

National E-Government Strategy

IT Planning Council decision

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Contents

1	E-Government: Helping overcome economic, social and technological challenges	3
2	The National E-Government Strategy: Guiding e-government activities in Germany	5
3	A model for 2015: Germany's e-government sets international standards for effective and efficient administration in a federal structure	7
4	Goals of the National E-Government Strategy	8
5	Implementing and financing the National E-Government Strategy	15

1 E-Government: Helping overcome economic, social and technological challenges

Information and communications technology (ICT) today plays a crucial role in society, industry and public administration. Without these key technologies, a dynamic and competitive economy and efficient public administration for the 21st century would be unthinkable.

E-government both provides an economic edge for businesses and is a modern and user-friendly aid in all administrative processes. Increasingly integrating citizens and businesses will reinforce these advantages, promote innovation and safeguard the quality already achieved.

At the same time, society is currently undergoing a fundamental transformation characterized in particular by four major trends:

1. globalization and European integration;
2. demographic change;
3. technological transformation into a knowledge and information society; and
4. climate change, with its diverse impacts.

These developments create a variety of challenges for government and public administration. E-government can play a key role in overcoming these challenges.

- Global competition requires measures to ensure that Germany *remains an attractive place to do business*. This means promoting a service mentality beyond local governments and assisting with bureaucracy reduction, thereby further improving the overall efficiency of the public service.
- Tight public budgets require public administration to operate even more *effectively and efficiently*. Cooperation across administrative jurisdictions, the resulting new forms of organization and optimized administrative processes create new potential for savings and increased efficiency; using this potential is part of managing public funds responsibly.
- In a globalized world in which information and communications technology plays an ever more important role in *economic and social processes*, ensuring Internet access is a crucial task, especially in *rural areas* especially affected by demographic change.
- Growing *shortages of skilled workers* means that competition between employers is intensifying, especially for highly skilled workers. The public administration must therefore invest more, as allowed by budget constraints, in the attractiveness of public service *employment*.
- Growing European integration requires paying attention to and participating in the organization of *international processes and standards*. So it is important for all those involved in Germany to agree on what is desirable and possible.
- Due to technological change, the *tasks and priorities* of public administration are changing ever more rapidly. So legal, organization and technical modernization is needed to enable public administration to act and respond flexibly. And it is important to ensure that standards and norms, especially when it comes to security and data protection, can be met also in the future. These tasks demand new forms of cooperation, joint efforts and joint solutions.

- The need to *promote innovation* necessitates the willingness to invest. In addition, service orientation and the capacity for innovation must be strengthened throughout the public administration.
- Greater agility and flexibility in public administration will make it easier to deal with *difficult-to-control risks* (such as financial and economic crises).

The joint National E-Government Strategy of the federal, state and local governments is sensitive to the economic, social and technological developments which have a great influence on tomorrow's public administration. This strategy consciously relies on the principles of federalism, the division of powers,¹ subsidiarity, local self-government and the principle of concomitant financing, and supports close and trusting cooperation across all levels of public administration. Concerns of individuals and businesses often involve jurisdiction of authorities at several levels of government. This is why rules are needed on cooperation between different levels of government which also comply with these principles and with Article 91 c of the Basic Law.

¹ Including the special aspects of the judicial system resulting from the independence of judicial bodies guaranteed by constitutional and ordinary law.

2 The National E-Government Strategy: Guiding e-government activities in Germany

E-government is assuming growing importance in the information society. Public administration continues to act on the basis of policy decisions in specific areas. But urgent tasks can be more easily managed with the help of e-government, because policy decisions and laws can be implemented more quickly and efficiently, even when they are highly complex and/or involve different levels of government.

With the introduction of Article 91 c of the Basic Law and with the State Treaty on IT to implement Article 91 c of the Basic Law, the federal and state governments have responded clearly to the growing importance of e-government.

The State Treaty establishes the IT Planning Council as the body governing this more binding cooperation.²

“The IT Planning Council

- coordinates cooperation between the Federation and the Länder on issues of information technology;
- adopts IT interoperability and IT security standards;
- manages projects on ICT-supported governing and administration (e-government projects) assigned to the IT Planning Council;
- assumes the network tasks listed in Section 4 of the State Treaty in line with the legislation referred to there.³

The National E-Government Strategy⁴ specifies future tasks for closer cooperation on the following aspects:

As a model for coordinated action taken on own responsibility: The National E-Government Strategy strives for a common strategic orientation by federal, state and local governments in further developing e-government and would like to coordinate action taken by those involved in order to ensure interoperability and cost-effectiveness. To this end, the strategy formulates a model and common goals for further developing e-government to serve as orientation for federal, state and local governments in their own areas of action and responsibility.

As an agenda for joint projects: The strategy describes measures for coordinating cooperation and agreeing standards and e-government projects to serve as beacons, which are models for and critical to the success of the targeted further development and repositioning of German e-government.

As a roadmap for implementation: In the framework of the State Treaty on IT, with the participation of the national associations of local authorities and on the basis of the National E-Government Strategy, the IT Planning Council determines joint steps for implementation and their financing.

² State Treaty on IT, Part I, Section 1, p. 1; Federal Law Gazette I 2010, no. 26 of 2 June 2010, p. 663.

³ Act on Connecting the IT Networks of the Federation and the Länder – Act implementing Article 91 c (4) of the Basic Law (IT-NetzG).

⁴ In accordance with the State Treaty on IT, the National E-Government Strategy is based on the definition of e-government formulated by the German University of Administrative Sciences in Speyer: “Electronic government refers to carrying out business processes related to governing and administration with the help of information and communications technologies via electronic media”, Jörn von Lucke and Heinrich Reinermann.

In this way, the National E-Government Strategy follows the European Union's Malmö Declaration of 18 November 2009.⁵ The priorities set there can also be found in Germany's e-government strategy, which thus respects the areas of responsibility of those involved, strengthens their joint orientation and provides the basis for specific planning, especially with regard to the State Treaty on IT, of further e-government areas and IT strategies of the federal, state and local governments.

Cooperation also covers legislation on e-government issues. Here, the Federation and the Länder together examine the need for further electronic processes of governing and administration. In doing so, they consider local government experience in implementing administration and their suggestions regarding the need for legislative action.

The federal and state governments use the IT Planning Council to coordinate and guide the promotion of e-government in legislative initiatives as well.

Comprehensive regulation on applying and designing information and communications technology in society is neither the aim nor part of the National E-Government Strategy.

⁵ The ministerial declaration adopted by representatives of the EU Member States, the Candidate Countries and the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) countries at the 5th Ministerial eGovernment Conference in Malmö, Sweden, calls for providing citizens and businesses with user-centric e-government services which increase the transparency of administrative processes and ease of access to public information as well as participation in the policy process by 2015. In addition, mobility in the Single Market is to be increased and cross-border setting up and running of businesses, studying, working, and retiring anywhere in the European Union is to be made easier (Annex 1).

3 A model for 2015: Germany's e-government sets international standards for effective and efficient administration in a federal structure

In their joint and individual efforts on e-government, the federal, state and local governments are guided by the following principles:

By 2015, Germany's e-government is ranked among the European leaders because

- A it is oriented on usefulness for citizens and businesses,
- B it is cost-effective and efficient,
- C it ensures data protection as well as transparency with regard to data and administrative action,
- D it supports the social participation of citizens and businesses,
- E it promotes innovative, sustainable solutions, and
- F it provides high-performance IT support.

Specifically:

- Users can complete as many of their errands as possible from the same point of access.
- Agencies work quickly, network-based and across different levels of government in order to reduce the effort necessary for citizens and businesses.
- Where there are no legal reasons to the contrary, users know which public agency is processing their personal data. They are confident that e-government is secure.
- Citizens can use electronic media to participate actively in the policy process and in organizing the provision of public services. Such participation plays a key role in political perception.
- Public administration cooperates with business and the research community when developing and operating e-government solutions. It enables innovative business models, in particular by offering online services and information (open government).
- Germany's e-government uses modern technology to help reduce bureaucracy, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of administrative action, cutting administrative costs and helping consolidate the public budgets.

4 Goals of the National E-Government Strategy

In order to implement the National E-Government Strategy, the Federation, states and national associations of local authorities are formulating shared aims on the basis of the principles mentioned in the last paragraph of the first section. Their actions are also guided by the shared model and agree on cooperation in clearly defined areas.

This section describes the aims of the National E-Government Strategy for the six areas anchored in the model and offers examples of where these aims can be achieved while respecting the principles of cost-effectiveness and frugality.

4.1 Area A: Orientation on usefulness for citizens, businesses and public administration

The quality of e-government offerings is primarily determined by their usefulness for citizens, businesses, and public administration.

Goal 1: Access for all potential users of a service

Citizens and businesses must be aware of e-government services, have access to them and be able to use possibilities for participation. Improvement is needed with regard to broadband access, especially in rural areas, and with regard to citizens' media literacy.

To achieve widespread access to e-government, action is needed in the following areas:

- universal broadband provision;
- adaptation of mobile technology through the universal expansion of infrastructure and services for mobile devices to ensure rapid and easy contact.

Goal 2: Access is barrier-free and services are user-friendly

Electronic communication of citizens and businesses with public administration is user-friendly and barrier-free.

To achieve further progress in this area, the following action is needed:

- Federal, state and local governments design their electronic administrative services to be user-friendly and with as few barriers as possible.
- They agree on general principles allowing Internet services for citizens and businesses to be further expanded and interconnected, so that comprehensive services can be offered to citizens and businesses despite different jurisdictions.

Goal 3: Easy access to public administration

Where appropriate, citizens and businesses have a single point of contact in the public administration, similar to a one-stop shop, who assists them in a wide range of cases, business and life situations. It is still possible to communicate with the public administration using various channels.

Examples for federal, state and local government:

- the model of a single point of contact as described in the EU Services Directive, and
- single public service numbers; their expansion into multi-channel services is currently being studied.

An additional area of action is

- the personalization of administration portals. allowing users to select information relevant for them and personalize their access.

Goal 4: All suitable administrative matters can be dealt with from start to finish via the Internet

Administrative matters can be dealt with any time, anywhere. This especially benefits working people, older people, those with restricted mobility and those living in rural areas. In this way, e-government helps provide vital services, create equivalent living and working conditions in rural areas, and reduce CO₂ emissions.

To this end, the Federation and the *Länder* strive, within their areas of responsibility, to

- give electronic and paper-based communications the same legal status, and
- do away with the requirement to submit written documents and other formal requirements wherever possible, in order to simplify electronic communication with the public administration.

Additional areas of action:

- Supervised by those involved in the various areas of responsibility, federal, state and local governments will prioritize and jointly implement in electronic form administrative processes which are especially relevant in practice.
- Shared services will be created for the federal, state and local administrations, when doing so creates synergies in providing knowledge, basic services and infrastructure.
- Universal broadband provision.
- Interoperability via standardized open interfaces and infrastructure services.
- Secure electronic exchange of data and secure identification of users and service providers while safeguarding data protection.
- The provision of necessary infrastructure and rules for secure electronic communications.

Goal 5: The public administration has e-government competence

The public administration and its employees are to be sufficiently prepared and trained to deal with the challenges and tasks of e-government in order to be able to meet the expectations of citizens and businesses.

Areas of action:

- the intensive exchange of experience among federal, state and local administrations, coordinated by the IT Planning Council;
- the expansion of staff training (e.g. e-learning) in the individual areas of e-government by federal, state and local administrations in their own areas of responsibility, with input from research, educational and training institutions;

- new forms of knowledge management and the collection of knowledge using Web 2.0 tools (e.g. wikis);
- the promotion of staff openness to change in dealing with organizational and technical innovations, by federal, state and local administrations in their own areas of responsibility;
- targeted “public relations” to inform the public about the possibilities and advantages of e-government and make them transparent within the administration.

4.2 Area B: Cost-effectiveness and efficiency

This area covers cost-effective, rapid and high-quality task performance by public administration.

Goal 6: Cross-level, client-oriented optimization and seamless digitization of process chains

Critical assessment of tasks, bureaucracy reduction, structural modernization and client-oriented process optimization ensure a high degree of cost-effectiveness and efficiency in public administration. The IT Planning Council takes up promising ideas because they create the necessary conditions for effective electronic support for administrative processes. At the same time, administrative modernization takes advantage of the new options offered by ICT.

Areas of action:

- facilitating cross-level process management which, based on modelling of existing administrative processes, undertakes interest-oriented links, identifies potential for optimization on the basis of client-oriented critical analysis and realizes this potential using appropriate improvements;
- promoting a model project with the aim of recommending appropriate methods for process management as described above, determining the concrete need for shared exchange standards between the appropriate methods and providing exemplary reference processes and chains;
- evaluating the potential and utilizing individual results of previous administrative modernization projects based at least in part on process management.

Goal 7: Businesses manage their administrative matters electronically

Processes involving businesses and public administration are implemented and supported electronically as far as possible. The Federation and the states create the necessary legal, organizational and technical conditions to facilitate the mandatory use of electronic processes. Standardized and open interfaces, as far as possible, ensure a high level of cost-effectiveness for both sides.

To do so, the appropriate administrative processes will be identified and joint priorities set for electronically optimizing processes between businesses and public administration.

Goal 8: Federal, state and local cooperation regularly uses ICT

Together with a critical assessment of tasks, structure and process optimization, e-government helps public administration perform its duties faster without a loss of quality, thereby helping satisfy the expectations of citizens and businesses. It reduces the length of time needed to complete administrative processes as well as costs for users and public administration. The division of responsibilities between administration levels should not constitute barriers to efficient cooperation among them.

The electronic implementation necessary for such cross-level administrative processes has not yet been carried out.

Areas of action are therefore as follows:

- The IT Planning Council will draw up a plan with priorities stating which cross-cutting IT interoperability and IT security standards will be binding for which administrative processes and when.
- Organizational and technical measures will be taken to enable secure electronic exchange of files, processes and documents.
- Modern IT-based platforms will be used to enable cooperation among teams in different secure locations which can access relevant documents simultaneously.
- The quality-assured XML standards created in the Deutschland-Online standardization project will be used for interagency communication.

4.3 Area C: Transparency, data protection and data security

E-government offers the chance to make policy and administrative processes more transparent, thus encouraging stakeholders themselves to increase and assure quality. In addition, data protection, data security and transparency are important for ensuring that citizens trust, accept and use e-government. Finally, open and non-personal government data also make it possible for entrepreneurs to develop new business models.

In the interest of reliable data protection and the greatest possible transparency, the following aims have been formulated:

Goal 9: Data minimization and data security

Only the personal data required to carry out the administrative task in question are collected and processed. As far as possible and reasonable, public administrations should make it possible to utilize their services without having to provide personal data.

Bundling tasks as part of simplifying administrative processes and cross-level cooperation may require amending legal, technical and organizational framework conditions, while respecting privacy rights and the principle of the separation of informational powers. The federal, state and local governments are taking coordinated action on this matter.

Goal 10: Users can request information about the processing of their data

Under existing applicable law, citizens can find out about their personal data processed by public agencies. Federal, state and local public administration seek coordinated solutions in this regard.

Goal 11: Administrative action and implementation of procedures and legislation are transparent and secure

Appropriate information from policy-makers and public administration which is important or useful to citizens, businesses and public administration, will be prepared and made accessible, in some cases for a fee.

Existing federal, state and local information portals are a good starting point for achieving the goal of open government.

Additional areas of action:

- Local governments will prepare relevant information from public administration and legislative activity in a targeted and user-friendly way and provide it through existing portals.
- Status indicators will be introduced for suitable processes, in order to show the progress achieved by the relevant local government body on administrative processes.
- Uniform security standards in public administration will ensure seamless protection for the data of citizens and businesses.

4.4 Area D: Social participation

This area addresses targeted promotion of participation by citizens and businesses in organizing and carrying out public tasks. The concrete goals are as follows:

Goal 12: Promoting participation by citizens and businesses

Information and communications technology offers an additional opportunity for citizens and businesses to participate in policy, planning and decision-making processes, and, as far as reasonable and allowed by law, in policy decisions and in organizing and carrying out public tasks.

The federal, state and local governments offer coordinated technical options for greater participation.

Goal 13: Participation by citizens and businesses will have a visible impact

It is important for citizens and businesses to see the impact of their participation. Results of participation and how they are handled are therefore to be made transparent.

- To the same degree that options for participation are expanded, those involved at all levels are to clarify the basis for making the results of participation transparent.
- Clarifying the legal status of digital participation includes examining institutionalized digital options for participation in the legislative process.

4.5 Area E: Innovation and sustainability

Goal 14: Federal, state and local public administrations support the capacity for innovation and openness to change

Federal, state and local public administrations support the capacity for innovation and openness to change through their own high-performance and client-oriented e-government offerings. They promote and use innovations to continuously upgrade their e-government offerings.

- Innovative e-government offerings are promoted along with the innovative capacity of business through modern e-government offerings.
- It is important to ensure that systematic transfer and regular evaluation of solutions are carried out. In the process, methods and experience from completed projects and solutions are transferred to other projects.
- Public administration creates the conditions for innovative solutions (e.g. experimental clause). This may include joint projects conducted with the private and research sectors.
- Universally available, up-to-date basic geodata are essential to spatially based e-government services. Geodata services are increasingly being integrated into e-government applications.

Goal 15: Germany seeks a leading role in e-government research

Germany seeks a leading role in Europe and the world in developing and efficiently using new technologies and solutions for e-government.

In order to pool the necessary competence from different scientific disciplines, the Federation and the states closely coordinate their promotion of interdisciplinary scientific e-government research.

Goal 16: E-government makes a significant contribution to environmental sustainability

The use of e-government, in particular the electronic optimization of process chains referred to in goals 4 and 7, helps reduce energy consumption and the resulting emission of CO₂ by providers and users of public services, thereby promoting environmental sustainability. This is due especially to the reduced number of trips to government offices.

4.6 Area F: High-performance IT support

Goal 17: The expansion of IT is appropriately modular and simple

IT systems are to be modularized as appropriate. In the process, it is important to ensure that the solution is as simple as possible while remaining scalable.

- Effective activities include setting standards, ensuring interoperability and making greater use of IT service centres.
- Implementation will be carried out across levels wherever appropriate.

- IT systems of the public administration facilitate mobile administrative structures. In this way, public administration can reach users, and public employees have greater flexibility as to where they work.

Goal 18: Content, basic services, applications and infrastructure can be bundled and re-used

As far as possible, content, basic services, applications and infrastructures used for e-government are bundled and made available to other agencies for their use.

- The IT Planning Council coordinates the implementation and expansion of cross-level standards.
- Federal, state and local governments drive the re-use and bundling in their own areas of responsibility and with each other.
- Re-use is tested in a praxis-based way (e.g. in model regions). Establishing best practices in suitable areas in a coordinated way lays the groundwork for efficient transfer.

Goal 19: International standards, especially for interoperability, are applied, and Germany plays an active role in the EU and internationally in defining these standards

The Federation and the states promote international standards for interoperability and security. The IT Planning Council coordinates Germany's involvement in developing and implementing international standards.

In the framework of its standardization authority granted under Section 1 (1) (2) of the State Treaty on IT, the IT Planning Council works to remove existing barriers to cross-border communication and cooperation in Europe.

Goal 20: E-government also functions during crisis situations

Also during crisis situations, key applications must be available to a sufficient degree for all needs.

- The IT Planning Council supports the implementation of necessary measures from the National Plan for Information Infrastructure Protection within the framework of the CIP Implementation Plan.⁶
- The federal, state and local governments strive to define common availability requirements and designate measures for specification and implementation.

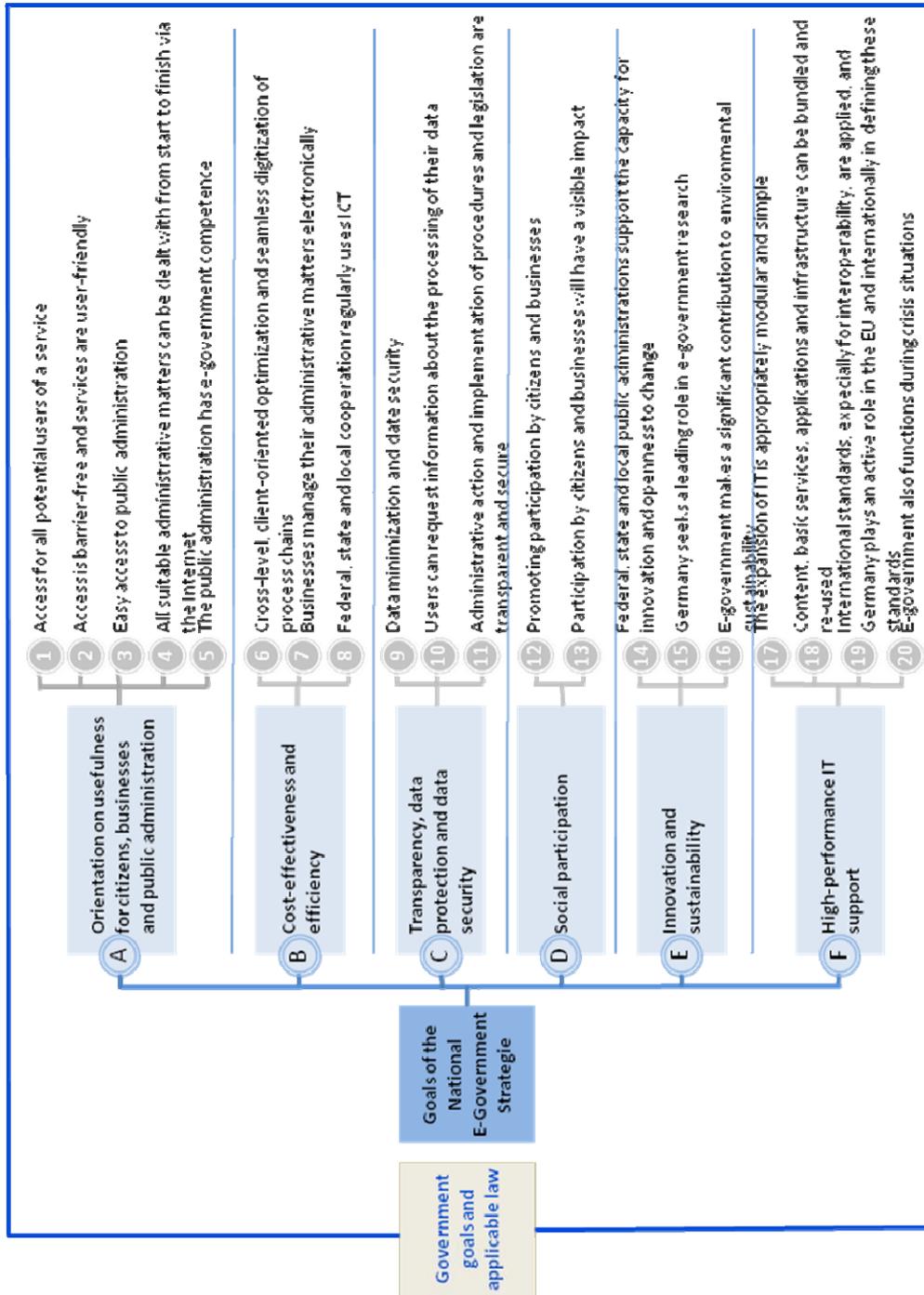
⁶ The CIP Implementation Plan follows from the National Plan for Information Infrastructure Protection. Its strategic aims related to critical infrastructures – prevention, response and sustainability – are fleshed out using concrete measures and recommendations.

5 Implementing and financing the National E-Government Strategy

To ensure that these goals of the National E-Government Strategy are met, the IT Planning Council is developing a specific plan in which the procedure for implementing and financing measures is agreed. This plan defines shared priorities and joint, specific and, if possible, measurable expectations of all those involved. A concrete portfolio of measures will be developed and agreed on this basis. The IT Planning Council makes the final decision on concrete measures, financing and controlling.

To ensure that the National E-Government Strategy remains innovative even in a changing social environment and under new technological framework conditions, it will be evaluated and updated in an ongoing process involving all actors in the fields of policy-making, administration, business, research and society.

Annex A: Overview of goals of the National E-Government Strategy



Annex B: Glossary

Basic services:	Basic services are general systems and components needed to create the necessary e-government offerings, such as directory services, forms servers and payment platforms.
Single point of contact:	Single points of contact help citizens and businesses resolve their queries and direct them to the person competent to answer them. The organizational form varies between and within states. Depending on the regional organization, this may be one or more offices within the network. >> see also "One-stop shop"
Separation of informational powers	The separation of informational powers means the separation between data collected by different areas of public administration for different purposes.
IT-NetzG:	The German abbreviation IT-NetzG refers to the Act on Connecting the IT Networks of the Federation and the Länder – Act implementing Article 91 c (4) of the Basic Law of 10 August 2009.
One-stop shop:	One-stop shop refers to a point of contact offering all services, regardless of which level of administration is responsible.
Open data:	Open data refers to making public data collections available to citizens and businesses in machine-readable form via open interfaces.
Open government:	Open government refers to making the “knowledge” of policy-makers and public administration available to the public. Within open government, different priorities may be set, such as transparency (open data), participation or collaboration.