

E-GOVERNANCE IN SMALL STATES

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE, LONDON | 19 NOVEMBER 2012

The Commonwealth Secretariat is holding a one-day conference on the latest developments in e-Governance for small states. The aim of the conference is to identify how the small states of the Commonwealth can maximise the potential of e-Governance for public administration to deliver deeper democracy and better development outcomes. The conference will bring different perspectives – i.e. the private sector, international organisations, member countries and academia – to build partnerships and foster knowledge sharing.

BACKGROUND

The evolution of ICTs over the past decade has provided new digital pathways for collection and diffusion of ideas and practices, enabling collaboration among diverse interest groups, intensifying the voice of communities and creating an environment to encourage digital democracy. Furthermore, the ease of access to information and the exponential increase in social media provide a vibrant digital culture to strengthen social accountability, improve transparency and ultimately achieve good governance goals.

E-Governance is the government owned or operated systems of information and information technologies that transform relations with citizens, the private sector and/ or other government agencies so as to promote citizens' empowerment, improve service delivery, strengthen accountability, increase transparency, and improve government efficiency.

The transformation of government processes to be citizen-focused requires reengineering of rules and processes by removing process silos and unnecessary 'hand-offs'. The application of technology amplifies the efficiency and transparency benefits associated with reengineering. Governments will become more efficient and provide better customer service, while reducing red tape and costs.

The combination of transparency and citizen participation can also increase public service delivery efficiency and responsiveness, as well as the government's ability to correctly prioritise services to correspond with citizen desires. Not only can public trust in government be enhanced, but inclusion and empowerment of groups often excluded from the policy process can be increased through extension of information access and capability to all citizens.

ICT AND 'MICRO-GOVERNANCE'

Small states face considerable challenges relating to their small size and isolation, which lead to their limited ability to reap the benefits of economies of scale, vulnerability to adverse external shocks and limited institutional capacity of the public sector.

ICTs play two crucial roles in addressing these challenges, by:

- Modernising government processes and enhancing the ability of the public sector to overcome the barriers associated with small size and isolation, to cost-effectively and efficiently reach and tailor services to isolated communities.
- Improving the speed and ease of new communication, enabling widespread citizen participation in decision-making and strengthening social accountability.

The mobilisation of ICTs for the 'micro-governance' of small developing states improves the quality of institutions, which in turn has been shown to improve political stability, raise the public debt threshold, decrease growth volatility and increase foreign aid and investment.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the latest developments and opportunities in e-Governance in small states from different perspectives – i.e. the private sector, international organisations, and Commonwealth small states.
- Share successful experiences, skills and knowledge on implementing e-Governance initiatives, which involve complex applications and processes that affect the government as a whole.
- Explore mechanisms to build partnerships between Commonwealth small states and the private sector and international organisations.
- Identify how the Commonwealth Secretariat's e-Governance programme can best help small states

Presentations on the latest developments, lessons learned and best practices in e-Governance will be made by the private sector, international ICT organisations, academia, member states and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

PLANNED OUTPUTS

- Improved operational insights on implementation of e-Governance in small state contexts.
- Compendium of 'best fit' practice based on small state country experiences and engagement with development partners.

- Engagement with private and international organisations to develop productive partnerships in e-Governance.
- Launch of the Commonwealth Secretariat's *e-Governance in Small States Handbook*.

AUDIENCE

- Government representatives – High Commissioners from the 32 Commonwealth Small States.¹
- Private ICT sector.
- International ICT organisations.
- Academia.

PROGRAMME

Time	Topic	Speaker
10:00 – 10:15	Opening Remarks and Welcome	Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat
10:15 – 10:30	The Commonwealth and e-Governance	Max Everest-Phillips (Director, Governance and Institutional Development Division)
10:30 – 11:15	Key Note Speech: How can ICT assist small states in strengthening governance	Frank McCosker (Managing Director, Global Strategic Accounts, Microsoft)
11:15 – 11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30 – 12:00	Telecommunications infrastructure for e-Governance in small states	Lasantha De Alwis (Corporate Secretary & Head, Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation)
12:00 – 12:30	Building partnerships for e-Governance in small states	Joseph Tabone (Chair, COMNET)
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 14:15	Lessons learned and 'best fit' practices	Lanka Dorby (Executive Director, ICT Division, Office of the President, Seychelles) David Spiteri Gingell (Former Executive Chair, Malta Information Technology Agency)
14:15 – 14:45	Ensuring public value in e-Governance	Antonio Cordella (London School of Economics)
14:45 – 15:15	E-Government evaluation in small states	José-Rodrigo Córdoba-Pachón (Royal Holloway)
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee Break	
15:30 – 16:00	Panel Discussion: How can the Commonwealth best assist small states with e-Governance	Panel Chair: Tony Ming Members: Frank McCosker, Lasantha De Alwis, Lanka Dorby, Antonio Cordella
16:00 – 16:30	The Commonwealth's e-Governance future	Tony Ming (ICT Advisor, Governance and Institutional Development Division)
16:30 – 17:00	Launch of the <i>e-Governance in Small States Handbook</i>	Max Everest-Phillips / Tony Ming
17:00 – 17:15	Break	
17:15 – 19:15	Reception	Remarks by Frank McCosker (Managing Director, Global Strategic Accounts, Microsoft)

¹ The Secretariat defines small states as countries with populations of less than 1.5 million. This list of countries also includes some larger countries – Botswana, Jamaica, Lesotho, Namibia and Papua New Guinea – that share many of the characteristics of small states.

