



POLICY BRIEF

Exploring emerging ICT-enabled governance models in EU cities

This policy brief outlines the rationale, methodological approach and preliminary findings of the exploratory research on emerging ICT-enabled governance models in EU cities (EXPGOV), led by European Commission's Joint Research Centre, Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (JRC-IPTS) and conducted in collaboration with EUROCITIES.

Rationale

The exploratory research on emerging ICT-enabled governance models in European cities investigated the interplay between ICTs and governance processes at city level in the EU by providing evidence of the changes that ICTs are producing on city governance models.

The research focused on how different stakeholders interact when introducing ICTs in governance systems and the way these interactions affect institutions and communities, and the related decision-making process. Two main issues have specifically been investigated:

- the changes produced by ICTs on the governance processes, (e.g. regulatory and legal frameworks, organisational and administrative procedures, roles of various stakeholders involved) and consequently the effects on decision-making, public management and service delivery;
- the socio-economic implications at policy level.

The core research question was the following: **What new ICT-enabled governance models are emerging at city level in Europe?**

In order to answer this research question three sub-questions were researched:

- Which are the main dimensions of new ICT-enabled governance models emerging in European cities?
- What are the effects of the changes driven by ICTs on the interaction 1) within the city administration and 2) between the city government and other stakeholders in a specific policy domain?
- What are the implications of new ICT-enabled governance models on a specific policy domain?

Objectives

The research had a twofold objective. On the one hand it aimed at informing policy-makers about the implications of change produced by new and emerging ICT-enabled governance models in EU cities and, on the other hand, to contribute and consolidate scientific evidence of impacts of ICT-enabled applications on city governance models in the EU. It also intended to enrich the knowledge base in the research domain of e-Governance.

The research entailed a broad range of dissemination activities targeted to researchers, practitioners and policy makers, either within the institutional framework of the JRC-IPTS and EUROCITIES activities, and through presenting the findings of the research to relevant policy and scientific events.

Milestones

The research consisted of the following activities:

- A mapping survey of EU cities to identify the city governance policy areas most impacted by ICTs and inform further steps.
- Development of a framework to assess the main dimensions of emerging ICT-enabled governance models at city level through conceptual work, desk research and consultation with representatives of cities and other experts.
- Four in-depth case studies (Barcelona, Berlin, Manchester and Tallinn) to understand the effects of changes driven by ICTs and analyse their implications on specific policy domains.
- Cross-case assessment and discussion of the key drivers of change and their consequences for ICT-enabled governance as well as the implications on the policy domains under investigation.
- Expert workshop on 31 January 2011, which validated the findings from case studies and discussed the preliminary results of the research with experts, representatives from the cities and other stakeholders.
- Publication of an in-depth analysis of the mapping survey, presenting the consolidated results of the analysis, putting key findings in the perspective of the conceptual framework developed and discussing future research directions.
- Publication of a final report, which includes case study analysis, policy recommendations and indications for future research in the area of ICT-enabled governance in European cities.

Survey results

The EXPGOV survey covers 66 European cities across 29 countries, including all the EU27 Member States. The cities included in the survey are drawn from a broad demographic spread, with resident populations ranging from under 100,000 to over 1,000,000 inhabitants. 47% of cities have between 100,000 - 500,000 inhabitants. Since there are 446 cities within the EU with populations over 100,000 and the survey covered 62 cities within the EU (equating to 14% of cities from EU Member States), it provides a robust sample for analysis, and it seems therefore to be representative of the different governance models and ICT-enabled services currently provided by European cities.

The high percentage of respondents from the EUROCITIES network also confirms the active involvement and interest of large cities (> 250,000 citizens), while responses from smaller cities and local governments add variety to the sample and a breadth of different experiences to the analysis.

The survey data showed that the majority of respondents (64%) recognise ICTs have brought about a significant change in their city governance. 10% of the respondents recognised a very significant change, 49% of whom came from cities with populations between 500,000 and 1,000,000. This highlighted in particular the impact of ICT-enabled changes have on improving information and communication channels and service provision. Overall, a general positive response to the question posed about the effects ICTs are having on city governance is very noticeable as it is irrespective of the role of the respondent, the demographic characteristics of the city, or the city's length of membership within the EU.

When asked if new ICT governance models were emerging, the majority of respondents (59%), answered: "Yes" (18% stating: "Yes, clearly", and 41%: "Yes, to some extent"). However, it should also be noted that 28% of the cities said that "it is too early to judge" whether the impact of ICTs is significant - or positive, for that matter.

Survey evidence on the city administrations that are implementing ICT-enabled changes also tends to suggest that the search for "open government" is the main driving force behind these developments, especially in the established EU Member States. This is seen as the case in both internal service provision development and external stakeholders' relations.

City case studies - some highlights

In **Barcelona**, the latest phase in ICT-enabled governance started in 2008 with the so-called Barcelona 2.0 management model, aimed at developing government to citizens by offering them a more flexible, straightforward and efficient service. The plan pursued: 1) improving municipal functions and services by focusing on citizens and quality; 2) reinforcing proximity by developing a new territorial model based on 73 neighbourhoods instead of 10 districts; 3) achieving process innovation by intensively using new technologies, and 4) measuring the quality of city and district management.

In **Berlin**, the experience of several decades of ICT-development show an evolution of ICT based interaction between government, administration and citizens resulting in new models of participation and service improvement. There is also both insight and strategic demand to centralize e-Government as a governance issue and to understand ICT-implementation as a community task. Finally growing demands on citizen-oriented services call for exploring the link between socialization of service delivery and commoditization of e-Government. Main impacts are seen in administrative efficiency, public service offer, closer interaction with citizens and in the area of inclusiveness / equal opportunities.

In **Manchester**, a new infrastructure began to emerge whereby ICTs were used not only as platforms servicing the market but for governing them on behalf of the community. That is, as a form of governance which has the capacity to co-ordinate, steer and assemble the means needed for communities to access such infrastructures and platform of services they offer. From the analysis conducted in Manchester, it is clear there is a question of how best to integrate these developments into the city's own service infrastructure. For while many of the interviewees noted the considerable progress Manchester is making to establish itself globally as a Digital City, the existing roll out and distribution of the technologies across the Administration is still patchy.

Tallinn was the first municipality to introduce mobile phone based parking payment in the year 2000. Its Mayor gave a first electronic signature on October 7th, 2002 to a cooperation agreement with the second largest city in Estonia, Tartu. It introduced electronic document circulation in 2002 and anecdotal evidence suggests it has one of the highest number of free WiFi hotspots per capita anywhere in the world.

One of the most surprising features of Tallinn is that it seems to have overcome the public

information and open government stages and currently builds ICT systems that allow full procedural transparency not only to public officials but to citizens. At the same time, the municipal government has a full overview of not only the services it provides but also about a variety of data necessary for decision making, promising better public management. However, whether this will materialize or not would require further research.

Further research and policy implications

From a research perspective, results of the EXPGOV mapping survey suggest the need to:

- broaden the scope of the analysis to better understand, beyond the technical issues related to the introduction of ICTs into government systems, the role of legal, organizational and cultural changes when discussing ICT-enabled governance models;
- deepen research in this field, in order to better understand the implications ICTs have for governance at city level, and the drivers of change in relation to ICT-enabled services and governance innovations;
- reinforce common methodological approaches for data gathering in order to be able to consolidate research findings and compare analysis conducted in different contexts.

In terms of policy implications, the following preliminary indications emerge.

The characteristics of different ICT-enabled governance models underpinning various policy developments in European cities should be defined so to have a better knowledge of the impacts of ICTs, drivers of change and opportunities, as well as identifying limitations and risks of the different initiatives and funding mechanisms;

The development of a common framework for monitoring progress and the identification of basic indicators for benchlearning could help to facilitate replicability and transferability of practices among Member States.

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More information on the research can be found at:
<http://is.jrc.es/pages/EAP/EXPGOV.html>