

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
CENTRE FOR E-GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT FOR SOUTH EAST EUROPE

Recognizing the importance of regional cooperation and public-private partnership in the development of information and communication technologies in South East Europe and the critical role played by eGovernance programs in democratic political, economic and social development in the 21st century,

Agreeing on the strategic goal of strengthening and supporting e-Governance programs by South East European governments and their implementation of the regional eSEE Agenda Plus, and thus facilitating the region's European and Euro-Atlantic integration and regional cooperation processes, taking into account the important e-Economy dimension;

Believing that there is a concerted need for such cooperation in South East Europe and that the Stability Pact for South East Europe's electronic South East Europe (eSEE) initiative and broadband South East Europe (bSEE) initiative represent an important foundation for sustaining and supporting ongoing regional efforts to promote eGovernance;

Confirming the commitment of the eSEE initiative and bSEE initiative to foster the region's progress toward achieving the objectives of the European Union's i2010 program and toward becoming a full participant in the global Information Society;

Believing that a decentralized regional network of programs and training support, with an administrative focal point to provide overall coordination, is an appropriate model;

Underscoring the need to train and advise leaders and stakeholders in using information and communication technology (ICT) to increase government efficiency and to improve democratic processes in order to build open information societies, increase transparency, reduce corruption and minimize the digital divide between EU member states and South East Europe;

Recognizing the necessity of raising public awareness of the potential of eGovernance as a contributor to reinforcing democracy, improving public services, and strengthening economic and business development;

Relying on the important contribution of the private sector in spurring ICT development in the region;

The undersigned stakeholders commit themselves to establish a Centre for e-Governance Development (hereinafter referred to as "Center", "eGovernance Center" or "CeGD") for South East Europe in order to address training, educational, consulting and research issues related to eGovernance throughout the region, as

defined below and in the Statute of the Centre and in close coordination with the eSEE initiative and its Secretariat in Sarajevo.

1. Vision

1.1. The Centre for e-Governance Development will strive to promote the development of the range of eGovernance programs within South East Europe. The Centre will rely on a decentralized network of institutions and experts, public and private, in a manner consistent with the direction laid out in the ongoing EU activities and policies as well as with recognized global best practices. The CeGD will be served by an administrative focal point to ensure effective coordination between regional governments, existing networks of ongoing eGovernance programs, and local training nodes to enhance implementation of eGovernance programs and policies throughout the region (Annexes 1, 2 and 3). The CeGD will work closely with the eSEE initiative and its Secretariat in Sarajevo, including following the transition of the Stability Pact to the Regional Cooperation Council, to meet the eGovernance needs of the eSEE participants.

2. Objectives

2.1. The primary objective of the Centre for e-Governance Development will be to support the eGovernance programs of the participants in the eSEE and bSEE initiatives with a single regional coordination point and a network of programs and training nodes for the creation and transfer of knowledge concerning e-governance, e-commerce and development of modern public administration and democracy in the region.

2.2. The main activity of the Centre would be the dissemination of information and best practices by facilitating training and advising leaders and regional governments in the use of information and communication technologies to increase efficiency and to improve democratic and economic processes in South East Europe with the aim of building open information societies.

2.3. The Centre will seek to develop and facilitate optimal institutional linkages and relationships among the countries of South East Europe to enable them to exchange experiences, decide on joint activities, and take leadership where they have the most experience while allowing for strong support relationships with donors and other governments with more advanced eGovernance programs.

2.4. The Centre should strongly encourage regional ownership and be closely coordinated with those regional initiatives that would benefit from this eGovernance initiative in the region, with strong participation and benefits for regional governments that support monitoring, design and implementation of policy-related elements of the modern Information Society.

3. Structure

3.1. The Centre for e-Governance Development will have a multi-tiered structure (Annex 4), encompassing a Supervisory Board of key stakeholders, a Management Board for operational oversight, an Administrative Focal Point and a network of programs and training nodes in the region to provide eGovernance services and coordination to governmental clients in the region.

3.2. The Supervisory Board shall be chaired during the first year by the Chairperson of the electronic South East Europe (eSEE) initiative of the Stability Pact for South East Europe to ensure regional leadership.

3.3. The Centre's Administrative Focal Point will be a small office headed by a Director and supported by the Government of Slovenia, key stakeholders and recognized partners and which is proposed to be located in Slovenia. The government of the host country (Slovenia) will be responsible for arranging visas and work permits for any Focal Point staff members who require such. In general, participants will provide visa support with respect to travel by regional representatives to CeGD-coordinated activities.

3.4. The Centre will also rely on two Committees, a Program Advisory Committee comprised of eSEE Initiative participant leaders on eGovernance programs charged with recommending eGovernance program priorities, representatives of the Centre's public sector stakeholders and recognized partners and other experts and a Private Sector Advisory Committee drawn from the Centre's private sector Stakeholders and recognized partners, the Stability Pact Business Advisory Council (BAC)-led ICT Forum and regional ICT business associations. The Program Advisory Committee will be charged with helping to shape the Centre's eGovernance program support and offerings, drawing on existing and planned programs within the region. The Private Sector Advisory Committee will serve as a source of private sector input to the work of the Centre, its Supervisory Board and the Program Advisory Committee.

3.5. In addition, the Centre and its Administrative Focal Point will seek to build a broad and dynamic network of key partners, who will provide technical support, counsel, and eGovernance content and will commit themselves to a cooperative effort towards the achievement of the Centre's overall goal of facilitating the creation of flexibly tailored and targeted working groups and programs in accordance with the specific requests of eSEE participants.

4. Network of Programs and Training Nodes

4.1. The Centre for e-Governance Development will function in a decentralized manner and will aim to deliver diverse eGovernance components, which will work in unison to form a collaborative environment in order to enhance regional ownership and effectiveness.

4.2. The Centre operation will involve an extended network of programs, and training nodes in the region, composed by already existing public and private institutions that have developed eGovernance material and/or can facilitate the delivery of training and consulting services on site, in the most cost efficient manner. The network should be open and inclusive in order to incorporate all similar initiatives and projects and enhance coordination to avoid duplication of efforts.

4.3. The Centre will encourage and support the establishment and work of local nodes in all eSEE participants in collaboration with public and private institutions involved in the sector. (See Annex 2 with attachments for an initial indicative inventory of CeGD programs and nodes). The Centre will support efforts by participating governments to develop their own eGovernance functionality.

5. Scope of Activity

5.1. The Centre for e-Governance Development will focus its activity in the region primarily on the areas of e-Governance that support the broader reform of public

administration, allow the transfer to South East Europe of the experience and best practices of more advanced EU member states and other global leaders, and support the development of eBusiness and eCommerce.

5.2. The activities of the Centre would also focus on specific eGovernance solutions of interest to regional governments; for example eGovernment, eDemocracy, eProcurement, eCustoms, eCommerce, eEducation, eHealth, eJustice, and eInclusion and such policy concerns as privacy, safety and eSecurity.

5.3. The principal areas of proposed activity will include:

- **Education and training:** to assist regional governments' efforts to build capacity and knowledge of eGovernance on content and experience; to define concrete topics that require training or support.
 - The Centre will also work with the eSEE initiative and bSEE initiative to support regional efforts in research and development;
 - and to facilitate where possible eSEE initiative participants' preparation of projects for possible funding under EU IPA and FP programs and other donor programs.
- **Knowledge Base (including Web Portal):** to develop a thorough survey of existing eGovernance programs and best practices both within the region and from other partners as well as the network of program managers and program providers working in the eGovernance area. A dedicated Web page will need to be developed to facilitate replication of best practice solutions and to serve as a platform for virtual networking among e-Governance educators, ICT professionals and other e-leaders.
- **Workshops/seminars:** to conduct or coordinate workshops and seminars on specific eGovernance topics and policy issues, to create training opportunities for central government and municipal officials in the acquisition of the latest eGovernance knowledge at schools of public administration and management, to address the specific competency needs of end-users, ICT professionals, media, civil society organizations, and small businesses at the local level. Where possible, activities will be supplemented by the development of opportunities for self- and remote learning in digital form.
- **Projects:** to support regional eGovernance programs by delivering specific services and programs, and supporting project delivery (opportunity based facilitating advisory and consultancy services, including engaging local expertise to this end.)

6. Openness

6.1. The Centre's approach to eGovernance activities will be informed by a commitment to innovation, to open discussion, and to open standards and interoperability to promote efficiency and to ensure a competitive environment for eGovernance solutions and services.

7. Budget and Financial Resources

7.1. The budget (See Annex 5) for functioning of the Centre will be developed by the Supervisory Board and will be funded voluntarily by participating stakeholders and

contributions from recognized partners and interested supporters. Provision of any funds by any signatory of this MoU requires prior written approval of such signatory.

7.2. The Supervisory Board will select five representatives to the Management Board from those stakeholders and recognized partners who participate with minimum of 15,000 € in financial assets or program value.

7.3. The initial budget for establishing the Centre will be developed by the Government of the Republic Slovenia as CeGD founder.

7.4. After an initial period, the Centre will develop a financial sustainability plan to address the eGovernance needs and challenges of the region for the foreseeable future.

8. Legal Status

8.1. The Centre will be placed under the political responsibility of the Stability Pact initially, and of the Regional Cooperation Council subsequently. Staff members will be contracted by the Administrative Focal Point office, which, while under the auspices of the Stability Pact eSEE initiative and subsequently the Regional Cooperation Council and funded through the Centre's financial resources, will be given legal status under Slovene law. The Statute of the CeGD will govern operations of the CeGD and its Administrative Focal Point.

9. Miscellaneous

9.1. Non-exclusivity: This Memorandum of Understanding is non-exclusive. All parties are free to enter into similar or identical agreements with other parties.

9.2. Non-binding: This Memorandum of Understanding is non-binding. This Memorandum of Understanding expresses the parties' current intentions. All legally binding commitments require a written agreement signed by the committing party.

9.3. Although not envisaged at this stage, all parties remain free to cease their cooperation under this Agreement at any time without any liability to either party under this Memorandum of Understanding. Parties note that no recognized partner bears responsibility or obligation under the Statute attached as Annex 1 or applicable laws relating to the founding or managing of the Center and shall be solely responsible to support the Center through its expertise and ICT know-how or as otherwise explicitly set out in one of the Annexes to this MoU.

9.4. Term: The term of this Memorandum of Understanding is indefinite, unless agreed otherwise by all parties.

Date and Place of Signing:

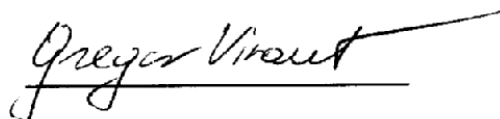
Ljubljana, Slovenia,
January 14, 2008

Stakeholders:

Stability Pact (eSEE)

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Government of the Republic of Slovenia

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European Foundation

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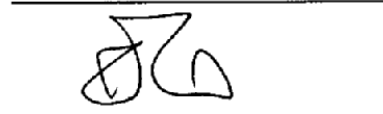
UNDP

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INA Academy

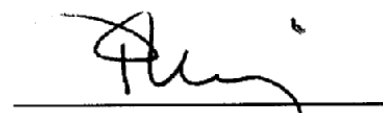
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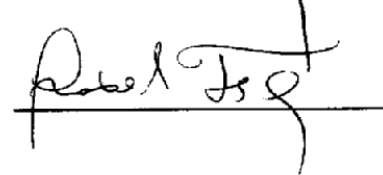
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Recognized Partners

Microsoft

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Siemens

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