



E-government Effectiveness (EgE) Inter-Agency Task Force

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

Prepared for consideration during EgE Inter-Agency Task Force meeting on June 29th, 2005

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1. Challenge

A weakening of trust¹ between citizens and their government representatives potentially undermines social contracts and democratic institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean. It threatens the public, private and civil society mobilization needed to achieve efficient, equitable and sustainable development in the Region.

Efforts to address this situation by deploying information and communication technology as part of the institutional transformation of the public sector, commonly termed “e-government”, have, thus far, not achieved their desired outcomes². These efforts could benefit from more effective local leadership, a deeper understanding of the challenge from a sufficiently holistic framework and greater coordination at the donor level.

At stake is a promise of achieving modern states, with democratic, efficient and transparent government and governance. The *challenge* is to improve the effectiveness of the partnership between the countries of the Region and international organizations in order to strengthen democracy and the capacity of the agencies and countries to manage change in this area. The risk of inaction or less than effective efforts, in the area of governance, including the use of Information Communication Technologies, is particularly high.

2. Response

International development organizations recognize that this *challenge* has emerged in spite of high level commitment and allocation of significant resources in their support of national efforts to use ICT to strengthen democracy. Furthermore, these agencies recognize that, for the most part, their country support of ICT in governance is complementary and can benefit from greater harmonization in the way they interact, individually and collectively, with national governments to strengthen democracy.

In order to achieve a holistic, comprehensive approach and greater harmonization in their interactions with national governments, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the World Bank (WB), at the behest of the Development Gateway Foundation (Development Gateway), have recently begun to explore how to harmonize their efforts and improve overall effectiveness supporting country efforts to use ICT to strengthen democracy by establishing a collaborative mechanism called **E-government Effectiveness (EgE) Inter-Agency Task Force (TF)**. This Action Plan is an initial product of their collective effort.

This Action Plan is designed to project an integrated approach that leverages the core capacities and expertise of each organization in a collaborative manner so as to enable each country to interact systematically and efficiently with them. While the issues addressed in this action plan are global in nature, the agencies involved have agreed to focus on the Latin American and the Caribbean region, in order to test the approach on a limited scale. Based on the experience of this regional effort, other areas of the world will be able to build upon and improve this approach.

¹ Democracia en América Latina, Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (2004)

² Latinbarometro, Santiago, Chile (2004)



The Task Force is designed with a duration limited to 2 years. At the end of this period, member organizations will assess the results achieved and either dissolve, strengthen or transform the inter-agency Task Force, as they deem necessary.

Task force activities will focus on a limited number of strategic areas that contribute to e-government effectiveness and support specific processes that facilitate effective collaboration between beneficiary countries and task force members. These strategic product areas could be:

- ❑ Skills development and managing change in public sector transformation (e-government human resource development through training and professional enhancement for public sector workers at all levels) ;
- ❑ Measurement of e-government effectiveness (indicators and methodologies) ;
- ❑ Policy planning for e-governance effectiveness consultative group (for the Task Force and the beneficiary countries to have periodic face-to-face dialogue that complements their interaction in virtual space) ;
- ❑ Building trust in governance (between citizen and public sector representatives) ;
- ❑ Legal and regulatory issues (related to use of ICT in public administration).

3. Outcomes

The General outcomes expected by the EgE IA TF are:

- ❑ Strengthen the capacity of beneficiary countries to foster democracy, improve governance and transform their public sectors through the effective use of information and communication technology in public administration ;
- ❑ Improve the patterns of cooperation and institutional arrangements within and among beneficiary countries, international organizations and donor governments in activities involving the use of ICT to strengthen democracy ;
- ❑ Promoting greater horizontal communication and collaboration among e-government officials throughout the region ;
- ❑ Encourage countries to use ICT in balancing centralization and decentralization of federal, province, district and municipal authorities.

Intermediate outcomes for the Task Force are:

- ❑ Share information on e-government initiatives currently in implementation or in planning stage, among the EgE institutions in a systematic manner;
- ❑ Make available to the institutions' constituencies information on e-government initiatives in a uniform fashion;
- ❑ Facilitate coordination and cooperation on e-government initiatives among the EgE members looking at building upon the core capacities of each member;
- ❑ While preserving the integrity of each Task Force member institution with respect to program and budgeting, leverage their respective outcomes by encourage participating organizations to consider the TF Action Plan as a framework for their respective planning on financing, project development and implementation strategy

Intermediate outcomes between beneficiary countries and TF members are:



- Identify and support product areas and processes that make strategic contributions to improving the effectiveness of agency and beneficiary countries in deploying information and communications to strengthen democracy ;
- Develop a harmonized engagement strategy for participating agencies for dialogue with client governments.

4. Activities

In support of the strategic product areas mentioned at the conclusion of section 2, the TF members will work to stimulate collaborative processes. Initial emphasis will be on processes among task force members and subsequently between the task force and beneficiary country.

- Internal Activities

1) Inter-Agency Platform

One of the goals of this Task Force is to create an inter-institution platform that will house information on e-government activities of the member organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. This platform will be in form of a limited access web site, which allows each institution to upload its information on e-government in the region.

The content shared on the common platform could be:

- Successful current practices that can be adapted in the region, as well as unsuccessful practices that should be avoided;
- Menu of services in which the different member institutions have valuable expertise and be able to provide support to countries;
- Calendar of e-government events in the region;
- Compilations of conclusions and recommendations from international e-government events
- Other relevant documentation and information on e-government in the region.

2) Coordination of activities

The Task Force will continuously look for ways to improve communication among the members and coordinate activities. This should reduce duplication of efforts as well as strengthen the complementary aspects of Task Force member programs. This Task Force work plan should evolve roadmap for working together.

3) Other activities

In order to advance their individual programs and cooperative effort, TF members will encourage their respective organizations to organize and schedule parallel missions, financed separately, so that their professionals can meet together with executing agency in each country. This approach would seek to avoid duplications, promote the reinforcement of individual programs and, thereby optimize resources and increase effectiveness.



□ External Activities

4) Website on e-Government, platform for Countries

The e-Government website will be a tool that developing countries and e-Government practitioners can use to receive updated information on the activities on the five institutions in the area of e-government.

Member organizations agreed on using the already existing and well known by the development community “e-Government topic page” (<http://topics.developmentgateway.org/egovernment>) managed by the Development Gateway. Content contributions to this community are governed by the terms and conditions and editorial policy published on the Development Gateway Portal. Visitors of the individual TF member websites would be able to click on the link to this e-government topic page, and so could do visitors of this website with the individual member websites.

Through the menu of services, countries will be able to see the current activities that each institution is supporting and thus will be able to match their needs to the relevant expertise.

Countries of the LAC region will be able to post their needs online and make request for assistance. This Platform will therefore provide guidance, current successful practices, policy advice, and technical assistance and build capacity.

The Program Managers designated by the member organizations, will provide this assistance, acting as mediator between their organizations and the recipient Countries.

The platform will also contain a calendar of e-government events of the five institutions to keep the countries abreast of the on-going events in the region.

The value added to the Latin American and Caribbean countries will be a coordinated effort to ensure that the resources of the five institutions are effectively channeled through the region avoiding costly duplication and competition.

5. Institutional Arrangements

The EgE Inter-Agency Task Force will be a self-sustaining, low maintenance, horizontal, organization that optimizes the use of information and communication technology as a platform for favoring harmonization among and between the international organizations and their partner countries on the formulation and implementation of regional programs for using ICT in institutional transformation of the public sector. The following paragraphs highlight basic operations of the Task Force. Task Force and Program Management Team responsibilities are detailed in Appendix #1.



Membership

The Task Force will be composed of senior representatives from the department/division involved in e-government activities in the following organizations :

- ❑ Development Gateway Foundation
- ❑ Inter-American Development Bank (Information Technology for Development Division)
- ❑ Organization of American States
- ❑ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Division for Public Administration and Development Management - DPADM)
- ❑ World Bank (Latin America and Caribbean region)

The Task Force is open and welcomes other international organizations involved in e-government activities in Latin America and the Caribbean that share the same action plan agreed by the funding organizations. The inclusion of new members will be based on consensus. Possible additional members of the task force include:

- ❑ Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA);
- ❑ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The Task Force will meet face to face, at a minimum, twice a year.

Program Managers Team

In order to implement this action plan, the task force members have created a program manager's team (PMT), made up of their delegated program representative. Once the action plan is approved, the TF may require that the PMT meet at least on a quarterly basis to implement the action plan under its guidance.

The Task Force will nominate a Program Manager Coordinator.

Virtual Work Spaces

In order to find a practical way for the Task Force to move forward in implementing the action plan, an initial attempt has been made to define strategic product and areas of activity that have a crucial impact on the effectiveness of e-government activities and that match with the core capacities of the members. A cluster approach will streamline TF activities by enabling each agency to take the lead in its areas of excellence.

In addition, virtual work spaces are contemplated, to link agency members of the task force (for inter-agency information sharing and favoring harmonization on areas for collaboration) and support the strategic product areas. Possible topics for the PMT clusters and the Task Force / countries issue areas appear in appendix #2.

It is anticipated that the clusters will evolve in two phases:

- Within the virtual work space of Program Managers' Team and, subsequently,
- Within the task force and countries work space as "issue areas".



6. Timetable

Activity	Duration in Quarters											
	J-05	O-05	J-06	A-06	J-06	O-06	J-06	A-06	J-07	O-07	J-07	A-07
<u>EgE TF Operations</u>												
1.1 Inter-Agency Platform - implementation	■	■										
1.2 Inter-Agency Platform - maintenance			■	■	■	■	■	■				
2.0 Coordination of activities, policy sharing	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
3.1 Consultative meeting with e-government leaders in LAC			■	■	■	■	■	■				
3.2 Missions, workshops, publications,...			■	■	■	■	■	■				
4.1 Website on e-Gov. - implementation	■	■										
4.2 Website on e-Gov. - maintenance			■	■	■	■	■	■				
<u>EgE TF evaluation</u>									■	■	■	■
<u>EgE Inter-Agency Operations</u>									■	■	■	>>>

7. Budget

The Task Force will not have a budget of its own. It will depend on the use of resources of its individual members to carry out their respective elements of the harmonized program. However, organizations participating in the Task Force recognize that some allocation of human capital will be required in order to fulfill the member commitment to the TF. Particularly it has to be considered that the role of Coordinator and Coordinator Assistant will be covered on a rotating basis by members of the organizations comprising the TF (see Appendix #1).

The value proposition of the EgE IA TF is based on harmonization of their individual and complementary support to beneficiary countries through coordination, knowledge sharing, resources saving, and improved effectiveness. This harmonization of efforts, except for the above mentioned contribution in human capital, should not imply higher commitments from the member organizations of the TF.



Appendix # 1 – Task Force Responsibilities

EgE Inter-Agency Task Force

- The EgE Inter-Agency Task Force will be comprised by senior officials designated by the respective institutions.
- The Task Force will meet twice a year on dates and locations agreed upon by all members.
- The Task Force will have the following responsibilities:
 - Assign a member of their respective organizations to the Program Management Team of the EgE Inter-Agency Task Force
 - Review and approve the Action Plan submitted yearly by the Program Management Team
 - Allocate the necessary resources to undertake the Action Plan
 - Discuss their respective e-Government initiatives and look for mechanisms to increase coordination and collaboration
 - Approve the integration of new members to the Task Force

EgE Inter-Agency Program Managers Team

- The EgE Inter-Agency Program Managers Team (PMT) will be comprised of managers from the member organizations appointed by the Task Force representatives of their respective organizations.
- The PMT will meet at least four times a year on dates and locations agreed upon by all members. To be considered a PMT meeting, at least two thirds of the managers shall participate to the meeting, physically or in conference call.
- The PMT will elect a Program Manager Coordinator who will coordinate activities and meetings of both the PMT and the Task Force.
- The PMT will have the following responsibilities:
 - Prepare Action Plans following the guidelines set up by the Task Force and according to the periodicity established by this body.
 - Undertake the Action Plans and other initiatives approved by the Task Force.
 - Prepare implementation reports to submit to the Task Force at least two weeks in advance to the Task Force meetings.
 - Assure that their respective organizations fulfill the commitments agreed upon by the Task Force, with special attention to sharing the information defined in the Action Plan.
 - Cultivate and support the virtual work spaces created by the TF.

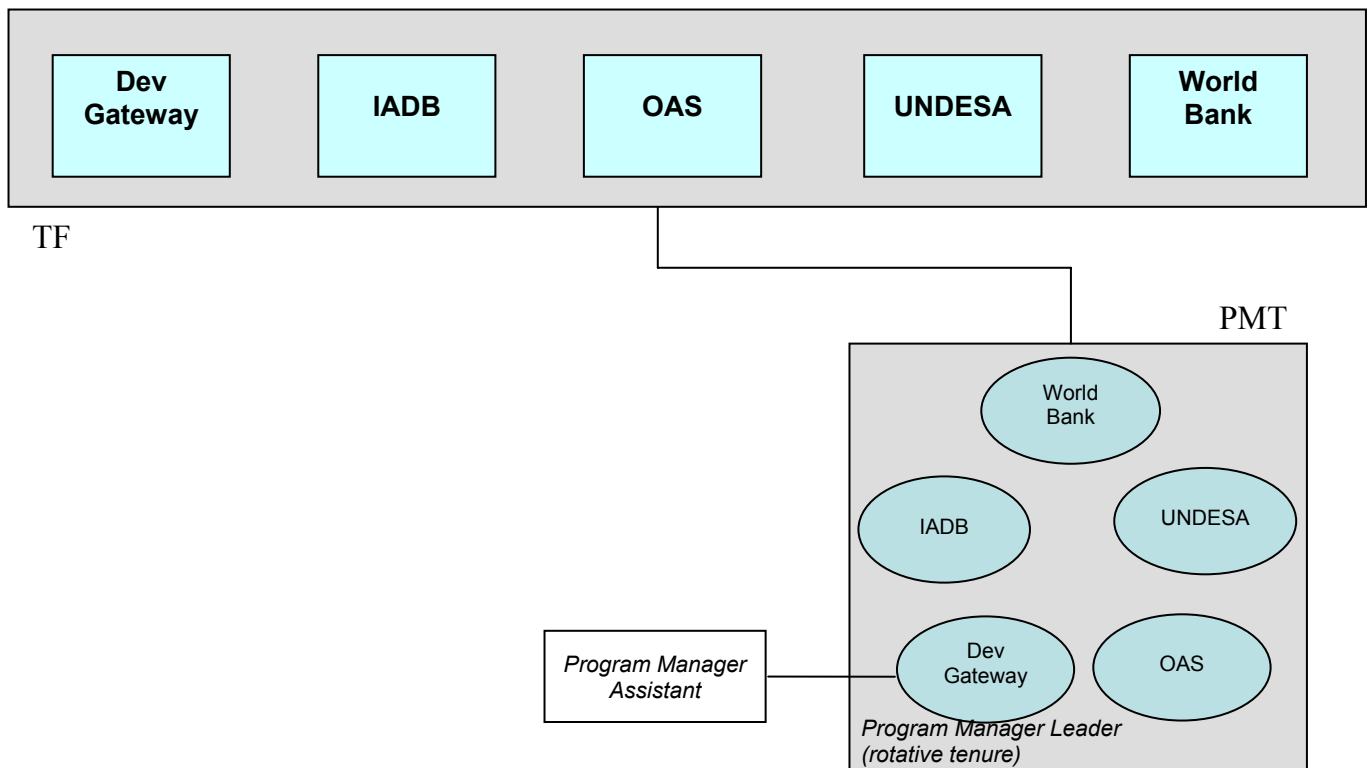
Program Managers Coordinator and Coordinator Assistant

- The Coordinator will coordinate the PMT in the above listed activities.
- This position will be covered in a rotating way by the managers of the PMT. It is expected that the Coordinator will contribute 3 to 5 days per months to carry on his duties.
- He will team up with a Coordinator Assistant contributed in a rotating way as well. The assistant will be an employee, a contractor or an intern of a different organization than the one contributing in the same moment the Coordinator, so to avoid overloading in a given moment a certain organization. The assistant will:
 - Contribute on average 7 days per month to carry on his duties.



- Be supported by a second Coordinator Assistant contributed by a different member organization after the first 3 months. This overlapping period has been defined in order to have continuity in the process.
- Be the “content guide” for the website (activity #4), follow the implementation of the inter-agency platform (activity #1), and support the Coordinator in the other activities.

Chart 1 – Organizational Chart





Appendix #2 – Virtual Work Spaces for support of activity clusters

As mentioned in the “Institutional Arrangements” section of this Action Plan, it is anticipated that a number of Clusters and Task Force / Country Issue Areas will emerge first among the agencies and subsequently between the TF and the beneficiary countries. Consideration could be given to continue operating through a cluster approach; each TF agency can take the lead on a strategic issue reflecting its core capacity. Cluster topics would reflect activities and be based initially on agreement among Task Force members. Subsequently, these clusters and corresponding strategic products and activities could be validated and/or prioritized during Task Force and LAC country dialogue).

Topics and corresponding agency leaders appear below:

Task Force Virtual Work Space (Program Managers Team)

To link agency members of the Task Force (for inter-agency information sharing and favoring harmonization on areas of collaboration).

Possible Task Force Clusters could be:

- 1) Platform Management Cluster (portal design – links with agencies and conclusions and recommendations from conference, seminars, meetings that have already taken place, dates and agendas for forthcoming events and documentation support for clusters and issue areas)
 - Development Gateway Foundation
- 2) TF and Country virtual Inter-action Platform Cluster
 - IDB and OAS (via Red de Gobierno Electrónico de América Latina y el Caribe - GEALC³)
- 3) Cluster on E-governance Effectiveness Policy Planning Consultative Process
 - IADB (SDS/ICT) – Face to face inter-action (with support from GEALC)
- 4) Cluster on Skills Development and Managing Change in Public Sector Transformation
 - UNDESA, ICA List of Experts, OAS training workshops
- 5) Task Force – Country Dialogue Coordination
 - World Bank, IDB

Task Force and Country Virtual Work Space

As the program managers’ team expands products and processes to facilitate information sharing and promote harmonization among countries and between them and the TF (this could involve the use of OAS and Development Gateway capabilities), the focus on strategic product areas could be refined and the role of the lead agency in the cluster expanded. The TF and country work space could initially focus on three issue areas (corresponding to the clusters):

- 1) E-governance Effectiveness Policy Planning Consultative Process
 - IDB (SDS/ICT) – Face to face inter-action
- 2) Skills Development and Managing Change in Public Sector Transformation
 - UNDESA, ICA List of Experts, OAS training workshops

³ See www.regealc.net