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## E-GOVERNMENT AS SOCIO-ECONOMIC TREND ~ KOSOVO CASE STUDY

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**Abstract:** The main mission of e-government in the first place is to provide a substantial increase of efficiency in the processing of massive requirements of citizens and providing administrative services within the state institutions, whether they are central or local institutions. There are increased amount of data for purchases, services and processing and is accelerated and the processing and storage of interactive databases and communication with customers. Likewise, e-governance contributes to long-term savings and significantly reduces the budget of the state apparatus. Substantial savings are possible, especially in the implementation of these governance models which interact in full horizontal communication among all relevant ministries, government institutions and public agencies or departments, and all state and local entities.

**Keywords:** e-governance, trends, service, administration, data, registers

### INTRODUCTION

That e-government be truly functional, for it to fulfill its mission satisfactorily, requires a precise and clear legal framework of the access availability level to personal data to protect in the first place all the citizens and their personal information.

It is necessary to develop an integrated national system of e-governance; should be included setting of all organs of state administration with the necessary information technology & programming packages. It is also necessary to train all those who work within the state and public administration, but also the citizens who use the system. In the initial stage, the cost of creating a service that functions as part of e-governance are very large, but the experiences of countries that consume these services for some years show that the subsequent savings in work of public administration have fully justified its initial investment. After all, the state and public administration with electronic governance have become much cheaper and more importantly, more transparent and more efficient.

However, a prerequisite for moving rapidly and functionally on e-governance is of course the fact that a large part of the country's population uses the Internet. In countries where the Internet has become an integral part of everyday life of the vast majority of citizens, this transformation of the service has its full meaning. In countries where the number of computers is still too small to invest in an integrated

system of e-governance would be premature and wasteful.

If we, for example, must be endowed with a certificate or declaration, it is sufficient that it be once in the system, and all those who have permission to access this system will be able to use the same virtual document. It is this unique administration which aims at strengthening the confidence of citizens in government and public administration.

All this of course allows considerable cost savings which until recently were considerable expenses for the public administration, but also provides a much better service for all users. To get a certificate or the required information is needed only a few minutes to work on your home computer, without the need of physical fatigue on many institutions counters. But perhaps the main social benefits of e-government are to ensure openness and transparency in all systems of governance and public administration. This is of course, the best way to fight corruption and abuse of power and position by any government official.

### USE OF THE INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC SERVICES TODAY

According to the latest figures of the UN today the internet is used more than 3 billion people, but there are significant differences not only between developed countries and countries that are developing, but also within the European continent.

The main primacy in this field have the Nordic countries, where over 85 percent of their population uses the Internet, with an impressive coverage of Iceland and Norway with over 90 per cent.

An extremely example guide and effective e-government offers small Estonia, which in the last decade has developed all of the e-government system. So today, almost all Estonian citizens have ID card with a special chip that through a special reader can access from their computers in an integrated computer system that allows them that almost all of their transactions government and public administration realize from the house. So for example via the internet to get any certificate or document is required to pay the tax and only some minutes to get the confirmation of payment and tax refund. Also, by means of electronic equipment can vote in local or general elections. If a citizen or potential investor in the Estonian economy will create an online company, for which would be needed just 18 minutes - that is probably a world record, but it gets even more useful information to enhance the professional image of Estonia as a place that really allows freedom of business and investment.

Estonia is also one of the first countries that immediately understand the dark side of e-government. Five years ago, after the relocation of a monument from the center of Tallinn, which is a symbol of the former occupation of Estonia by foreigners, was launched a virus around the world to seek specific information from the servers of the main institutions of Estonia, key at the same time, which cause a collapse in functional electronic services. For some days, Estonia was not able to use her official website. Their response, however, it was much pragmatic. With an intense lobbying, Estonia today has achieved to be the most positive image for e-governance becoming a center of excellence for the fight against cyber-terrorism, as well as the new EU Agency for the Information Technology.

#### **OECD AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING e-GOVERNMENT**

All the benefits of the transition to e-government that more than a decade ago are recognized by an international organization, whose responsibility is to encourage the development and the global economy. OECD in 2003 published the first comprehensive analysis of the benefits of switching to e-governance. This review shows that it is important when deciding to transition e-government, both nationally and at the level of the main organs of the state administration. Computerization and networking systems between state administrations have made it possible for citizens to communicate directly and perform the necessary actions with government and public institutions. This communication has

increased government efficiency, transparency and confidence in the work of the state administration, and also reduced the total cost of administration by promoting socio-economic development.

In its thematic report from 2012, the United Nations notes that e-government is an important mechanism or tool that has initiated positive social change and the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, the report shows an increase in the efficiency and transparency of e-governance.

International Telecommunication Union, as part of the global initiative "Connect with the world by 2015", calls for the harmonization of e-governance at the regional level so that all the citizens to participate actively in the management system. Then the whole system becomes an agent of change and social and economic reforms.

E-Governance today is based on a complex reform and reorganization of the classic work of the state and public administration, and its whole foundation is laid on the development of socio-economic policies for long-term strategies.

Today, only less than two percent of the world's governments do not have their own website and in less than forty countries, the relevant departments or ministries does' not yet have access through the Internet. Of course, this figure shows how e-government is still far from a global dimension. In more than 70 countries, all Internet users can communicate directly with the country's president.

#### **USE OF THE INTERNET AND e-SERVICES IN KOSOVO**

E-Kosovo began in 2008 with the designing and then the adoption of e-government strategy for 2009-2015 + with ambitious claims. E-government portal really provides an excellent overview of very useful informations. Most people today have the necessary need and knowledge for electronic interactive communication with the leadership of the state, the government and its ministries. This two-way communication is becoming the new standard of confidence in the work of these institutions and the basis of their reliability. Finally, it is certainly better that through criticism, comments, opinions to be channeled the demands of citizens and business community. It's hard to say exactly to what extent e-government strengthens tolerance in society, but the widespread use of the Internet certainly offers new insights about the world where there are different cultures, different ideas and values systems, also different and that no one has a monopoly on the truth. Therefore, e-government, but also the use of the internet today is based on the development of any modern country.

Association for Information and Communication Technology Kosovo (SHTIKK), in its annual report for 2013, estimates that the Internet in Kosovo, is in the

global standards. Internet penetration based on users is 76.6 % and 84.8% for households. This report provides updates of SHTIKK Regulation of 2012 by giving a brief overview of Internet usage in Kosovo in 2013.

Internet penetration in Kosovo based on users is 76.6%, this percentage was almost the same as those in developed countries. In a 2013 report published by the International Telecommunication Union, it is estimated that Internet penetration in developed countries is 77%. If figures are issued per household, then Internet penetration in Kosovo is even higher, reaching 84.4%. An estimation for the geographic penetration of the Internet has an average of nine wireless networks per kilometer everywhere in regional roads of Kosovo.

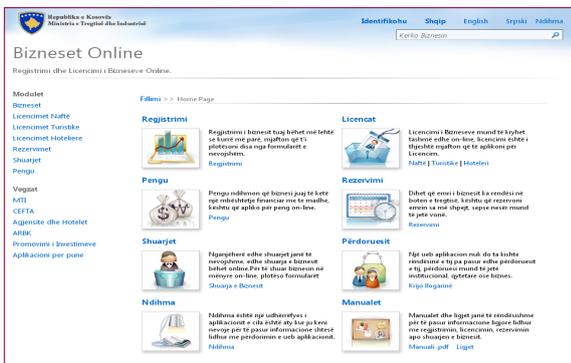


Figure 1. Online licensing system of the businesses in Kosovo

Regarding the situation of electronic services for businesses should be increased the efforts in awareness and training campaign for plurality of services offered but not yet satisfactorily used by business community itself. In the economic sphere, the availability of a variety of modern telecommunication services, helps businesses increase productivity and efficiency by creating more efficient manufacturing techniques and reducing the costs of coordinating of economic activity within and among businesses. Unfortunately, without a top-level domain of Kosovo, businesses cannot place the websites of their firms here and this way, various purchases and transactions remain extremely difficult to meet.

Kosovo should promote the information technology sector in particular to attract the foreign investment. Monitoring and support for public services is also important.

Over a million and one hundred thousand of Kosovo people use the Internet, with a nearly identical percentage of developed countries including the results for urban or rural areas which have almost equal usability. The percentage of rural population that uses the Internet is 77.7 percent, two points of index higher than urban population using the Internet with 75 percent. According to the results

show that 76.62 percent of the population are Internet users, while 23.38 percent stated they did not use it. Of these users, Internet access has 87 percent of urban households and 83 percent of rural households.

Kosovo is a society of widespread Internet, where the rate of Internet usage by the citizens is comparable to global rates.

Safety is the primary issue for the operation of IT systems in general and in particular for electronic governance. Physical protection of the equipments is essential to reduce the risk of unauthorized access to data and to protect against loss or damage.

Information System of the Government of Kosovo is largely conducted according to the standards and recommendations of Cisco and Microsoft. During this period, has been respected the standard of confidentiality, integrity and availability of information.

People's access to online public services has taken a great spreading, and it gives the possibility to people and civil society to monitor easier the institutions work.

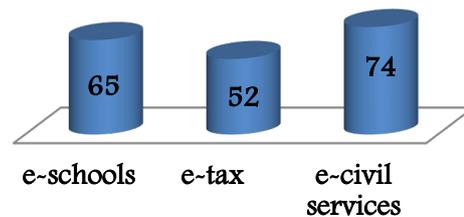


Figure 2. Differences in the use of e-services

Asked which of the internet services is mostly used, in the first place is Facebook, followed by Skype, personal email and Twitter. Forms of social communication like Skype and Facebook have a greater use because of the Diasporas, which uses these forms of communication with family members. Given that remittances to seven consecutive years tend to rise in Kosovo (which is the only event in the region, given the global economic crisis of the recent years) it can be seen as a way to attract investments from abroad (Diasporas).

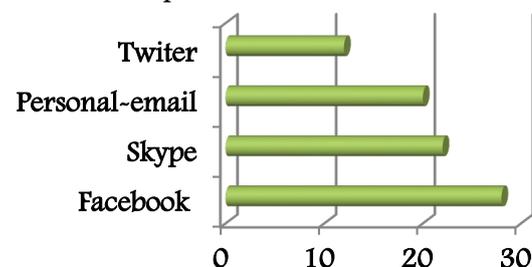
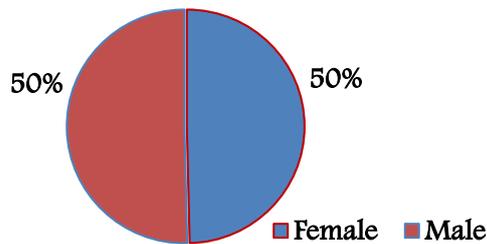


Figure 3. Web services that are used mostly

According to the results, employees use the Internet at the rate of 51.75 percent, while 48.25 percent unemployed. Also in this study is showed that 86.76 percent of respondents use the Internet every day, while 9.57 percent just three times a week.

It also showed that the percentage of women who use the Internet is lower than men. 49.62 percent of women use the Internet, while 50.38 percent use men.



**Figure 4.** Users of electronic services according to gender structure

And in accordance with global trends, the number of Internet users via mobile phones is in the amount of 65.37 percent.

Kosovo is already a very dynamic online environment, with potential for further development of business, government and investors.

### CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental function and mission of e-government is the modernization of the administration or efficient and accountable management in all its levels.

For a faster economic and more substantive development in the Republic of Kosovo, without any doubt, enter the part of the creation and realization of more and qualitative electronic services for the citizens and businesses in Kosovo.

The creation of this environment of electronic services will enable citizens, businesses, as well as the Government, an increase in the living standards and a rapid progress in all areas.

E-governance will upgrade the administration and will create an efficient and responsible management in all levels of administration, and will reflect in the actual implementation of the Strategy for the Public Administration Reform.

With the implementation of e-government strategy, Kosovo society will have great benefits. The benefits will be economic and social, including the modernization of the administration, education, health, justice, security, business development, trade development, agricultural development, budget increase, the growth of democracy, the development of culture, scientific researches, various statistics, etc. Some of the benefits of e-government application would be:

- » Reduction of administrative loads and expenses;
- » It will increase the transparency and efficiency in public administration;
- » Develops effective relationships (student-teacher-parent) in education;
- » It increases significantly the safety and reliability in the justice;
- » Fights and reduces the organized crime;

- » Digitalizes the data and automates the processing of information;
- » Reduces the necessary time in decision-making;
- » Reduces the level of corruption;
- » Creates spaces for increasing the investments;
- » Citizens and businesses realize their obligations through the Internet;
- » Revenues realization electronically is monitored better
- » Facilitates the communication with the community, especially in rural areas;
- » The information published and online training that are undertaken, it influences on the increase of knowledge and makes the improvement of technology in all areas of life.

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