

Chapter 6

Performance Tools

Administrative simplification and e-government initiatives require a set of performance tools to monitor the outcomes of implementation for full impact. Although an increasing number of OECD countries are developing performance tracking frameworks, only a limited number have put them into operation. The aim is to enable governments to evaluate simplification activities and introduce any necessary corrective adjustments to meet their political and strategic goals.

This chapter analyses the tools for performance management in relation to the Simplex programmes. The key questions are:

- **Monitoring and evaluation:** OECD countries are increasingly using systematic monitoring and evaluation methodologies for performance management of simplification projects. They can follow performance, measure if policy goals are met, and spot possible future problems. Are the right tools for monitoring and evaluation in place and being used?
- **Outcomes and impact:** Do the Simplex programmes lead to the expected outcomes and have the expected impacts compared to the goals of the reform? Are users' expectations of the new and simplified services met? What is the impact of reforms, and are there unexpected outcomes of policy implementation?
- **Communication:** Communication is an important tool to ensure correlation between goals of the Simplex programmes and stakeholder expectations. Are the outcomes adequate and sufficient?

Monitoring and evaluation

Frequent and accurate monitoring and evaluation is essential to manage performance and implementation, and identify possible future problems with e-government projects and programmes in OECD countries. Standard tools to monitor and evaluate tasks and activities in projects, risk management or analysis of economic impact include cost-benefit analysis, business case methodology, return-on-investment calculations, etc.

Indicators for strategic steering and for monitoring progress

Basic indicators describing project status and development are necessary to measure administrative simplification and e-government progress. These may include measures of costs and benefits, as well as qualitative and quantitative

measures of progress towards stated policy goals. For Portugal, indicators have not yet been accepted as an integrated tool for managing administrative simplification and e-government activities, and tracking progress.

Indicators on regulatory quality

Measuring quality of regulation is not simple and will require selection of indicative representative parameters for overall regulatory quality. A number of institutions are developing indicators of this kind and using them for regular measurement, the results of which are presented in benchmarking studies. In this section, three such indicator exercises will briefly be presented: the *Product Market Regulation (PMR) Indicators* from the OECD, the *Doing Business Indicators* from the World Bank, and the *Global Competitiveness Indicators* from World Economic Forum (WEF).

These rankings have proven to be excellent drivers of reform. The centre of the Portuguese government is aware of the development in Portugal's ranking and is seeking for improvement. Hence, the initiative On-the-spot-firm was structured to improve the Portuguese position in the indicator of starting a business and Simplex 2008 contains priority areas centred on licensing procedures; import/export procedures; trademark and firms registration procedures; and human resources and working conditions procedures. There are, however, no clear and quantitative public goals for improvement as concerns these indicators.

The Product Market Regulation (PMR) Indicators are a comprehensive and internationally comparable set of indicators that measure the degree to which policies promote or inhibit competition in areas of the product market where competition is viable. They report the economy-wide regulatory and market environments in OECD countries in (or around) 1998 and 2003, allowing comparisons across time and countries. A new update will be done by the OECD in 2008. The methodology for constructing the indicators is briefly explained in Box 6.1.

The methodology used by the World Bank in the Doing Business Project is briefly explained in Box 6.2.

The methodology used by the World Economic Forum for computing the Global Competitiveness Index is explained in Box 6.3.

Indicators on user satisfaction

A programme aiming at improving service delivery and increasing citizen trust could also be guided by indicators of general user satisfaction. Portugal is measuring user satisfaction with the *European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI)* methodology on an annual basis, to ensure that data on customers' expectations and habits are up-to-date.

Box 6.1. OECD's indicators on Product Market Regulation (PMR): methodology

The PMR indicator system includes 16 base-level indicators and one overall top-level indicator of product market regulation. Each low-level indicator captures a specific aspect of the regulatory regime. The low-level indicators are attributed weights (according to the proportion of cross-country variation explained by the component) and aggregated into higher-level indicators. At one of the highest levels, the following three indicators are found:

1. state control;
2. barriers to entrepreneurship;
3. barriers to trade and investment.

Barriers to entrepreneurship is an aggregation of (weights in brackets):

- Regulatory and administrative opacity (0.48):
 - ❖ Licenses and permits system (0.55).
 - ❖ Communication and simplification of rules and procedures (0.45).
- Administrative burdens on start-ups (0.30):
 - ❖ Administrative burdens for corporation (0.36).
 - ❖ Administrative burdens for sole proprietor firms (0.30).
 - ❖ Sector specific administrative burdens (0.34).
- Barriers to competition (0.22):
 - ❖ Legal barriers (0.30).
 - ❖ Antitrust exemptions (0.70).

The main sources of information used to construct the PMR indicators are the responses of OECD governments to the Regulatory Indicators Questionnaire and data published by the OECD and other international organisations. All these data are extensively checked by OECD and government experts.

Source: Conway, P., V. Janod, and G. Nicoletti (2005), *Product Market Regulation in OECD Countries, 1998 to 2003*, OECD Economics Department Working Paper, No. 419.

Measuring user satisfaction is part of a clear user-focused vision for administrative simplification and e-government allowing public administration to become more aware of customers' needs.¹

Indicators on administrative burdens

Over the last decade, a growing number of countries have focused on reducing the administrative cost of complying with regulation for businesses. Attempts to measure these burdens have included survey methods, interviews and modelling. One of the most ambitious programmes was

Box 6.2. The World Bank's indicators on Ease of Doing Business: methodology

The Doing Business indicators are based on factual information concerning laws and regulations in force. The focus is domestic, primarily small- and medium-sized, companies. The methodology builds on extensive and detailed information on regulations, collected by local partners in each of the 178 countries included in the study.

The overall index is calculated as the ranking of the simple average of country percentile rankings on each of the ten topics covered in Doing Business 2008:

- starting a business;
- dealing with licenses;
- employing workers;
- registering property;
- getting credit;
- protecting investors;
- paying taxes;
- trading across borders;
- enforcing contracts;
- closing a business.

The ranking on each topic is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators. For example, the ranking on starting a business is the average of the country percentile rankings on the procedures, time, cost and paid-in minimum capital requirement to register a business. In Iceland it takes five procedures, five days and 3% of annual income per capita in fees to open a business. The minimum capital required amounts to 14% of income per capita. On these four indicators Iceland ranks in the 6th, 2nd, 10th and 55th percentiles. So on average, Iceland ranks in the 18th percentile – the average of the four percentiles – on the ease of starting a business. Higher ranks indicate simpler regulation and stronger protections of property rights.

Source: World Bank (2007), *Doing Business 2008*.

MISTRAL,² developed and implemented in the early 1990s in The Netherlands. The method, which is now widely known as the Standard Cost Model (SCM) method, is still in use and has spread to a large number of countries, mainly in Europe.

The SCM method is a way of modelling the total administrative burdens on companies in an economy. Administrative burdens are defined as “the

Box 6.3. World Economic Forum's Index on Global Competitiveness: methodology

Since 1979, the World Economic Forum has published annual reports concerning the factors enabling national economies to achieve sustained economic growth. The methodology developed over the years, and the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) was introduced in 2004 and now covers and ranks 127 countries. The index seeks to take microeconomic and macroeconomic foundations for national competitiveness into account, and competitiveness is defined as *the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country*.

The index seeks to take the many components that determine competitiveness into account. These are weighted and grouped into "12 pillars of competitiveness", which include institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, education, market efficiency, labour market efficiency, technological readiness, business sophistication, innovation, etc.

The GCI is composed of 113 variables, of which 79 come from the World Economic Forum's annual Executive Opinion Survey. For the latest survey, 11 127 senior business leaders responded to the questionnaire. The remaining variables are "hard data" from a number of sources providing comparable data across the participating countries.

The score on each of the 12 pillars, as well as on the 113 variables, is presented in the report. This allows a selection of variables relative to policy purpose. In relation to the Simplex programmes, it could *inter alia* be relevant to look at Portugal's ranking on "Wastefulness of government spending" (number 63 of 131 countries), "Burden of government regulation" (62), "Efficiency of legal framework" (53), "Time required to start a business" (8), "Burden of customs procedures" (36), "Number of procedures required to start a business" (37), and "Laws relating to ICT" (23).

Source: World Economic Forum (2007), *The Global Competitiveness Report 2007-2008*.

costs to the businesses of complying with the information obligations resulting from government-imposed legislation and regulations. This also includes the obligation to provide information to third parties (for example consumers)."³

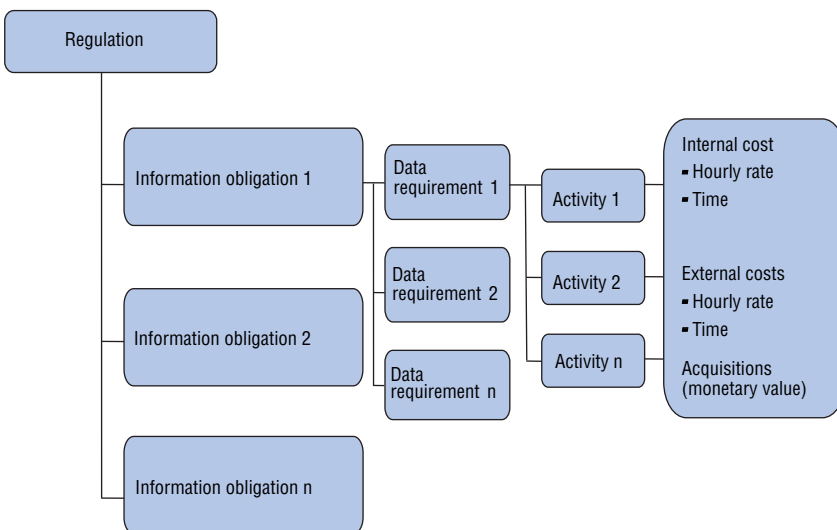
The method consists of a qualitative and a quantitative dimension:

1. As the definition begins with information obligations, the first step is to find such obligations in the legal texts. In principle, every law is examined to determine where businesses are obliged to deliver information to public authorities (or to third parties, as for instance in regulation on price labelling). The specifics of the obligation (data requirements) are then

described in more detail by examining *inter alia* forms, mapping the exact information that the individual company must supply in order to meet the information obligation. Next, the necessary activities for providing this information are described, using a standard typology of activities (see Figure 6.1).

2. The quantitative dimension builds on this qualitative breakdown of information obligations by first determining the number of companies that have to comply with the obligation, and then fixing a standard cost for the individual company. This is done by determining how much time a normally efficient company will spend on the necessary activities and the underlying frequency. The concept of the normally efficient company has been introduced in an attempt to make the assessment more objective, as there is a risk of bias and subjectivity in assessments made by survey. The standardised time consumption and unit prices (hourly wages, etc.) are fixed by interviewing a limited number of companies and consultants with special knowledge in the field. Some kind of clearance is normally made through business organisations.
3. The aggregated annual burden is calculated by multiplying the total cost (time consumption times hourly wage plus overhead) for the individual company (the sum of time spent on each activity and each piece of information) by the number of companies affected and the annual frequency of the obligation.

Figure 6.1. **Structure of the Standard Cost Model (SCM) method**



Source: The International SCM Manual: Measuring and Reducing Administrative Burdens on Businesses, SCM Network, October 2006.

The validity or precision of the method can be questioned, as the normally efficient company is not a statistically derived unit. Rather, it is a proxy of a real-life business, established by examination of legal obligations (under the assumption of full compliance) and by modelling standard time consumption on administrative activities, informed by qualitative interviews with a smaller number of companies and business service providers. The main advantage of the method is that it can give an indication of the total level of administrative burdens and of the relative burden of individual laws or regulations and of individual information obligation within each law, and that it can be used to model the effect of changes in the regulation (*ex ante* as well as *ex post*).

The method is well suited for establishing an index that can be used to follow the development in total administrative burden over time. It is being used in this way in a number of countries that have established quantitative targets for reduction of administrative burdens. The Netherlands, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom all have similar targets. The European Commission has communicated a target of 25% reduction of administrative burdens and has encouraged its member states to adopt similar targets. Other OECD countries are using the SCM method without having quantitative reduction targets (Norway and Poland), or are preparing or considering the use of the method (Korea). Countries using the SCM method have created the SCM Network, where the methodology is further refined and experiences in its use – and in the subsequent use of measurement results in simplification programmes – are exchanged.⁴

Portugal has chosen to use the standard SCM methodology, although it is seeking to improve it in order to also incorporate the burdens for citizens and to cover full compliance costs, including the opportunity costs of waiting times and delays of the public administration in the burden concept. Like other OECD countries, Portugal adopted the 25% reduction of administrative burdens target (to be reached in 2012) suggested by the European Commission.

Existing monitoring in Portugal

In Portugal, the start of the Simplex programmes constituted a change regarding monitoring and evaluation. Before the Simplex programmes, there was little systematic monitoring and evaluation of initiatives for public sector transformation (only in relation to initiatives on e-government). This is gradually changing, even if a full-fledged monitoring and evaluation system is not yet in place. It is a widespread conviction that monitoring and evaluation of the Simplex programmes must be strengthened. As one OECD interviewee said: “if you cannot evaluate a system, you cannot control it”. It has been stated by the Portuguese administration that Simplex 2008 will be an important step in this direction.

Monitoring and evaluation can be seen in connection with the general Simplex programmes – where progress can be measured against the general goals for the programme. It can be seen looking to single initiatives – where more specific evaluation standards can be applied. Or it can be seen in relation to clusters of initiatives, such as the life events, allowing the assessment of integrated measures. In the following sections, the current use of monitoring and evaluation tools in Portugal is examined on each of these levels.

Monitoring and evaluation of the overall Simplex programmes

There is reason to believe that programmes for public sector transformation (including administrative simplification and e-government) will have higher impact and sustainability if they are guided and monitored by clear indicators on what is to be achieved. This implies two things:

- Strategic goals for public sector transformation should be defined and made operational.
- Indicators for identifying problems and monitoring progress should be defined.

The risk in not having clear and operational strategic goals is that it will become difficult to obtain and maintain a clear focus on relevant lines of action and initiatives that will contribute to reaching political goals. As time passes, focus may gradually slide in the direction of what can be delivered with less effort and/or risk. By steering towards very broad concepts such as *competitiveness* and *trust*, it will be difficult to distinguish significant initiatives from insignificant or even irrelevant ones. In other words, the number of initiatives in future phases of the Simplex programme may still be in the hundreds, but the reach of the new additions may gradually decrease.

Aiming to avoid this, Simplex 2008 has defined priority areas of simplification based on life events, constituted by clusters of procedures. This will allow measurement of results not only on single initiatives, but also considering clusters of procedures, *e.g.* import/export procedures.

SEAM (and previously UCMA – see Chapter 1) is responsible for overseeing the progress of the overall Simplex programme. Progress reports are compiled annually and every three months for internal and external monitoring, and every month for internal monitoring only. Ministries report to SEAM on progress and delays, and the overall progress report is given to the Council of Ministers and later published on SEAM's Website. The monitoring report for 2006 shows that 280 of 333 initiatives had been executed according to plan and that 15 were partially executed.⁵ A similar evaluation for the first trimester of 2007 shows the status for 27 measures that were to be accomplished before 1 May 2007. Of these, 19 had been fully executed, 2 partially executed, and 6 were late or had been rescheduled. The yearly

report on 2007 Simplex shows that 183 of 235 initiatives were fully implemented.

Even if the 2006 and 2007 form of monitoring was very crude and only scored initiatives nominally, there is clear evidence that Simplex programmes and the organisational set-up around them led initiatives to be implemented on schedule.

In 2007, a Monitoring Panel was established⁶ for the Simplex programmes. It is meant to monitor progress and bring forward suggestions, and to give an external view of the yearly programme. All Simplex evaluation reports and documentation are sent to panel members on a regular basis. The members of the panel have been given individual assignments such as businesses, consumers, macroeconomy, etc. There is not yet clear evidence regarding the reporting and the impact of the work of the Monitoring Panel, which had only convened twice at the time of writing this report.

There is still no overall evaluation of the extent to which the Simplex programmes fulfil their goals – an overall assessment will be made at the end of the four-year cycle (governing cycle). However, use of the Standard Cost Model (SCM) method for measuring administrative burdens is under preparation in Portugal.⁷ Based on pilot projects conducted in the last part of 2007, a new evaluation methodology will be used from 2008 onwards. It will be a quantitative methodology with some variations to the standard SCM methodology and complemented with other methodological instruments, which aims to measure the stock and development of administrative burdens. The measurement will be co-ordinated by SEAM/AMA and will be accompanied by quantitative reduction targets. It should be noted that Portugal is aiming at not only measuring and reducing the administrative burden of regulation for enterprises, but also the burdens incurred by citizens, as well as the burdens of administrative procedures, including wider compliance costs, namely waiting times and public administration delays.⁸

A significant driver to start measuring administrative burdens with the SCM method⁹ was the March 2007 decision of the European Council to aim for a 25% reduction in the administrative burden in the European Union. It is the recommendation to member states to set similar targets.¹⁰

Portugal is aiming at improving the standard SCM methodology so as to cover the burdens for citizens and to include full compliance costs, including the opportunity costs of waiting times and delays of the public administration in the burden concept. The results from the pilot measurements have shown that SCM in the customised version tested still does not deal effectively with the two other key dimensions of simplification – administrative simplification and dematerialisation/use of ICT. The results have shown that SCM is rather limited as a systematic approach to support simplification efforts and that there is a

need to include and/or complement with other methodological instruments, *e.g.* process mapping and measurement of delays and waiting times.

From monitoring and evaluation of individual action lines to monitoring and evaluation of life events

Simplex 2006 operated within six key areas, but these are no longer used for structuring or overseeing the programmes. With Simplex 2007, and especially with Simplex 2008, the main focus turned to the organisation, communication, and monitoring of integrated life events/clusters of procedures. These clusters are expected to enhance consolidation and assessment of integrated measures, and an overall assessment is planned to take place by the end of the governing cycle (four years). The six main instruments for achieving the programmes' goals defined in 2006 continue to be used as simplification tools inside of each life event/cluster of procedures, even if they were abandoned as a systematisation method for Simplex initiatives. As an example, when establishing new licensing procedures, all these tools will be considered. The six main instruments are:

- eliminating certificates;
- simplification/de-bureaucratisation;
- eliminating paper/dematerialisation;
- deregulation;
- easier access to public services;
- harmonising and consolidating sets of rules.

The life event/cluster monitoring and evaluation will counteract the risk of goal displacement, where more difficult or controversial measures are “forgotten” and others are given more importance. This will help to fight the risk of a lower degree of success as each of the measures will contribute to realising the overall goals of the programmes in a life-event context. With this method, *e.g.* attempts at deregulation – where obsolete or superfluous regulation is removed – will not be given less attention even when there is a heavy focus on using ICT to improve communication within the administration and between the administration and external stakeholders (businesses and citizens). On the other hand, with this method, each measure will contribute – within its life-event context – to the overall goals of improving efficiency, reducing regulatory pressure, and increasing user satisfaction. This life-event monitoring system is expected to put sufficient pressure on participating organisations to ensure that all possibilities for improving the regulatory framework are sought.

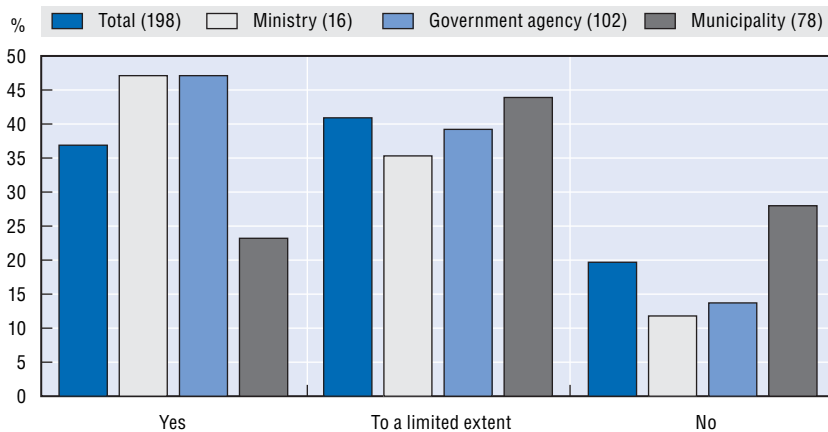
Monitoring and evaluation of individual initiatives

Responses to the OECD survey shows that guidelines for monitoring and evaluation exist to a limited extent at the institutional level. Almost 80% of respondents say that they have some guidelines. Guidelines seem to be most developed in ministries and government agencies, and less developed at the local level (see Figures 6.2 and 6.3). Evaluation is performed most frequently by ministries, followed by government agencies. Half of the municipalities participating in the survey report that they conduct evaluations at least annually (see Figure 6.4).

Many initiatives in the Simplex programmes have built-in monitoring and evaluation systems. Very often, these measure costs and user satisfaction before and after the implementation of new solutions. They usually include qualitative targets aiming for *improvement* – but do not state exactly how much improvement should be expected or delivered.

User satisfaction surveys are essential for meeting users' demands and learning how to improve services so they are better aligned with user preferences. The Simplex programmes could have systematically contained indicators to measure user satisfaction; greater user satisfaction should be an important goal in any public sector reform. Setting up indicators, including metrics, on user satisfaction could be further explored as a supplement to better instruments for evaluation and monitoring.

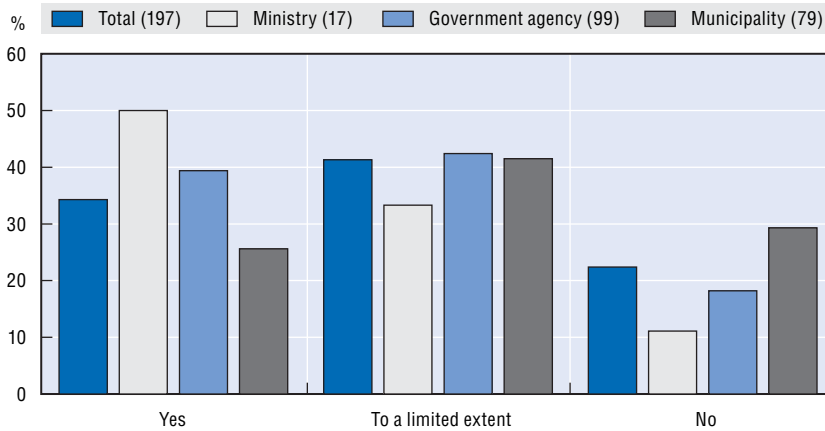
Figure 6.2. **Existence of guidelines for monitoring**



Note: N = 198 (9 have answered “don’t know” or are missing value). Regions are included in the total, but are not shown as a category.

Source: OECD Survey on Administrative Simplification and E-Government in Portugal, 2007.

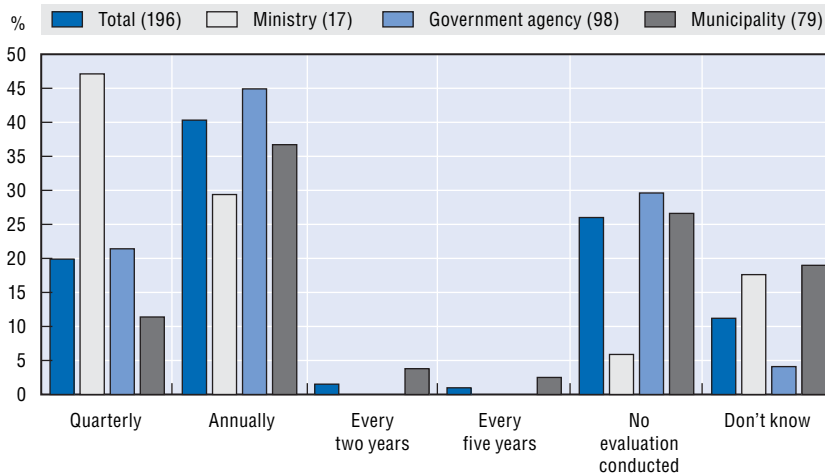
Figure 6.3. Existence of guidelines for evaluation



Note: N = 197 (10 have answered “don’t know” or are missing value). Regions are included in the total, but are not shown as a category

Source: OECD Survey on Administrative Simplification and E-Government in Portugal, 2007.

Figure 6.4. Frequency of evaluation



Note: N = 196 (11 are missing value). Regions are included in the total, but are not shown as a category.

Source: OECD Survey on Administrative Simplification and E-Government in Portugal, 2007.

Until 2007, the Portuguese government did not carry out any global user satisfaction surveys covering the entire public sector. A first global user satisfaction survey on public services using the European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI) methodology has been implemented and the first survey was conducted in 2007. It is the intention to conduct these surveys on a yearly basis to ensure that knowledge on user expectations and satisfaction is up to date.

The results are expected to improve public service delivery by providing additional input on how to meet users' needs and identify improvements.¹¹

Other user satisfaction measurements have been performed, *e.g.* by Deloitte for the General Directorate of Taxation within the Ministry of Finance. Using a survey of companies, the tax services were evaluated in 2006. It was found that 86% of the companies considered the online tax service better than the previous year.

User satisfaction with the Citizen's Shops is measured on a regular basis. AMA has annual data on attendance, complaints, and satisfaction from all Citizen's Shops since 2002. According to interviews, another goal is setting up Citizen's Shops in each municipality by 2013 (where today there are only 10 Citizen's Shops in the most important cities, one of which is a second-generation Citizen's Shop).

The Social Security services also measure user satisfaction; in 2006, 98.2% of respondents were satisfied or very much satisfied with the services.

In 2007-2013, Simplex measures will be evaluated using indicators set up by each responsible ministry in addition to the following shared indicators with the national monitoring system for the European Union Structural Funds:¹²

- number of single points of contact created (including the percentage of multi-channel points);
- reduction in per cent of average waiting times (before and after the initiative is implemented);
- reduction in per cent of the average number of interactions between the citizen/company and the public sector (before and after the initiative is implemented);
- increase in per cent of the use of public services (by citizens and enterprises) through non-in-person channels (telephone, Internet);
- public services available online;
- increase in per cent in the use of electronic invoices within the public sector;
- reduction of communication costs achieved;
- number of interoperable systems within the public sector;
- percentage of employees trained in relevant areas for administrative modernisation (front office, ICT, knowledge management, etc.).

Monitoring performance on the above-mentioned indicators from 2007 seems to be a step in the right direction, but efforts to set up clear and ambitious tracking indicators could be improved. To meet this goal, the use of a method for measuring administrative burdens is under preparation in Portugal. It is a quantitative methodology with some variations on the

standard SCM methodology and is complemented with other methodological instruments. The aim is to measure the stock and development of administrative burdens for enterprises, but also those burdens incurred by citizens, as well as the burdens of administrative procedures, including wider compliance costs, namely waiting times and delays of public administration. (See Box 6.4 for examples of evaluation and monitoring in OECD countries.)

Key points

- The Simplex programmes have led to an increased focus on monitoring and evaluation of public sector modernisation initiatives.
- Common tools for evaluation and monitoring in the public sector – at both the central and local levels – should be established. Portugal will use the Standard Cost Model (SCM) method for measuring administrative burdens. A new evaluation methodology will be used, complemented with other methodological instruments.
- Making more detailed monitoring and evaluation information accessible to the general public will increase pressure on performance by allowing external stakeholders to hold government and the administration accountable to public sector modernisation goals.

Box 6.4. Evaluation and monitoring in OECD countries

Facing pressures to deliver projects on time and within budget, OECD countries are increasingly using analysis of costs and benefits, and other methods to evaluate and monitor e-government and simplification projects.

In **Germany**, the federal administration has used the WiBe Economic Efficiency Assessment methodology to assess ICT projects since 1998. The latest version of the methodology (WiBe 4.0) includes four elements:

- costs and benefits in monetary terms;
- urgency of measure;
- qualitative and strategic importance of project;
- external effects.

The method uses a net present value method to assess 1), which represents the economic efficiency in a monetary sense, while 2)-4) are assessed according to a benefits analysis, providing parameters of extended economic efficiency. E-Government projects should always include an assessment of external effects.

Box 6.4. Evaluation and monitoring in OECD countries (cont.)

In **France**, the former Electronic Administration Development Agency (ADAE) developed in 2005 a methodology to assess the value of public sector transformation projects. The MAREVA method (méthode d'analyse et de remontée de la valeur) is used for selecting, monitoring and evaluating projects. It has been developed in parallel to introduction of results-based budgeting.

The MAREVA method consists of:

- standard calculations of return on investment;
- assessment of value;
- presentation format using a radar diagram to portray values.

It considers projects' external benefits to users as well as internal benefits to employees and administration. Furthermore, it measures risk and necessity. The advantage of MAREVA compared to other evaluation and monitoring tools is that it provides a standard and consistent method for selecting and appraising projects.

Source: a) Koordinierungs- und Beratungsstelle der Bundesregierung für Informationstechnik in der Bundesverwaltung im Bundesministerium des Innern (2004): WiBe 4.0. Recommendations on Economic Efficiency Assessments in the German Federal Administration, in Particular with Regard to the Use of Information Technology. OECD (2007): Benefits Realisation Management. b) OECD (2006), Benefits Realisation Management, [GOV/PGC/EGOV(2006)11/REV1], 29 March 2007, Paris, France.

Outcomes and impacts

As the first initiatives in the Simplex programmes were launched in 2006 and their implementation is barely finalised, it is still too early to evaluate the general outcomes and impacts of these simplification activities in Portugal. However, specific areas and sectors have made significant progress in providing e-government services, a prerequisite for many of the simplification initiatives in the Simplex programmes.

An additional difficulty in analysing outcomes and impacts is the limited use of tracking indicators, and monitoring and evaluation tools that could provide policy makers feedback on how simplification initiatives have actually achieved their stated goals. Simplex 2008 is expected to have significant impact on monitoring and evaluation as it establishes a new approach for these matters. Bearing this in mind, this section will describe and analyse the following aspects of outcomes and impacts:

- Which e-government services are available for citizens and business?
- To what extent are they used?
- How can challenges to user take-up be explained?

E-Government services for citizens and businesses

In recent years Portuguese government agencies have increasingly put services online. The central government's e-government services can be accessed through two main portals: the Citizen's Portal and the Business Portal.

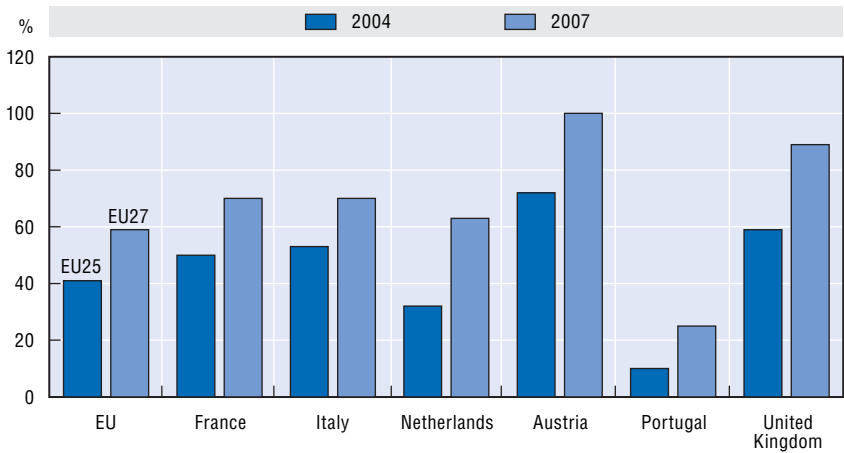
The Citizen's Portal is the main electronic contact point between government and citizens. It has 820 services from 130 entities and half a million regular visitors. The most popular services are information services, certification request services, tax return services, and address change services. Since 2005, SMS messaging and mobile portal services have been available as well. The Business Portal is organised according to a "Business Life Cycle" concept with areas for creation, management, expansion, and dissolution of a company. It brings together 480 company-oriented services and includes a "Reserved Area" where different types of certification, registration, and declaration can be made. For services requiring strict authentication of identity, such as the fully online creation of a company, advanced digital signature certificates are used for digital authentication: the Citizen's Card or alternative digital signature certificates recognised by the state such those carried by lawyers. Even though the Citizen's Card deployment was initiated in February 2007, lawyers can act as representatives of people wishing to create a company or of enterprises for operations requiring strong authentication of identity as they carry advanced digital signature certificates that have been recognised by the state for several years. A number of e-government services can be accessed on individual agency Websites, *e.g.* social security, civil service retirement, health, and taxes online.

With respect to full online availability of basic e-government services, Portugal ranks third amongst European countries, after Austria and Malta (see Figure 6.5 regarding online availability in selected countries).¹³ According to the ranking, 90% of Portugal's services are fully online and is approaching its goal of 100% availability in 2010. This position represents a major leapfrog from 2004 when Portugal ranked eleventh in the EU15, with only 40% of its services fully online; it now ranks well above the EU average.

Use of e-government services

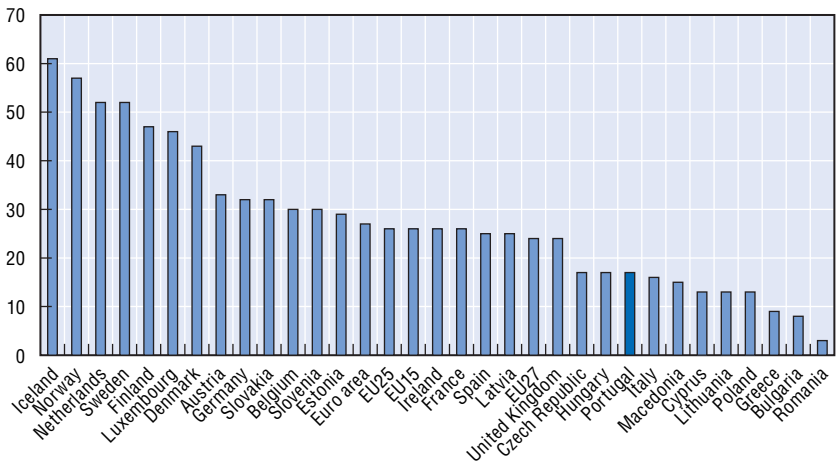
The Portuguese government's strong commitment to e-government development has led to a significant improvement in the number of services provided online. But Portugal faces the same challenge as other OECD countries: low user take-up of these services. Figure 6.6 shows the proportion of the population using the Internet to interact with public authorities (obtaining information, downloading official forms or sending filled-in forms). It shows that use of e-government services is quite low in Portugal, indeed, below average. A notable exception to this is electronic tax returns, which have been very successful as in other OECD countries

Figure 6.5. **Percentage of e-services fully available online**



Source: OECD compilation of EUROSTAT data: 2004, 2006, 2007 in selected countries.

Figure 6.6. **Use of e-government by individuals**



Source: OECD compilation of EUROSTAT data, 2006 all available countries.

(see Box 6.5). Several Portuguese e-government services have high use.¹⁴ The picture is the same for businesses (see Figure 6.7), where Portugal is slightly below average.

Although Portugal performs well, providing public online services, as well as on their use by businesses, there is a considerable gap regarding the actual use of online services by individuals. This could indicate that citizens and businesses are not regular Internet users.¹⁵

Box 6.5. Electronic tax returns in Portugal

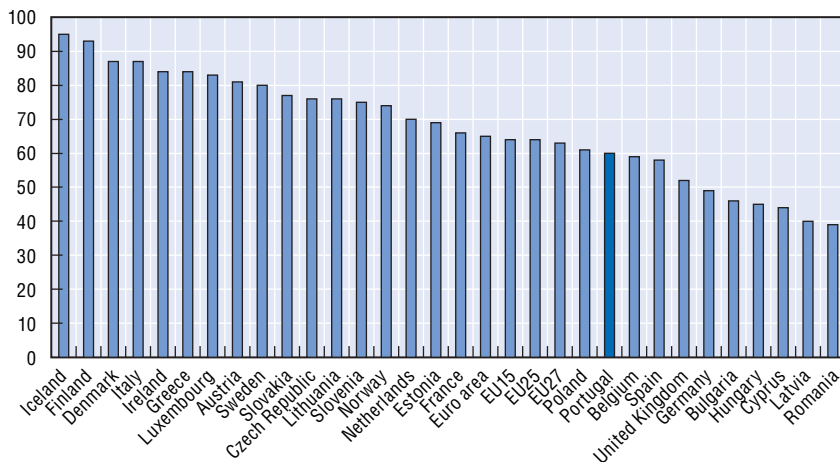
In 1997, a first version of a system for electronic tax returns was developed in Portugal. Since then, a number of services have been added to the system. Today it is a full transactional service, including filing, inquiries, and payments based on online operability and multi-channel communication. Functionalities in the system include pre-completed income tax declarations and a tax complaint system.

About 60% of Portuguese taxpayers submitted their income tax declarations by Internet in 2007. This represents a significant number considering that only 40% of the households in Portugal have Internet access at home. Furthermore, following introduction of the online tax system revenue collection for the state has improved, tax fraud is expected to have decreased, and considerable savings in the tax administration have been accomplished.

The Electronic Tax Returns system was evaluated in 2006 by Deloitte. Of the companies surveyed, 86% said that online tax services had improved in 2006 and 65% considered pre-completed electronic income tax declarations a good simplification measure.

Source: Answers to the OECD Questionnaire on Administrative Simplification and e-Government in Portugal, 2007. Question 3.3.1.2.

Figure 6.7. Use of e-government by businesses



Source: OECD compilation of EUROSTAT data, 2006 all available countries.

However, the On-the-spot-firm (*Empresa na Hora*) initiative has made it possible to form a company in less than one hour using a single contact point. Between July 2005 and December 2007, more than 45 500 companies were formed through this service, each taking an average of 51 minutes to create¹⁶ (and in January 2008 this average was down to 45 minutes).

The public authorities in specific sectors are also providing users with integrated and seamless services. For example, the e-government portal for citizens and businesses for Social Security (*Segurança Social Directa*) has become more interoperable with different entities in the Portuguese administration including the Employment and Professional Training Institute, and had more than 2 million online accesses from January to September 2007.¹⁷ Sharing data makes it possible to terminate unwarranted unemployment benefits. The estimated savings from this amounted to EUR 20 million in 2006 and EUR 12 million in 2007.

The focused development of e-government services has enabled Portugal to leapfrog the development of many other countries in recent years – though user take-up of these services remains low. Efforts could be made to increase take-up.

Reducing the digital divide

To reap the benefits of e-government solutions, citizens and businesses need to use the digital channels. But questions remain about the digital divide in Portugal, and what policies and strategies are in place to bridge it. Although Portugal has a high level of government services available online, and user take-up of these services by enterprises and individuals with at least secondary education is high, with individuals having less than a secondary education it seems to be rather low.

Compared with other countries, the proportion of Internet users in Portugal is low. Although the proportion of regular Internet users has gone up in recent years (35% in 2007) it is still significantly below the EU27 average of 51% (see Table 6.1). The overall low use of the Internet is due to a high proportion of people without secondary education: Portuguese with secondary and higher education are among the top users of Internet in the European Union (81% of people with secondary education, and 90% of people with higher education).

Only 6% of the Portuguese population have bought goods or services using the Internet (through forms provided in usual browsers), compared to an EU27 average of 20%.¹⁸ The percentage of enterprises that have received orders online is about half the European Union average of 15%.

The percentage of households with Internet access has gone up from 26% in 2004 to 40% in 2007. This represents significant progress but is still considerably below the EU27 average of 54%.

Table 6.1. **Internet usage and access in Portugal and the EU27**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	EU27 (2006)	EU27 (2007)
% of individuals regularly using the Internet	25	28	31	35	45	51
% of individuals who ordered/bought goods or services for private use over the Internet in the last three months	3	4	5	6	20	23
% of enterprises that received orders online (10 employees or more)	6	9	7	9	14	15
% of households with Internet access at home	26	31	35	40	49	54
% of enterprises with access to the Internet	77	81	83	90	92	93
% of households with a broadband connection	12	20	24	30	30	42

Source: EUROSTAT, Information Society Indicators (accessed 24 October 2007).

The percentage of enterprises that have access to the Internet is 83%, closer to the EU27 average of 92%, while the share of households with a broadband connection in 2007 was 30% compared to 42% on average in the EU27.

Portugal has launched a number of policies in an attempt to bridge the digital divide. In 2005, the government launched the *Technological Plan and Connecting Portugal – Mobilising the Information and Knowledge Society*. The Technological Plan is a growth strategy with initiatives related to knowledge, technology, and innovation. Connecting Portugal is one of the strategic components of the Technological Plan. Connecting Portugal includes a number of targets to be reached by 2010 to enhance the knowledge society.¹⁹ They include:

- doubling the number of regular Internet users;
- tripling the number of households with broadband access;
- increasing the number of computers in schools to reach one per five students;
- ensuring that the price of permanent broadband access is among the three lowest in the EU;
- increasing employment in the ICT sector to 3% of total employment, representing 44 000 new jobs;
- increasing the percentage of workers using computers linked to the Internet to at least 40%;
- extending regular use of e-commerce to at least 25% of the population;
- ensuring online availability of all basic public services.

Connecting Portugal focuses on wider mobilisation of the Information Society and increasing the use of ICT in society in general. The policies to reach these goals include a tax deduction on the cost of computers for families with students, making computers available for students with poor financial resources through a national system of financial aid, increasing the number of

public locations with free broadband Internet access, and a range of initiatives to promote ICT in the education, research, and development sectors. (See Box 6.6 on strategies for digital inclusion in selected OECD countries.)

Box 6.6. Strategies for digital inclusion in selected OECD countries

The digital divide has become an issue of concern in many OECD countries. The term “digital divide” is used to characterise a polarisation phenomenon in society – a gap between those who have access to and use ICT, and those who do not. A range of countries have developed strategies to promote digital inclusion that typically consist of initiatives to: 1) improve access *e.g.* by reduced prices, 2) improve capability or skills, or 3) increase motivation.

In **Belgium** the strategy comprises all three elements. The federal and regional governments have launched a strategy to reduce the digital divide by one-third by 2010 using different initiatives to raise awareness, increase training, and improve access:

- The Flemish Region government has set up a global project, eFl@nders, to stimulate the use and acceptance of ICT by both individuals and businesses, through various action projects and campaigns.
- The Walloon Region government has launched training programmes to improve diffusion of ICT to people aged 50 and over. It also introduced the “Digital Public Spaces” programme, which enhances municipalities’ efforts in providing free Internet access in public locations such as town halls.
- The Brussels-Capital Region government has placed emphasis on providing computers and Internet connections in schools and has investigated the possibility of implementing a free wireless network throughout the region.
- The federal level has a wider range of actions aimed at raising awareness and promoting access to and use of ICT. These include the “Internet for All” initiative, which offers financial incentives for buying computers, facilitates access to computers and the Internet in public places, and promotes the reuse of outdated computers from the public administrations.

In countries like **Mexico** and **Hungary**, where the digital divide reflects a regional divide with lower Internet access and use in rural than in urban areas, strategies to reduce the digital divide have been focused on providing public Internet spaces. Mexico has pursued a strategy of establishing Digital Community Centres across the country targeted towards people who do not have access to ICT. The centres provide assisted access to the Internet and information on health, economy, education, and government services at all levels, enabling people to use the Internet regardless of their educational level and local language.

Box 6.6. Strategies for digital inclusion in selected OECD countries (cont.)

Hungary's strategy to reduce the digital divide has also to a large extent been based on establishing public Internet spaces. "Tele-cottages" offer access to ICT and a range of services, including assistance in using ICT. Originally they were meant to function as a kind of community centre for the rural population, and they maintain a role in promoting local life and community values.

Korea, which has one of the world's highest penetration rates of broadband services and proportions of Internet users, has followed a different path. Korean governments have pursued a deliberate strategy of building a broadband infrastructure through private and also large government investments. Korean governments have successively used ICT infrastructure as a platform for creating growth and innovation while targeting the digital divide.

In the **United Kingdom**, the government has a strategy to make the United Kingdom the first country to close the digital divide (Cabinet Office: Connecting the UK: the Digital Strategy, 2005). Besides initiatives to improve access and skills, it also contains a range of measures to raise motivation, i.e. to increase interest in using the Internet. These include initiatives to improve security and to help foster the right environment for creation of content, which is considered the main driver increasing the effective use of ICT.

In 1999, the first Citizen's Shop was set up in Portugal with the purpose of providing a range of public as well as private (utilities, banking, and communication sectors) services in the same building.²⁰ The idea was to establish a single point of contact for citizens and businesses, though in a departmentalised manner. As of 2007, there are 10 Citizen's Shops located in areas with high population density (one of which is the first of many second-generation Citizen's Shops), 77 Citizen's Contact Points typically located in local town halls and 11 Company Formality Centres (business shops). All these initiatives further the concept of the "single contact point" with users. Citizen's Shops services concerning tax, social security, and civil documentation are in greatest demand.

The plan is to expand the network, and from 2007 start establishing second-generation Citizen's Shops characterised by:

- *a new customer service model*: citizens can get answers from all services;
- *channel integration*: in person, phone or Internet based on "single sign-on";
- *quality assessment procedures*: framework for assessing customer satisfaction indicators.

The aim of the government is to provide all districts with Citizen's Shops before 2013. The new generation of Citizen's Shop is intended to be the in-person contact point *par excellence* between people, businesses and public administration.

Access to the Internet remains a significant challenge to user take-up of e-government services in Portugal. Reducing the digital divide is not only necessary from an Information Society perspective, but it also affects prioritisation of service delivery strategies. So far, the government has placed strong emphasis on providing online services and improving access. At the same time, a strategy is in place for expanding and improving the existing network of Citizen's Shops.

Key points

- Outcomes and impacts of simplification in Portugal are difficult to evaluate, as initiatives have not yet become known and experienced. However, Portugal has for a number of years prioritised the development of the Portuguese Information Society and focused on putting public sector services online. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the European Union e-government benchmarkings regarding accessibility of e-government services.
- Physical one-stop-shops – the so-called Citizen's Shops – have progressively been set up throughout Portugal with an aim of full national coverage in 2013. The next step is to digitise the services provided by the Citizen's Shops.
- Portugal faces a significant challenge in bridging the digital divide and suffers, like most OECD countries, from limited user take-up of online services.

Communication and dialogue

An important tool for cultural change is basic communication and dialogue with stakeholders affected by simplification activities. According to OECD interviews, the biggest challenge in implementation of the simplification initiatives is changing attitude and perception about how the public sector should function and its goals. Communication and dialogue within the public sector and with citizens and businesses is important; experiences in the Netherlands show the importance of making the process and results known and to engage stakeholders internally and externally.²¹

The administrative culture in the Portuguese public sector has for decades been based on a traditional perception of a public authority which acts in its own right and pace within its legal and regulatory foundation. This traditional perception of a public authority's role and how it should work and

interact is harder to accept today – the public sector is an integral part of national policy goals and a country’s societal development. Portugal is in the midst of this transformation process and has committed politically to carry through: Portugal sees the public sector as a necessary engine for the transformation of Portuguese society and as a key component to increased competitiveness. Changing the administrative culture parallel to administrative simplification and further e-government development is imperative for the success of the public sector transformation underway since 2005 (featuring the launch of the Simplex programmes in 2006).

Tools for changing administrative cultures (as mentioned in Chapter 5) include new organisational structures and individual and collective incentives through new human resource policies, budgetary incentives, and managerial and political attention and priority. Communication and dialogue is an additional but important tool which often has been under-prioritised and whose impacts are often underestimated.

Portugal has engaged a broad selection of communication and dialogue tools including traditional conferences and seminars, informal *ad hoc* meetings, top-level political attention and systematic follow-ups, and the creation of public awareness through traditional public relations work (e.g. press conferences, press releases, etc.).²² OECD interviews revealed a significant general knowledge of the Simplex programmes, and ministries in central government seem to have both political and top-management focus on the simplification process and the importance of contributing to and carrying through Simplex initiatives. It is evident from OECD interviews that regional and local governments are also attentive to the political priorities in central government and seem to initiate similar initiatives. Simplification activities enjoy attention in the media, in parliament and among interest groups. Awareness of the Simplex programmes is high.

OECD interviews indicated that communication could be improved in terms of expectation management. This is needed to address any discrepancy between the government’s goals for the programme and expected outcomes and impacts, in terms of immediate improvements on the one hand and citizens and business’ expectations on the other.

Notes

1. Answers to the OECD Questionnaire on Administrative Simplification and E-Government in Portugal, Question 3.3.1.1.
2. *MeetInSTRument Administratieve Lastendruk*, Measurement Instrument for Administrative Burdens.
3. From the Dutch Cabinet letter *More Leeway for Businesses Thanks to Fewer Burdens – From Producing Burdens to Reducing Burdens*, 8 April 2004.

4. The network was established in 2003 by a number of European countries that were committed to using the SCM method for measuring administrative burdens. The network has since been expanded and counted 22 countries in January 2008. The homepage of the network offers background documents and updates of developments in participating countries, see www.administrative-burdens.com.
5. *Relatório Simplex*.
6. Answers to OECD Questionnaire on Administrative Simplification and E-Government in Portugal, Question 3.2.1.1.
7. Reply to OECD questionnaire, p. 157.
8. Most countries using the Standard Cost Model (SCM) method only measure the administrative burden on businesses. Some countries, including The Netherlands, also include burdens on citizens. The Netherlands is currently seeking to expand the reach of the methodology to cover wider compliance costs.
9. Answers to the OECD Questionnaire on Administrative Simplification and E-Government, Question 3.2.1.1.
10. Council of the European Union, *Brussels European Council, 8/9 March 2007 – Presidency Conclusions*, paragraph 24: “The European Council underlines that reducing administrative burdens is an important measure for boosting Europe’s economy, especially through its impact on SMEs. A strong joint effort significantly to reduce administrative burdens within the EU is necessary. The European Council therefore agrees that administrative burdens arising from EU legislation should be reduced by 25 % by 2012. Taking into account the different starting points and traditions the European Council invites Member States to set their own national targets of comparable ambition within their spheres of competence by 2008.”
11. Answers to the OECD Questionnaire on Administrative Simplification and E-Government, Question 3.3.1.1.
12. Answers to the OECD Questionnaire on Administrative Simplification and E-Government, Question 3.2.2.1.
13. European Commission (2007), *The User Challenge. Benchmarking the Supply of Online Public Services. 7th Measurement*. Prepared by Capgemini.
14. In 2007, 65% of individual income tax declarations were submitted online. All VAT is handled through the Internet since 2005. On average, 5.7 companies were created fully online per day in December 2007, and 90% of enterprises used the Simplified Enterprise Information (IES) system to report their accounts through the Internet in 2007, in the first year of operation (from September 2006 to September 2007). 368 500 electronic passports were issued to individuals. 22% of individuals use the remarkably extensive integrated ATM network for electronic payments to the government.
15. The digital divide is probably part of the explanation of this problem. As a matter of fact, Portuguese citizens with secondary or higher education are among the top users of Internet in the European Union (81% of citizens with secondary education, the fifth highest in the EU27, and 90% of citizens with higher education, the seventh highest in the EU27), and the comparatively low values for overall Internet users result from a high percentage of the population without secondary education.
16. *Better Portugal*, page 17.

17. Answers to the OECD Questionnaire on Administrative Simplification and E-Government in Portugal, Question 3.2.1.1.
18. However, 33% of the Portuguese population search for information about goods and services on the Internet and a very high percentage uses the extensive unified ATM network (also operated over the Internet), namely 51% for mobile phones top up, 38% for payment of utilities, 9% for payments of purchases by catalogue, 7% for payment of purchases ordered through the Internet, 7% for buying tickets for performances, and 6% for buying transportation tickets.
19. Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education: *Connecting Portugal*, 2007.
20. Presidency of Council of Ministers (2007), *Better Portugal*, New Public Service Distribution Model, and the Presidency of Council of Ministers (2007), *Better Portugal. E-Government Strategy*.
21. OECD (2007), *Administrative Simplification: Review of the Netherlands*, [GOV/PGC/REG(2007)1], 17 April 2007, Paris.
22. Answers to the OECD Questionnaire on Administrative Simplification and E-Government, 2007. Question 2.2.2.1 (on e-government policies and strategies) and Question 3.3.3.1 (on how goals and results are communicated).

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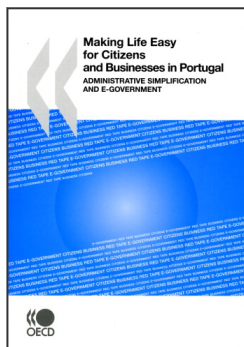
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