

Multi-channel Inclusive eGovernment

Session 6 : Challenges remain, but the Direction is clear



Introduction

In this session we:

- Present cases where the components of multi-channel sustainable services for socially excluded people are under development – building on the earlier ‘Life Events’ activity
- Note that significant challenges remain, particularly to countries that face significant social exclusion problems while still building eGovernment, local governance, and service landscapes
- Set these, and the cases covered in earlier sessions, within a framework for sustainable services, with the progression from value chains to value networks
 - Identify the key components for Inclusive eGovernment to deliver efficiency, effectiveness, value and sustainability for services to socially excluded people

Challenges remain

Main examples:

- Challenges in developing the partnership landscape: Social exclusion challenges in Lithuania
- Developing service interventions in challenging geographical circumstances: The Mobile Bus service centres in Cyprus
- Challenges in building governance and capacity through networks of service centres: Citizen Service Centres in Greece
- These cases help to identify the challenges ...

A clear need for multi-channel eGovernment to maximise service delivery through networked governance

- Challenge of developing integrated service portfolios to address social exclusion in countries where the eGovernment developments have focused initially on the high-impact services
- Challenge to build the powerful role of intermediaries in linking services to the needs of socially excluded people, and the needs of the intermediaries to have access independently to services through multiple channels that avoid traditional service gatekeepers
- Resource challenges that exist in countries with highly dispersed rural populations, with relatively limited access to ICTs, but where innovative solutions (such as mobile service centres) can help build capacity to engage with services by citizens and intermediaries
- The challenge of building 'good governance' where the multi-channel service availability can be used in a process of building trust in public services, and trust in the government organisations that create the services

Lithuania

- The Centre of Social Services in Panevezys (North Central Lithuania, c.43,000 population)
 - Started by providing a shelter for homeless people, and has extended its role in the local delivery chain
 - Staff help people plan their ‘pathway’ through the available public services and help them to receive those services, but has been relying heavily on non-electronic information
 - Developed a network of key contact people across the public sector and NGOs network
- Decentralisation of public service delivery to Municipalities (60)
 - How to overcome the risk of propagating service silos at the local level
 - CSS Panevezys was recently reorganised into a separate municipality agency providing range of public services to variety of disadvantaged groups such as low-income families, vulnerable children, people with disabilities, the homeless etc. in one place

Lithuania

Legislation,
Policies



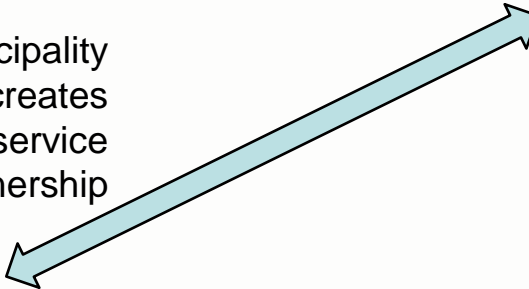
Central Government

Devolved Service Delivery
and developing
eGovernment Landscape



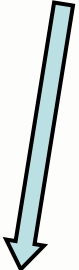
Municipalities

Municipality
creates
service
partnership



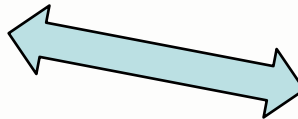
**CSS Panevezys,
and NGOs**

Dominant
service
delivery to
date



Homeless

Identify service needs
and match to services
available



Lithuania

- eGovernment pathway with early development implementing online services and providing access to the Internet, but where extension of the opportunities into key areas of social welfare is challenging
 - Channel access, particularly through ICTs, was difficult for the homeless since Internet Access Points were in Libraries and other public spaces where the homeless did not normally use.
 - Therefore channel mediation has been essential, but the formalisation of the partnership enables better training and support
- Inclusive eGovernment is not yet addressed through specific national policies addressing homelessness
 - Focus on EU Structure funds and ‘digital divide’ activities, and the deployment of ICT in the public sector, transferring public services to the Internet, local democracy and participatory projects, and expanding public Internet access points
- Sustainability is not yet well developed, but the deeper intermediary role in constructing individualised service portfolios is positive

Lithuania

Observations

- eGovernment is essential in enabling more coherent information
 - To date mainly provided through personal (paper) files. Staff help people plan their 'pathway' through the available public services and help them to receive those services
 - Need for information sharing and integration through efficient eGovernment back-office transformation
- Developing Channels and ensuring their use: The Lithuanian labour exchange 'e-job-centre' project to make it easier to access the services local job centres offer
 - Challenges: Overcoming ICT skill limitations with homeless people, who often avoid public spaces such as public libraries where most of the public Internet access points are placed
 - Training the shelter staff to use the e-job centre project

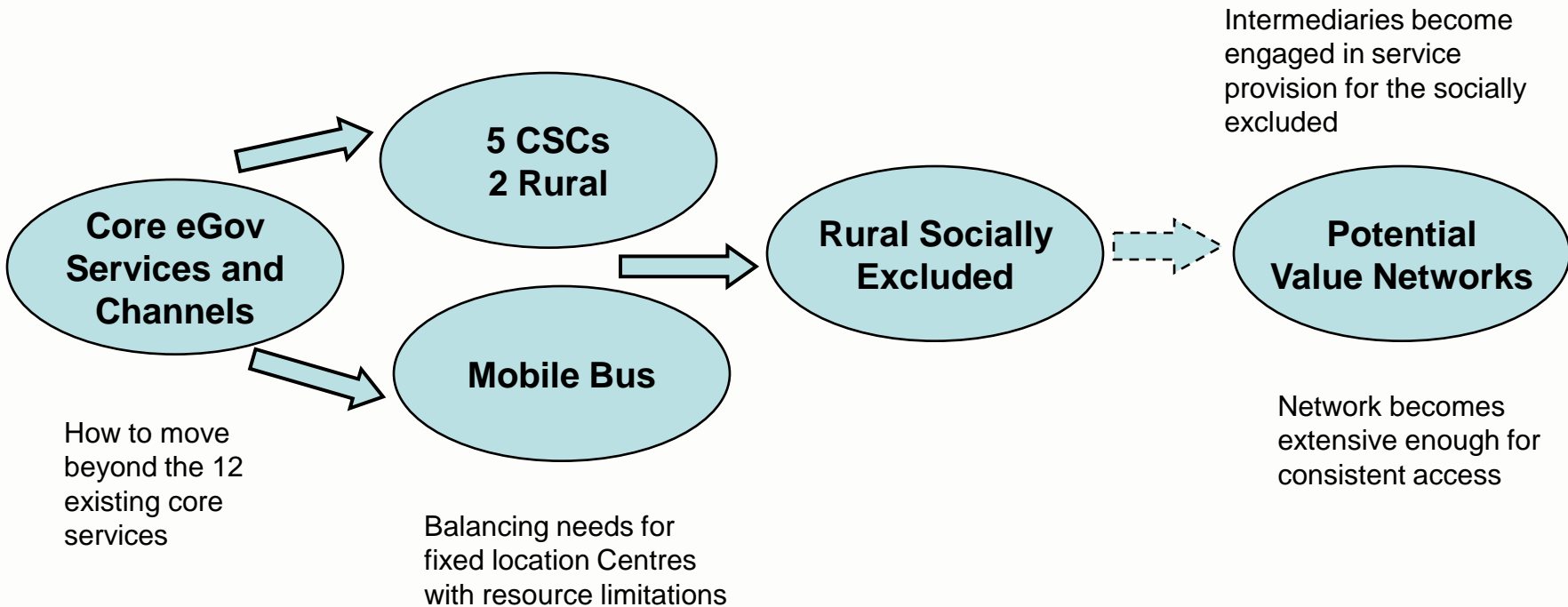
Lithuania

- Embedding the actors and the intermediaries into the service landscape
 - Need for an integrated policy framework for social exclusion, with engagement between The Ministry of Social Security and Labour , Municipalities, local actors and beneficiaries
 - NGOs in Lithuania have weak representation at national levels, and as yet are not fully involved in the public policy debates, consultation processes, and have little input into how services are delivered
 - Need better training of intermediaries to access the growing portfolio of electronic services
- Need to move beyond existing public funding reliance

Cyprus

- Virtual Bus Project. Mobile internet research and training unit with computers, wireless internet access and mobile technologies , space for 11 users, accessible for disabled
- Specific targets are disadvantaged groups and rural exclusion
- Taking the technology to those in need. Complements the existing Citizen Service Centres (5 as of October 2008, 2 in rural areas)
- Aims to overcome problems with previous fixed-location centres
 - ‘Coffee shops’ sponsored by the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CYTA) who provided fast free Internet access for 4 PCs in each coffee shop
 - The pilot revealed very low levels of Internet skills/experience, of technology usage and skills; none of the 600 people accessing the coffee shop had even used an ATM previously
 - Sustainability - The 'coffee shop' model was deemed to be too high budget

Cyprus



Cyprus

Multi-Channel

- The channels are themselves mobile, but the extent to which this channel provision leads to sustainable policy outcomes is not clear
 - Increasing ICT take-up in rural areas?

Inclusive eGovernment

- How to encourage beneficiaries and intermediaries to take ownership of access to channels?
 - Trained staff are on hand to help users to access the Internet and undertake the tasks they wish to perform, e.g. using Internet banking or filling in a road tax application online. All services are offered free of charge at point of access to the user. However intermediaries are not from specific disadvantaged groups, they are just paid staff who run the bus
 - How to measure impact for socially excluded people beyond providing access?
 - National Strategic Reference Framework for Cohesion Policy (NSRF), 2007-2013

Cyprus

Sustainability : a challenge

- Ministry of Finance is providing some funding to develop a wider programme of visits across 20 villages commencing in January 2009. If successful, the project may then be rolled out to create 4 buses
- The bus is funded through individual 'commissions', mainly from public service projects that require some assistance in the dissemination phase of their project
- Any surplus funding that is incoming from this project based work is re-invested into other activities
- Using this flexible model the project has been able to sustain its activities through a wide investment base and beyond the original life of the set up funding, while maintaining services that are free at point of access to the user

Cyprus

General Observations

- A clear focus on social exclusion and the use of multiple channels in a country with challenging physical terrain, dispersed population in rural areas with low Internet access
- A challenge to extend eGovernment into the more complex services needed by socially excluded people
- How best to identify and engage local intermediaries in such a dispersed rural population?

CSCs, Greece

- The national network of CSCs is designed to provide better quality interactions between all citizens and government (3,000 centres)
- About 1,000 services offered - 35 are wholly online and some 53 transactions can be completed at least partly online
- Facilitates more effective transactions across many areas of public services, and in particular meets the needs of citizens who were previously disadvantaged by geography
- ICT has provided an efficient, effective and standardised way of delivering a local presence
- CSCs have made a significant intermediary contribution to reducing the power of “gatekeepers” and combating corruption
- Implementation has required organisational change

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**In cooperation with the
Piraeus Bank**

The Ministry of M.I.P.A.D. in cooperation with the Piraeus Bank is implementing a pilot program of electronic cash payments in 23 KEP throughout Greece.

Home Page

**KEP
and it is done!**

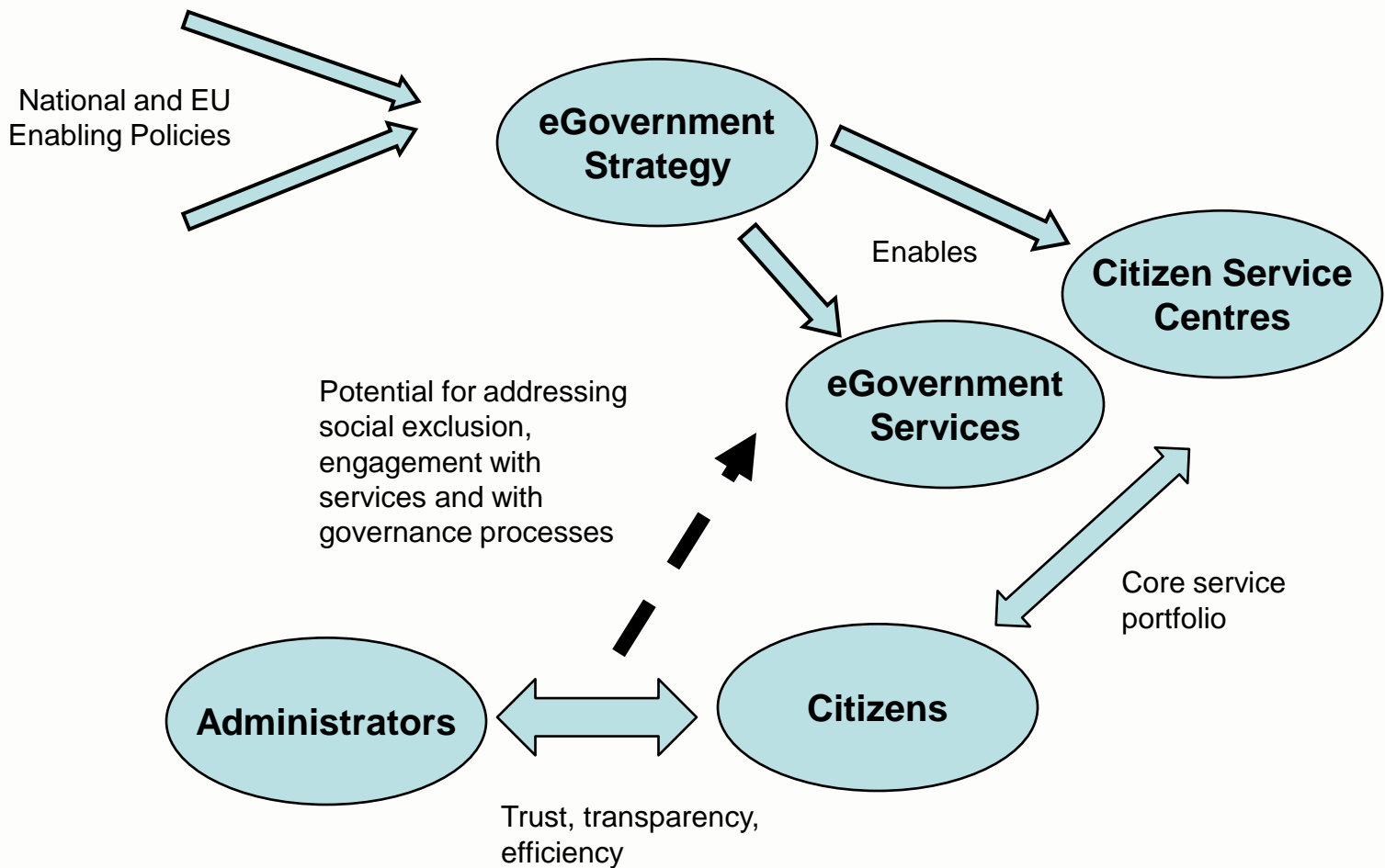
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CSCs, Greece



CSCs, Greece

- The case shows use of multiple channels:
 - back office system provides standardised online transactions, (organisational channels)
 - provides many more opportunities for structured face-to-face contact than before (human channel)
- It promotes Inclusive eGovernment through:
 - giving citizens easier access to a range of services
 - providing infrastructure and platform for future service development
 - addressing ICT-related exclusions
- It offers potential service sustainability through:
 - increased service effectiveness
 - service consistency and stability (reduced scope for inefficiency and corruption)
 - increased service quality and increased trust in government

CSCs, Greece

Building governance:

- Highly centralised approach reflects relative weaknesses in regional, sub-regional and local governance.
- Better access to services and improved efficiency strengthens the relationship between government and citizens
- Improved consistency and transparency builds trust
- eGovernment enables development of better governance

Service capacity:

- Multi-channel approach is key to enabling intermediaries and beneficiaries
- Based on the CSC network as a starting point, there is significant potential to move towards inclusive eGovernment
- Current phase is transitional between the old ways of delivering public services and the future. Involvement of intermediaries and building value networks is the next challenge

Summary

These cases, along with the earlier 'life-events' developed by the project, show that there are challenges, but they also show how multi-channel access to services can add value to each of the projects by:

- Maximising access to services through multiple channels
 - Building on the efficiencies and cost benefits of eGovernment in countries where resources are very limited, topography is very challenging, and social inclusion needs are significant
 - Allowing beneficiaries and intermediaries to build targeted service portfolios
- We now turn to consider what it all means ...



Sound analysis, inspiring ideas, effective delivery

