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A BLUEPRINT FOR AN ADAPTIVE AND INNOVATIVE GOVERNMENT

2020 - 2030

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A BLUEPRINT FOR AN ADAPTIVE AND INNOVATIVE GOVERNMENT

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research group

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1 Objectives of the Blueprint

Society's evolution requires governments, and their administration, to rethink their role and position in the world. *All countries face on-going social, economic and environmental challenges that cannot be tackled by States' administrations alone.* New policy initiatives have been emerging, where citizens, civil society organisations, and businesses are involved and challenge the administration by making use of bottom-up approaches and initiatives. Technology is thereby helping those citizens, civil society organisations and businesses to voice their concerns and bring their grieves to the attention of politicians and administrations.

Governments have to find ways to deal with these changing situations. The existing federal administration is also challenged by other governmental levels, whether at the regional or local level. Indeed, cities and municipalities often offer a more suitable structure and proximity with the citizens that favour interaction, while regional organisations create more possibilities to deal with regional challenges. This raises the following questions: *How can the federal government, and its administration, evolve, in order to become even more adaptive and innovative?*

This question seems simple at first sight but calls for a highly complex answer. Government plays a fundamental role, but it needs to reinvent its way of functioning. Government is driven by complex demands and challenges at the global, regional,

national and individual level, builds on technology, remains in the hands of humans, connects society and facilitates interaction and society-driven solutions.

To deal with these challenges and demands, the Government's administration needs to reinforce itself so that it becomes more adaptive and innovative, and the creation of a new approach is required to be able to fulfil the needs of society. Above all, and by all means, the Government should be there for its citizens, by respecting the fundamental rights and values enshrined in the social contract concluded with its citizens, and by continuing on the path of the liberal democracy. Indeed, transforming the administration, and thereby making use of digital tools and technological advancements, may undermine the rights and security of citizens, businesses or societal organisations.



The position of the Government's administration in society is changing. It is moving from a leading and dominant position towards a new role as facilitator and partner of its citizens, businesses, and other societal organisations. The Belgian federal administration is particularly vulnerable to the on-going changes because of the multiple federalisation waves it had (and has) to face and its relatively long, and silo structured, existence. The federal administration is influenced by policies developed by international (e.g. PSI Directive, INSPIRE Directive) and regional actors (e.g. address registers developed by regions, building registries) as well as by events taking place at the international and regional level. Furthermore, it is confronted with a changing civil society and new civil society organisations and movements, such as climate organisations and the growing disconnection between political parties and civil society organisations (e.g. Greenpeace, Youth for Climate).

In conjunction with this challenge, today's on-going and steady technological advancements (Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Big Data, Internet of Things, etc.) are expected to change the citizens' and businesses' ideas on the services offered by the administration. Technology is, as such, expected to transform the relationship between society and the administration. Citizens, civil society organisations and business have more tools to inform the administration on their expectations and the administrations is capable of being in constant contact with

society. As society evolves, influenced by the wave of digitalisation that flows over an ever-more localised and globalised world, *the expectations grow for the administration's organisations to innovate in the way they work and interact* with citizens, businesses and other organisations from the same or another level of power.

The *Government's future* lies in becoming an *adaptive and participatory actor* that is organised on the *principles of openness and collaboration*, thereby making use of the possibilities provided by both human capacity and technology. The Government of the future has an administration that interacts and innovates with society and citizens, while providing the necessary structure based on the traditional bureaucracy. It serves the others, and acts as an epitome of trust. It steers towards a sustainable future with society and other governments' administration.

During the last decades, the *Belgian federal administration has taken crucial steps* when it comes to e-government developments and reforms. Moreover, the various levels of power have realised that cooperation with others concerning the offering of services and the exchange of data and information is the way forward. Singular actions by one organisation are often no longer possible and feasible in a multi-level governance context.

The above calls for an overall view on what the Government's future should be. There is a crucial need to find a common approach regarding the path to follow. Of course, all actors should remain free to implement this common approach

concretely in the manner they find best suited. This process requires out-of-the-box thinking, and will challenge actors, organisations and individuals. *Accordingly, the goal of this Blueprint is to suggest a vision on Government. Three axes, nine key principles and a dozen of strategic actions are suggested to reinforce the administrations aiming for an even more adaptive and innovative Government. This Blueprint Vision* also underlines the benefits of the suggested strategic actions. It builds on the findings of the FLEXPUB project, but also exploits basic fundamental principles for an appropriate relationship between the state, society and citizens. This Blueprint starts from an e-government context but aims to look beyond it and touch on more essential questions. Technology is, in this respect, only one of

the on-going challenges that invite to question the shape of Government, while e-government is only a tool that may help to achieve it.

This Blueprint, which purposely remains general in scope, is complemented by a more detailed and specific approach in the *Strategy for Flexible Geospatial Public E-Services*. In order to be aligned with this Strategy, this Blueprint also follows a ten-year timeline (2020-2030). The year 2030, and the finalisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, will offer the ideal setting to evaluate the then-achieved position of the State in relation to citizens and society.¹

¹ It has to be underlined that this framework is built on the basis of existing frameworks, such as the “Open Government Framework” and the findings from the FLEXPUB research (*Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice*, D. Lanthrop, & L. Ruma (Eds.), 2010, O’Reilly Media, Sebastopol (United States).)

2 A Vision oriented around three Axes

Our vision of Government is oriented around three axes. Those axes should allow the government's administration to become more innovative and adaptive. The three axes interact with each other and are complementary. Based on our research, an Adaptive and Innovative Government is one that...

...is opened towards the outside world: Openness is about sharing information and services as broadly as possible, when possible for free, in a secure and privacy compliant manner, in order to increase transparency and foster economic growth through collaboration and data re-use, and to generate value-added services.

...takes constantly into account the evolving needs from its stakeholders: The participation of stakeholders, whether they are citizen, businesses, societal organisations or civil servants, will enable the Government to make decisions that are more in phase with the currently existing needs and benefits of the stakeholders.

...organises itself on the needs of those it serves: Organisations of the future will continue to provide services, thereby stimulating themselves to constantly reinvent their activities and to motivate societal organisations to do the same. This implies the need to rethink their organisational structures, depending on the service needs. Collaboration is required, implying the need to build bridges, connections and networks between the different layers within and between different administration's organisations.

3 Nine Key principles

The three axes identified above can be further refined into nine key guiding principles that can be followed by the administration. **In line with the axes, those principles should allow the Government to input the suggested vision, in order to become even more innovative and adaptive.**

3.1 Open Government

Rethinks the information management system²



Transitioning towards a truly “Open Government” implies fundamental data governance reflections, as rethinking the whole information management system is a prerequisite to achieve efficient and effective openness. While this process has been started by the administration, it is a constant work in progress to reflect on how the information infrastructure should serve the administration’s goals. Indeed, integrated information systems can enable better decision-making and help improve on the public values that the federal administration pursues. Moreover, it can help to identify, in a more timely fashion, relevant datasets requested by re-users. Being “Open” thus requires much more than uploading data on an “Open data” portal; it is a mind-set.

Furthermore, such an openness may also be required from the private sector. Indeed, there are reflections at the European level on whether data held by private companies, and deemed to be of public interest, should be shared with the administration.³ Policymaking would strongly benefit from the potential to reuse private sector data. This requires close collaboration between the private and public sector.

Ensures sustainable funding for public data quality and up-to-dateness

It also implies finding the right balance between budgetary autonomy and user orientation, namely between free and royalty fees’ models, as a sufficient funding is vital to keep the quality of the data, and specifically its up-to-dateness, at an appropriate level. Indeed, the value of the data for re-users is function of its nature (value-added data is more useful than raw

² The icons related to Openness, Participation and Collaboration are retrieved from flaticon.com.

³ See the High-Level Expert Group on Business-to-Government Data Sharing, Towards a European strategy on business-to-government data sharing for the public interest – Final Report, 19 February 2020, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/experts-say-privately-held-data-available-european-union-should-be-used-better-and-more>.

data), quality and up-to-dateness, and Government should strive towards meeting these requirements.

Guarantees personal data protection and security

Finally, Government shall take personal data protection and security concerns into consideration from the start when rethinking its information management system. Ensuring maximum privacy for citizens should be the norm (Privacy-by default) and the IT infrastructure should be developed in a way that ensures this (Privacy-by-design).

3.2 Participative Government

Aligns with and trains internal stakeholders



The digital divide remains a crucial challenge in society. Government must not only tackle it externally but also within the administration. New developments in technologies and the digitalisation will allow it to redesign its processes and organisations. This profound transformation must take place in coordination with the internal stakeholders, in order to decrease their fear of losing jobs and of change in general, and to transform their previous tasks in new ones, with more meaning and added-value. Staff should also be able to acquire the necessary competencies to deal with the new technologies, not only within their own administration, but also at the local

level when there is strong interaction with the higher administration.

Integrates the input from citizens and external users

External users, such as citizens and businesses, have higher or new requirements regarding the services provided by the administration but also strive towards being recognised in a proactive position for the service delivery. Government should organise as a platform to let the interested users take up that role. This proactive role can take several forms, from being a consumer of information to a highly active involvement in the service delivery. Examples of such involvement are app development, service feedback rounds or participation in the development of services. Ultimately, users can also be involved to redefine the role of government, in a broader debate about their needs.

Develops the appropriate methods and tools

Developing a participative strategy internally and externally requires a fundamental change in the existing processes of Government. Government should experiment with existing and new methods to gather the input, whether on a small scale, via group discussions, roundtables, or interviews, or on a large scale, via social media, surveys or online platforms. Those methods should be implemented in a coherent and continuous way, to ensure a lasting impact.

3.3 Collaborative Government

Rethinks organisational structures to actively serve the end-user



Developing a collaborative approach is a primordial requirement to ensure that Government becomes and acts in a user-oriented

way. In turn, it will also stimulate additional collaboration. The inclusion of stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, as well as the need to actively provide changing services based on the evolving needs of citizens, businesses and societal organisations can only be achieved by stimulating the collaboration among different societal and government actors.

Strengthens coordination and sharing practices within a single administration

Government has to make use of the digital opportunities to increase the coordination and sharing of data, information and services across different organisations of the same administration. Interoperability, a

shared policy and communication approach, and intensified collaboration focused on coordination instruments within the same administration are crucial. This will require the rethinking of currently existing forms of collaboration within the federal administration.

Builds on common service and data approaches to stimulate cooperation across public administrations

The federal public administration has to collaborate with other public administrations, within and across national borders. A user-centric approach and global challenges force the federal administration to look beyond their own level. The public administration has to develop networks and stimulate participation with partner public administrations. It has to further intensify data exchange approaches (including geospatial data) as well as the development of common services and standards. The further development of the Belgian interoperability framework is highly recommended in this respect, thereby focusing on legal, organisational, semantic and technical interoperability.

4 Strategic Actions for Government

To achieve these nine key principles, the following strategic actions are suggested. Those strategic actions should allow the Government to become more innovative and adaptive. Those strategic actions are partially derived from a more detailed and specific analysis in the **Strategy for Flexible Geospatial Public E-Services**. Indeed, those strategic actions are broader in scope and do not only focus on a geospatial context but impact the Government in all of its dimensions and missions.

4.1 Open Government

Rethinking the information management system: Fundamental data governance reflections



Government needs to *launch awareness-raising campaigns* about the benefits of Open Data in its administration. Indeed, opening up public information is a major change requiring a great deal of time and resources. *To motivate the administration* to engage in such a revolution, it needs to be guided and convinced that this will not only be useful for the re-users, i.e. private sector, NGOs, citizens etc., but that it is most importantly beneficial for itself. Indeed, the public sector is the first beneficiary of Open Data because it forces the administration to invest in its information management systems and in structures that will facilitate its work, and it also allows to break silos within the administration as the various departments are thereby made aware of the informational resources that already exists internally elsewhere.

Government needs to *provide tools and instruments facilitating data re-use*. Indeed, fostering economic growth through data re-use, in order to generate value-added services, requires more than simply uploading data on an “Open data” portal. It calls for collaboration between the administration and the re-users, with the former creating the tools allowing the latter to identify quickly and efficiently the datasets that are valuable to them. This could be achieved through standardisation and through the creation of a single point of contact to help re-users know where to find the specific data that they look for. Moreover, in order to facilitate the provision of this data, Government should work on making its data available via Application Programming Interfaces (APIs).

Additionally, Government should *define priorities in order to determine on which open datasets it should be invested the most*. To do so, Government could take both a passive and active approach. The passive approach would consist in monitoring the number of downloads that the various datasets have had, in order to identify those that are re-used the most. The active approach would consist in setting an “Open Data working group” with

representatives of the re-users (citizens, private sector, NGOs) in order to identify use cases and potential re-users, to define data quality requirements and to identify public datasets that are not yet open, but have a major economic or societal value (this could especially be relevant for authoritative data sources).

In order to enable re-users to combine data held by administrations of different levels of power, Government should *strive towards harmonising the various “data re-use licences”*, in order to avoid licensing incompatibilities’ issue, through an agreement on a *set of common licences*, which would replace the current licence fragmentation. The standard for such licences should be based on supra-national standards, namely the CC-BY⁴ or the CC0⁵ Creative Commons licence. This not only requires ensuring technical standards’ compatibility between the various licences, but also legal compatibility. Moreover, these licences need to be available for all on the Open data platforms, in order for the platforms’ visitors to know what their rights and obligations will be if they decide to re-use the data.

Finally, in the vein of discussions currently ongoing at the European level⁶, Government should engage with the private sector in order to *set the conditions for the access to public interest data held by private companies*, and deemed to be of public interest, as government policy

making would highly benefit from the possibilities offered by this data sharing. This fits in the wider reflexion of the constant necessity to evaluate what is to be considered as falling within the public interest and the administration’s public service mission. The key question is indeed which privately held data should be considered as being of public interest and hence should be made available to the administration? Naturally, such collaborations should be set in full compliance with personal data protection and security requirements and should ensure the protection of the private companies’ commercial interests.

Sustainable funding to ensure public data’s quality and up-to-dateness

Government needs to *foresee sustainable “Open Data funding”* of the fixed and marginal costs linked to the quality, the continuity and the maintenance of the opened data at the federal level, via a global federal budgetary envelope, or via the creation of “Freemium models” (data would be shared freely, but administrations could sell the services built on top of this data to third parties). The same should also be done within each level of power (Regions and Communities). Ideally, this “Open Data funding” issue should be tackled before July 2021, as by then, the Government will have to transpose the

⁴ <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/be/>

⁵ <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.fr>

⁶ See the High-Level Expert Group on Business-to-Government Data Sharing, *Towards a European strategy on business-to-government data sharing for the public interest – Final Report*, 19 February 2020, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/experts-say-privately-held-data-available-european-union-should-be-used-better-and-more>.

amended version of the PSI Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/1024 of 20 June 2019) in Belgian law. Indeed, this Directive imposes the obligation to share “High-value datasets” for free. This will have a significant impact on federal administrations that are not funded at 100% by tax-payer money, because they will no longer be able to request a fee for these types of data. Moreover, the Directive also imposes to set up APIs for these High-value datasets, and this should be implemented in a uniform and standardised way at the Federal level.

Government needs to *collaborate with its re-users*, in order to ensure that the public sector data is always of the utmost quality and timeliness. Indeed, while the administration uses data for its own functioning, it might not always need this data to be of a perfect quality or perfectly up-to-date to be able to provide its public services. Thus, it might not have the incentive to “go the extra-mile” to increase the quality and up-to-dateness for the re-users that require it for their own services. Therefore, creating an eco-system where public-private-partnerships (PPPs) are entered into in order for re-users to increase this quality and up-to-dateness of public data not only for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of the administration, is an avenue that should be explored (e.g. the FPS Mobility could enter into a partnership with applications such as Waze in order to get real-time data about the status of traffic jams in order to re-orient drivers, via interactive screens on the road). For instance, instead of re-using raw public data, a private sector company could be interested in partnering up with an

administration in order to get access to value-added data created specifically by the administration for that specific PPP.

Guaranteeing personal data protection and security

Government should *take personal data protection and security concerns into consideration* from the start when rethinking its information management system. Ensuring maximum privacy for citizens should be the norm (Privacy-by default) and the IT infrastructure should be developed in a way that ensures this (Privacy-by-design).

To do so, Government should *provide trainings to its civil servants about the IT security measures* that they must respect, and about the existing personal data protection rules that impact on their daily work (EU General Data Protection Regulation, relevant national legislations, good practices...). This should be done in a multi-modal way (documents, templates, workshops, traineeships...).

Finally, Government should *adopt strict personal data protection and security policies*. These should not be adopted once and for all, but should be reviewed often enough to keep in touch with the new technological developments. Indeed, future technical developments will potentially affect the security of the systems, or might endanger personal data protection through the apparition of new techniques of big data collection and analysis facilitating the re-identification of individuals. In this regard, Government should conduct regular audits of its

administration, to ensure that it fully respects these personal data protection and security policies.

4.2 Participative Government

Aligns with and trains internal stakeholders



Government should *take into account the input from its internal* (civil servants) *stakeholders to improve its functioning*. In

order to increase the acceptance of a project and to gain input from civil servants, one must involve internal stakeholders, through interviews or group discussions for instance, to explain the project. This collection of input must ideally be done in each of the potentially impacted departments to maximise the idea generation (Human Resources, IT, Records Management, Communication, Finance, Legal etc.). Furthermore, this internal alignment will allow identifying people who could prove to be valuable resources within each department. It will also improve the sense of acceptance of the projects, as the civil servants would positively welcome the opportunity to give ideas and feedback beforehand. On a final note, one must be aware that the digital divide is present within the population but also internally between departments and between different public administrations (such as local administrations). Therefore, the explanations have to be adapted in function of the digital literacy and respective skills of the department so that Government is truly inclusive. To improve these skills, key

trainings enhanced by innovative methods (e.g. SCRUM), improvisation principles, visualisation, online training tools and modules could be used.

Integrates the input from citizens and external users

Government should *take into account the input from its external* (citizens, business or other societal and governmental actors) *stakeholders to improve its functioning*. Government should thus consider its external stakeholders as multifaceted partners.

Firstly, they can be *democratic participants* in the decision-making process of government. By engaging in consultation, government will gather ideas from the external stakeholders without a necessary impact on decision-making. At a higher level, co-decision should be possible with decision-making shared between officials, citizens and businesses. This co-decision must be performed taking into account the representativeness of the participants with respect to the population. Secondly, citizens and businesses can be *co-creators* in order to propose better solutions and ideas and to decrease the risk of failure of the projects early in the process. Finally, thanks to the new developments in information and communication technologies, the external stakeholders can also participate as *ICT users* by proactively using the ICT infrastructure to make them feel surrounded by technology and to enable them to participate more easily. For

instance, several platforms⁷ can be used to collect ideas, needs and input from citizens.

Develops the appropriate methods and tools

In order to collect the input, Government should consistently rely on a number of **participation methods** to develop a complementary ecosystem of participation. Interviews are a direct and simple method to gather input from the stakeholders. A representation in the project team can also be an option to determine salient intermediary stakeholders that can be considered as partners and intermediaries in different stages. Workshops allow the interaction with selected groups of different stakeholders, with the aid of innovative techniques such as visualisation tools or improvisation principles. Finally, other methods are possible such as online and off-line surveys, phone, mails, comments collected on website, dedicated platforms, social media, innovation ecosystems (living lab or hackathons) or prototyping.

Government should implement different participation methods to carefully **take into account the ideas, needs, expectations and requirements of its citizens**. The choice to use such methods, or of which method to use, depends on different context factors specific to each case: the organisational context, the users' characteristics, the project stage or the public values present in the organisation. We thus recommend that the choice is made in a coherent way with

regard to these context factors. A particular attention should be set on the transparency of the requirements' processing.

By **embracing participation**, Government can expect several benefits in their functioning such as increased trust, better alignment between project and requirements or promotion of innovation.

4.3 Collaborative Government

Rethinks organisational structures to actively serve the end-user



Government needs to function in a user-centric way. **Offering user-centric services will require the further and continuous development of a network of public administrations, civil servants, tools and data**, which creates the possibility for civil servants to serve citizens, business and societal organisations in an active way. This network transcends a single public administration, and also involves collaboration with the local level, which is the level mostly consulted by citizens. The intensified collaboration within the entire Belgian public administration, will ensure that users are served in a more effective way, when they need a service. Technology developments are in this respect also expected to lead to a different offering of services. Administrations now function in a fixed timeframe, whereas it can be

⁷ Example of citizen consultation to discuss fake news by the Belgian federal administration.

expected that technology will reduce this dependency.

Government will be a push government. *It will offer services when users need it without them having to ask for the services. Strict implementation of the organisational interoperability and the once-only principle will be crucial in this respect*, while ensuring that public administrations remain accessible. The local level will be key in this respect as it is a key access point for citizens and businesses, but has to be supported by the higher levels. Therefore, those higher levels, together, need to support the local level in providing specific service support and general guidelines. Furthermore, to implement organisational interoperability and the once-only principle, governments will need to further develop the *concept of authoritative data*. It is of high importance that the federal administration defines, together with the three regional administrations, what the concept means and which quality requirements are set for the data sources that will be labelled as authoritative.

Government might no longer be able to deal alone with the different challenges it faces. When possible and necessary, and in the interest of serving the users, a potential *collaboration with the private sector as well as with civil society organisations* must be considered. Also, due to the 'de-pillarisation' of society, it can be questioned to what extent the current interaction between the administration and civil society via the long-existing institutionalised consultative structures remains legitimate. In this context, it should be possible to find new partners in civil

society. Such a collaboration can go in various directions. It is advisable that the different societal and public administration actors meet on a regular basis to discuss strategic e-government themes which are of common interest, and to debate ongoing and future strategic e-government development. Based on those meetings, it can be agreed to take common actions. For example, some services can be developed in a partnership between the public sector, civil society and the private sector, data can be shared to optimise policies, and policies can be developed by civil society organisations with support from the public sector.

Strengthens coordination and sharing practices within a single administration

It is advisable that the Government makes *use of a common and shared e-government policy and communication approach in its activities towards its end-users*. Increasing the user-centricity of the organisation requires the development and acceptance of a common external approach towards the users. This will lead towards the avoidance of confusing and contradictory messages for the users. It will require the development and acceptance of common lines of communication and presentation by the different organisations of an administration. There can be differentiation, but only based on the different type of users.

There is a need to *adopt new organisational instruments and responsibilities*, whereby organisations with horizontal responsibilities, such as the FPS BOSA – DG DT and the FPS Chancellery

– DG Administrative Simplification, need to be further strengthened in order to be able to provide the necessary support towards the other federal organisations. This will increase the possibility of those vertical organisations to focus on their core tasks and allow them to tackle challenges in cooperation with their external stakeholders. Secondly, besides the need to strengthen horizontal organisations, it is suggested that the G-Cloud structure and the Board of the Federal Chief Information Officers, which are both voluntary collaboration bodies, are grouped into an officially established coordination body called the “E-Government Board”.

IT Departments within the federal organisations need to be supported and triggered to develop their mutual relations in order to increase the (re-)use of services, data, tools and information. *Together with their internal Innovation Teams, internal HR Departments, the internal organisational Management, and with the support of the FPS BOSA and the overarching approach of the E-Government Board, the IT Department needs to trigger change within its organisation and increase the use of the most recent technological tools and possibilities for offering services towards the end-users.* It is of crucial importance that the IT Departments is more than technology driven. They need a clear vision and strategy that fits within the broader approach of the organisation and the overall administration so that they are able to support the wider development of the organisation and the federal administration.

Builds on common services and data approaches to stimulate cooperation across governments

Different policy fields and thematic topics are spread among various policy levels. Users, be it citizens, businesses or societal organisations, want to receive the desired public service but have no interest in being confronted with the complexity of the state structure. Therefore, it is advisable that the Government continues to develop, in collaboration with the other governmental levels, ***a single portal that groups common services and public data of the different Belgian administrations.*** Besides developing such a platform, a process needs to be established to continuously update the information on the available services and public data. Furthermore, ***intensified collaboration and cooperation*** with the other governmental levels will increase the quality and user-centricity of the services. Various possibilities exist, ranging from cooperation agreements, the creation of common organisations or the re-federalisation of certain services. In particular, the creation of interfederal coordination bodies for specific topics has proven to be valuable.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the federal administration, together with the three regional administrations continues to ***further develop the Belgian interoperability framework***, thereby focusing on legal, organisational, semantic and technical interoperability.

The European Union internal market and cross-border activities, the increased movement of people both within the European Union and outside of it, the

globalisation of our markets and the ongoing security risks, enforce the need for Government to *collaborate intensively across national borders* with neighbouring countries, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and France, but also with supra and international organisations. In this regard, the aim has to be the intensified creation of cross-border services for businesses, and when necessary, for citizens, the increased exchange of data and the creation of

common standards that can intensify the user-benefits.

Collaboration in Government, however, has to go further than just the mere exchange of data and the creation of common and shared services. The exchange of knowledge and stimulation of thoughts on potentially new and innovative approaches via *nationally and internationally organised exchange programs can stimulate all civil servants.*

5 Benefits of the Strategic Actions

Each of the strategic actions suggested above creates benefits for the Government. These are built on insights gained from the FLEXPUB project, academic literature, and national and international good practices.

5.1 Open Government

... rethinks the information management system	
1. Launches internal awareness-raising campaigns	Allows better perception of the benefits, for all, of Open Data and motivates further engagement in this endeavour.
2. Provides tools and instruments to facilitate data re-use	Allows public data re-use by a wider variety of re-users and not only by businesses having high IT skills, providing more choice for citizens, SMEs and non-profit organisations.
3. Defines priorities in order to determine on which open datasets it should be invested the most	Allows the administrations to focus their efforts and resources on the most relevant datasets, in order to maximise re-use. This increase in re-uses will, in turn, further motivate the administrations to engage with Open Data.
4. Agrees on a set of common “data re-use licenses” that are publicly available (CC0 and CC-BY)	Allows re-users to combine data from different administrations, in order to provide more complete services across the entire Belgian territory.
5. Sets the conditions for the access to public interest data held by private companies, in full compliance with personal data protection and security requirements	Allows the Government to have access to a greater scale and scope of data, in order to enhance its policies and decision-making processes (for instance in terms of mobility).

... Ensures sustainable funding for public data quality and up-to-dateness	
1. Foresees sustainable Open Data funding	Allows engaging more actively in Open Data, which is no longer seen as a costly obligation but as a benefit for all.
2. Collaborates with re-users on quality and up-to-dateness of data	Allows the provision of better services by both the re-users and the administration itself.

... guarantees personal data protection and security	
1. Takes personal data protection and security concerns into consideration from the outset	Allows the administration's organisations to be more systematic in their projects. Avoids classic legal compliance issues at the end of the project, thus reducing frustrations by the project developers.
2. Provides training to civil servants on IT security measures	Reduces the number of security incidents, which are often due to human errors or insufficient knowledge of the security risks and good practices.
3. Adopts strict personal data protection and security policies	Generates more trust from the citizens and provides them with more control on their personal data.

5.2 Participative Government

... aligns with and trains internal stakeholders	
1. Takes into account the input from civil servants	Allows to increase the internal acceptance of projects and benefits from the internal knowledge.
2. Bridges the internal digital divide	Takes into account the discrepancies in terms of digital skills from the civil servants and provides solutions to decrease it.
3. Offers training to staff from the public administration, also at the local level	Ensures that staff, at federal and local level, has the possibility to participate in training, thereby strengthening skills and competencies.

... integrates the input from citizens and external users	
1. Considers external users as democratic participants and allows them to have an impact in the decision process in a representative manner	Increases the external acceptance of projects and benefits from external knowledge.
2. Allows external users to become co-creators of services	Empowers the users to provide insights in the development and to develop their own solutions.

... develops the appropriate methods and tools	
1. Understands what methods and tools bring added value to the internal and external users	Provides the organisation with information about the range of possibilities to enable participation.
2. Develops complementary methods and tools to stimulate participation of internal and external users	Develops an ecosystem of participation to maximise the collection of internal and external inputs and evaluates the impact of this collection.

5.3 Collaborative Government

... rethinks organisational structures to actively serve the end-user	
1. Creates a stable internal organisational network to offer user-centric services	Promotes active and collaborative organisations, allows for increased standardisation and flexibility in service delivery towards end-users.
2. Supports local level in offering services	Strengthens local level, ensures closer relation between the administration and society, increases qualitative and inclusive service delivery.
3. Develops new collaborations with key societal actors	Strengthens the relation between the administration and society, allows for the inclusion of new approaches and ideas not put forward by current society – administration contacts.

4. Develops a common approach towards authoritative data sources	Allows the roll-out of the once-only principle, which will lead to an improved service delivery.
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... strengthens coordination and sharing practices within a single administration

1. Adopts common e-government policies and communication approaches	Increases external visibility and reinforces the approach towards society. Strengthens the brand 'federal administration', and leads to a stronger alignment on the federal e-government policy.
2. Adopts new organisational instruments and responsibilities for organisations, especially via a strengthening of the FPS BOSA – DG DT and the FPS Chancellery – DG Administrative Simplification, as well as via the creation of the E-Government Board	Allows for an increased policy focus for vertical federal organisations, and leads to a stronger position of horizontal federal organisations in horizontal policy areas. It also ensures a streamlined debate among federal organisations and the development of a common e-government policy.
3. Further strengthen the relations between the organisational Management, IT Department, Innovation Teams and HR Team and HR Teams into the Leaders of Government	Ensures constant innovation and adaptation of the leadership within each of the federal organisations.

... builds on common services and data approaches to stimulate cooperation across governments

1. Offers services and communicates on a continuously updated single data portal for external users	Increases the use by citizens and businesses of services and data available online. Helps to achieve a digital-by-default strategy.
2. Intensifies collaboration and cooperation with other Belgian public administrations	Increases the quality and user-centricity of services, and forces organisations to rethink their service processes.
3. Intensifies cross-border collaboration for the exchange of data, services, information and best-practices	Reduces administrative burden for companies, which stimulates economic growth.
4. Continues the development of the Belgian interoperability framework	Increases the possibilities to exchange data across public administrations and

	organisations, increasing the service delivery quality towards users.
5. Organises exchange programs for civil servants	Allows civil servants to be innovative and critical towards their own organisation, services and approaches. Stimulates national collaboration.

6 Priorities & Implications

6.1 Priorities

In order to help the Government in its transition towards becoming more adaptive and innovative, this Blueprint suggests to start by focussing on some key priorities. These priorities relate to each of the three strategic areas (Openness, Participation and Collaboration):

Increase the uptake of Open Data



While numerous initiatives have been taken by administrations in terms of Open Data, and while some administrations are more advanced than others on the topic, there is still a clear need to increase the uptake of Open Data. In this regard, the priority for Government should be set on ensuring a sustainable “Open Data funding” of the fixed and marginal costs of Open Data, and on determining on which open datasets it should be invested the most, in light of their value for re-users.

Strengthen coordination across levels of government



It is key to strengthen the coordination across the various levels of government and administrations. In this regard, the priority for Government should be set on building common services and data approaches to stimulate cooperation,

on multiplying interfederal projects, on creating interfederal coordination bodies to coordinate policies across levels, on setting-up exchange programs for civil servants, and potentially on creating an “Interfederal project fund”.

Integrate the input from citizens and external users



The administrations should pay greater attention to the needs of their users and should further integrate their input. Having a truly user-oriented focus is fundamental for administrations. In this regard, the priority for Government should be set on increasing user participation in the development of e-services, through the use of complementary online and offline methods. Another priority is to stress the importance of resorting to Agile methods, in order to be more flexible and to better include the users’ evolving needs.

Guarantee personal data protection and security

In light of the recent entry into force of the GDPR in May 2018, administrations need to ensure that they comply with this legislation. In this regard, the priority for Government should be set on ensuring that the civil servants implement it correctly in their daily work, and on ensuring that the

administrations understand that compliance is a daily challenge, rather than a “one-shot” (being compliant today does not necessarily mean being compliant tomorrow).

6.2 Implications

The table in Section V above outlines the positive implications for Government of each of the strategic actions contained in this Blueprint. However, it is also worth pointing out that failing to implement these strategic actions could lead to negative implications such as a lack of economic growth due to weak Open Data re-use and personal data protection; a lack of stakeholder representativity due to insufficient participation; or a lack of

economies of scale in e-service development due to silo culture and insufficient coordination. In this regard, “Work Package 4 Report: Enablers” contains an analysis of the risks that could prevent the implementation of these strategic actions, and of the likelihood of occurrence of those risks (see Table 11 in Section 11. “Risks and Impact Assessment”). The focus of that analysis thus lies on risks that could lead to the *non-implementation* of the suggested strategic actions. The likelihood of occurrence of these risks is then presented as being: (i) very low; (ii) low; (iii) moderate; (iv) high; or (v) very high. Risk mitigation factors are then proposed, which suggest actions to circumvent the risk, or circumstances that reduce the risk’s impact. Finally, the consequences of the lack of implementation of the enablers are outlined in an impact assessment.

7 Key stakeholders

In order to ensure that the Government makes the transition towards becoming ever more adaptive and innovative, key stakeholders are suggested and a governance structure has been prepared.

In the first place, it is recommended that the responsibilities related to the Federal Digital Transformation, the Administrative Simplification and the Federal Innovation are grouped into a single ministerial “wallet”, with a Minister dedicated exclusively to these matters. The appointed Minister would be politically accountable for this transition process.

Secondly, it is recommended that the FPS BOSA – DG Digital Transformation, the FPS Chancellery – DG Administrative Simplification and SMALS are recognised as key actors in the further development and implementation of this Blueprint. Those three actors are advised to collaborate and to meet each other, in order to determine how this Blueprint for an Adaptive and Innovative Government can be further developed and implemented. Further

developing and implementing this Blueprint, will require, from those three actors, an active collaboration with the E-Government Board and the three Colleges, to ensure the support of all federal organisations.

Regarding the implementation of the FLEXPUB Strategy, a close collaboration will need to be set-up with the Task Force suggested in the Strategy for Flexible Geospatial Public E-Services.

Finally, the politically responsible actors will be responsible for assigning the necessary and required budgetary resources to ensure that the above described actors can take their responsibility and lead the federal administration on the path towards becoming ever more adaptive and innovative.


8 Conclusion

By working on those three axes, nine key principles, and a dozen of strategic actions and their potential implications, we believe that the first steps can be taken towards the development of an Adaptive and Innovative Government. The Belgian federal administration has the potential to act in a much more adaptive and innovative way. We believe that this transformation process can be started (or can be pursued where it has already begun) by following the above Blueprint Vision. As pointed out in the introduction, this Blueprint purposely remains general in scope and is partially derived from the more detailed and specific analysis in the *Strategy for Flexible Geospatial Public E-Services*.

The axes, key principles and actions offer ideas for the Government and stimulate the thoughts on what can be done by the administration as a whole, and by each organisation, department, team and individual civil servant.

What about the future? Where to go now with this Blueprint? This Blueprint calls for further reflection, refinement and implementation. The *key stakeholders* suggested above (*FPS BOSA – DG DT, FPS Chancellery – DG Administrative Simplification and SMALS*) will have a key role to play in this regard. They *will need to collaborate in order to steer the administration into the future and to push and pull the administration towards the required change*.

Finally, *there is a need for the inclusion of citizens, businesses and organisations in this redevelopment process*. Without the structured input of citizens, business and organisations, there is a risk that their needs and demands will insufficiently be taken on board. Though this may appear as a complex task, it should not be forgotten that a State's authority and legitimacy rely on the social contract it has passed with its citizens.

A visualization of the cosmic web, showing a complex network of yellow and orange filaments and clusters of stars against a dark background.

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