to the public?**

No.

- 9. What authentication initiatives are underway? When will they be available to government employees? To the public? When implemented, will they accelerate the use of on-line e-Gov transactions by the public?**

Authentication is mandatory for the development of reliable e-governement services. Next to available solutions, work is in progress on many fields.

- 10. When will a government-wide architecture be in place? What will it look like?**

A single government-wide template for architecture is not a policy item. Focus lies on communication and integration architectures for service provision.

- 11. List a few (if appropriate) cross government, Government Without Boundaries (GWOB) initiatives.**

PKI introduction, citizen service numbers, Unique registrations for objects of government

- 12. Is work being doing to measure the results of e-Gov investments? Will this be a major priority in 2004?**

From a financial viewpoint all government actions are evaluated for effectiveness. This is instigated by the ministry of finance.

- 13. Is there a program to obtain feedback from the public about on-line information and services?**

No

- 14. Is e-governance a priority at this time? If yes, is the emphasis on e-voting or on some other area?**

It has the attention. E-voting solutions are under study.

- 15. Does your government have a national identity card? How many employees have the card? How many citizens have the card?**

Initiatives for digital identity cards have been started.