Report on E-Government

Connecting Québec to Its Citizens

SHINE AMONG THE BEST

Presented by
Henri-François Gautrin,
MNA for Verdun
Parliamentary Assistant
to the Premier

JUNE 2004

Québec

Version française disponible sur demande.

Dépôt légal - Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 2004
ISBN : 2-550-42751-3

ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE
QUÉBEC

Québec, June 2004

Mr. Jean Charest
Premier of Québec
Assemblée Nationale
Hôtel du Parlement
1045, rue des Parlementaires
Québec (Québec)
G1A 1A4

Mr. Premier,

It gives me great pride to present this report on e-government to you today. This project is especially dear to you: You made it a focal point of the 2003 campaign that brought us to power, and when you appointed me as your parliamentary assistant, you asked me for a report that identified the pitfalls to avoid and the routes to follow to ensure the implementation of this project.

The e-government project is a project for society, for all Quebecers, both citizens and businesses alike. It will profoundly alter not only the relationship between the State and its citizens, but also between citizens themselves. Just as the Jean Lesage government will forever be associated with the foundation of the Québec State, and the Robert Bourassa era with the development of our hydroelectric potential, your government could well go down in history for the establishment of e-government.

The e-government project is not a technological one; rather, it is a project that harnesses the potential of new information and communication technologies to improve the quality of life of our fellow citizens. Its core objectives are a change in the relationship between government and citizens, a search for more efficient health and education services, and enhanced political debate.

Current circumstances in Québec and elsewhere in the world highlight the relevance of such a project. The state of public finances and the need for Québec to occupy a competitive place on the world stage force you to strive for greater efficiency in the way public services are delivered. The renewal of the public service and the review of the State's role in citizens' lives and in the development of businesses are a unique window of opportunity to reexamine the way in which the State communicates with its citizens and businesses. Finally, your wish to give citizens back their right to be heard within a democratic society propels you to stimulate political debate. The establishment of e-government will enable you to reach these objectives and, in so doing, place Québec among the leading knowledge-based societies.

The shift toward e-government will require major efforts over the coming years. It will require leadership, coordination and a sharing of knowledge between the State, its various constituent bodies and the various social agencies. It will be worth the effort.

This report is testimony to the real enthusiasm for this project, which, I am convinced, will showcase Québec's full innovative capabilities within a modern, restructured government.

Yours truly,

Henri-François Gautrin
MNA for Verdun
Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank Stéphanie Yates, who has been an exceptional collaborator throughout this project. This report would not have been possible without her thoroughness, enthusiasm and extraordinary editing skills.

I would also like to thank Martin Franche, who joined our team for the second half of the report and shared his knowledge with us, specifically on computer security and the protection of personal information. His contribution was first class and he, too, has left his mark on this report. I would also like to thank François Rivet, intern on a Fondation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant scholarship, who helped draw up the list of current practices in the departments and agencies.

I also own a debt of gratitude to everyone in the private sector, the government network and the university community who helped me define the boundaries of e-government. I started this project humble in how little I knew, and I have emerged knowing a great deal. I owe it in large part to these individuals, who, each in their own field, patiently shared their expertise with me.

Lastly, I would like to express my thanks to the members of the Premier's cabinet and the *ministère du Conseil exécutif*, in particular the Chief of Staff, Stéphane Bertrand, and the General Secretary, André Dicaire, for their unwavering support throughout the preparation of this report.

CONNECTING QUÉBEC TO ITS CITIZENS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7

NOTE TO THE READER 23

LIST OF ACRONYMS 24

INTRODUCTION 29

CHAPTER 1 - GLOBAL EXPERIENCES AND THE CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE 33

1. A Global Trend 36

2. The Canadian Perspective 38

CHAPTER 2 - A VISION FOR QUÉBEC 43

1. E-Administration 45

2. Citizens' Access to State-Held Information About Them: The "My Gov. Info." Citizen's Page 49

3. Generalized Use of ICTs in the Main Sectors of State Activity 51

3.1 Health, Education and Justice Theme Sites 51

3.2 Using ICTs to Transform Services to Citizens 53

4. E-Democracy 56

5. Québec's Place on the World Stage 57

5.1 Québec's Contribution to Fighting the Digital Divide Between Developed and Developing Countries 58

5.2 Québec's Contribution to Preserving Cultural Diversity 58

6. Implementation Timeline - Horizon 2007 59

CHAPTER 3 - THE QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT'S REPORT CARD AND PROJECTS TO BE IMPLEMENTED . . 61

1. Report/Comments on the Summary Sheets 62

1.1 Clear E-Service Delivery Objectives 62

1.2 Delivery of E-Services Within Québec Departments and Agencies 63

CONNECTING QUÉBEC TO ITS CITIZENS

2. Future Projects - Horizon 2007 79

2.1 Projects Related to E-Democracy 79

2.2 Projects Related to the Increased Use of ICTs in the Areas of Education, Health, Justice and the Municipalities 83

2.3 Creation of the "My Gov. Info." Citizen's Page 84

2.4 Delivery of E-Services - Short Term (2004) 84

2.5 Developing Multiservice Centres 91

CHAPTER 4 - GOVERNANCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF E-GOVERNMENT 95

1. Governance Structure 95

1.1 Current Situation 95

1.2 Observations 97

1.3 Proposed Governance Principles 98

2. Consideration of E-Government by Senior Officials in the Public Administration 106

2.1 Analysis: Impact of the Briefs Submitted to Cabinet on the Development of E-Government 106

2.2 Performance and Accountability Agreement 106

CHAPTER 5 - THE KEY CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS 109

1. Establishing a Climate of Trust 112

1.1 The Legal Foundations of a Climate of Trust for E-Government 112

1.2 The Basic Principles for the Protection of Personal Information and Privacy Under E-Government 116

1.3 The Organizational and Technological Methods Enabling the Respect for the Basic Principles of the Protection of Personal Information and Privacy 123

1.4 Toward a Culture of Security 133

1.5 Identification 137

2. Simplifying Access to Government Services 140

2.1 Focusing on Multimodal, Multiservice Centres 141

2.2 Promoting Free Access to the Network 141

CONNECTING QUÉBEC TO ITS CITIZENS

2.3 Extending the Broadband Network 143

2.4 Acknowledging People with Motor, Sensory or Cognitive Limitations 146

3. Informing the Public and Raising Awareness About New Ways of Interacting with the State . . 149

3.1 Promoting Quebecers' Adoption of New Technology by Making the Internet a Source of Value-Added Information 150

4. Commitment of the Public Service and Networks 152

CHAPTER 6 - IMPLEMENTATION METHODS 157

1. Projects for Citizens and Businesses 159

2. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) 160

2.1 Promoting Participation by Start-Up and Regional Businesses 163

2.2 Using Local Expertise 163

3. Making Room for Free Software 165

CONCLUSION - LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS 169

REFERENCES 179

APPENDIX - DEPARTMENT AND AGENCY SUMMARY SHEETS 193

A Crucial Project for Québec

With the publication of the Liberal Party's program in September 2002, Mr. Charest made the implementation of e-government one of the priorities of his future government. This was not just an election promise–it was a firm commitment to begin the process of modernizing Québec.

One year after the Liberal Party came into power, the road to e-government is being mapped out. The project, which harnesses the potential of new information and communication technologies for citizens, is the driving force behind the modernization of the State.

Some of the objectives to be achieved during the government's mandate through the implementation of e-government include: Better government services accessible from everywhere 24/7, enabling all citizens to benefit from a better quality of life and businesses to be more competitive regionally and internationally; a review of public servants' work methods in order to incorporate value-added components; improved accountability on the part of the government to its citizens; modernization of the political debate process; a bridging of the digital divide; and completion of the high-speed Internet network.

The current government must set clear objectives by the end of its first mandate. **It is possible to contemplate a "connected" Québec by 2007, delivering at least 50% of services to citizens and businesses on-line, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**. Tangible results in terms of closing the digital divide must also be achieved by 2007–every citizen, regardless of age, education, ethnicity or socioeconomic status must be able to access on-line services if they so wish.

1. What is E-Government?

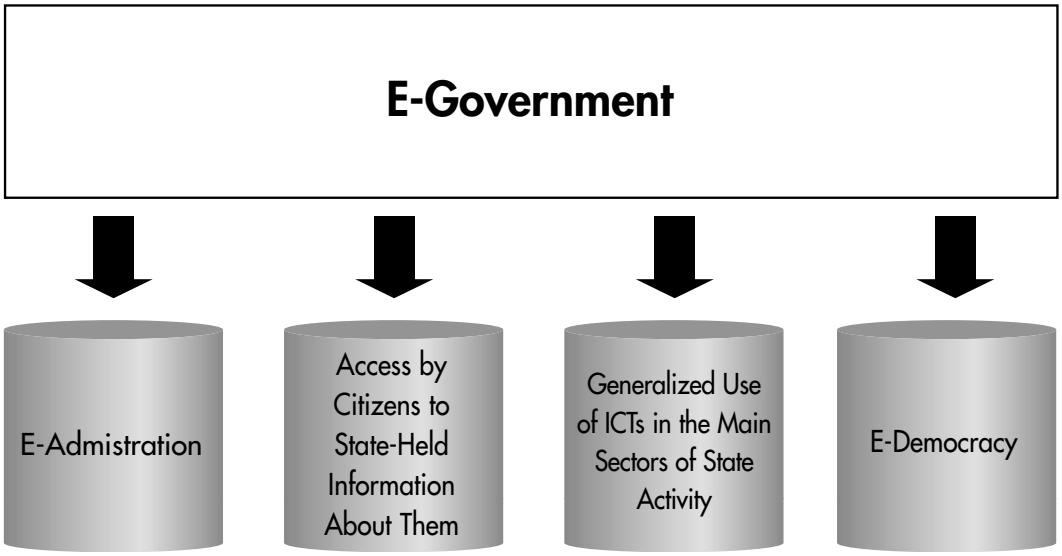
E-government can be defined as a process of institutional development whereby information and communication technologies (ICTs) are used to effectively guide government actions and better respond to the needs of citizens and businesses and other members of society. In short, it means using technologies to improve the capacities of institutions, i.e., the governance of the State. E-government therefore involves redefining not only the relationships between citizens, businesses and the government, but also all other activities within society and its organizations that may be related to the use of ICTs.

Far from being just the delivery of e-services, the e-government project is designed around four major principles–access by citizens to State-held information about them, generalized use of ICTs in the major areas of State activity, e-democracy and, of course, the delivery of e-services.

a) The Delivery of E-Services

The delivery of e-services, or e-administration, consists in offering citizens and businesses the possibility of carrying out their government transactions on-line to benefit more fully from the main programs and services offered by the Departments and Agencies. The Québec government has already made major efforts in the area of e-services, with several services already being offered in transactional mode. As citizens become increasingly demanding of their government, they must eventually be able to obtain most services on-line at any time of day, quickly and efficiently.

The Four Elements of E-Government



The challenge of e-government lies in presenting services in a manner suited to the logic of citizens and businesses rather than of the administration of government structure. While all government departments or agencies currently have Web sites comprising thousands of pages of detailed information on programs, services and activities, a citizen or business looking for a specific service must search through all of these Web pages to find the relevant information.

To better meet these needs, the Québec government will create a **one-stop service portal** where citizens and businesses can go to find the answers to all their questions. Government services and information about those services will no longer be organized according to the departments' missions, but rather according to the **life events** of citizens and businesses. Services will also be grouped by **specific themes**, for example, a Business section, which is currently being developed, and a Youth section. With the aim of delivering services that best meet the needs of citizens and businesses, the one-stop government portal must, in the medium term, incorporate the services delivered by other levels of governments, whether federal or municipal.

The government must consider people who, for demographic, socioeconomic or personal reasons, cannot or do not wish to use e-services. Other than the Internet, government services will also be accessible via several routes, such as service counters, mail and telephone. **Multiservice centres** to be set up across Québec will offer counter and telephone services and will be the method used to meet the needs and preferences of all citizens.

This will ensure increased public satisfaction with government services. For their part, local businesses will be more competitive on the regional and international levels. The economic climate will be more attractive for foreign investors, since the simplified, more efficient relations between businesses and the public administration as a result of e-government will significantly spur economic activity. Moreover, the Québec government will

be more innovative, more effective and more efficient. Finally, e-administration will significantly reduce the costs associated with running public programs. These savings could then be reinvested, for example, in social programs such as health, the fight against poverty and education.

b) Citizens' Access to State-Held Information About Them

The government holds a great deal of information which, in fact, belongs to citizens and businesses. The e-government project aims to make this information, as well as the modalities related to its management and use, more transparent for the persons involved. Accordingly, citizens and businesses must be able to access all State-held information about them.

The **creation of the "My Gov. Info." citizen's page** meets this objective. Once citizens have properly identified themselves, they could access the specific information they need from among all the State-held personal information about them, whether this be their address, driver's license, medical files, status of a bursary application, etc. Similarly, businesses could access information about themselves, including grant applications, or the status of a permit application.

It will also **enable citizens to send information about themselves to anyone they wish**. Similarly, we also foresee the day when citizens will be able to send their medical file to their new family physician via the "My Gov. Info." citizen's page. The basic principle behind this project, which will take several years to implement, is that citizens have the right not only to consult this information, but also to use it as they see fit.

Finally, citizens and businesses can customize the "My Gov. Info." citizen's page to **access public information and organize it according to their preferences**. Information on a specific topic could be sorted and displayed on this page, which would cut down on search time. Access to public documents is a basic right that enables citizens to make quicker, more informed decisions.

Without a doubt, this project will enable citizens and businesses to better manage information and their personal data. The stakeholders–both in society and in the public administration–will be and should be held more accountable and responsible for the use of such information. By enabling the tracking of requests, the "My Gov. Info." citizen's page will significantly increase the efficiency of services. Finally, the project will lead to better transparency within the public administration.

c) Generalized Use of ICTs in the Main Areas of State Activity

The State is the main service provider in three key sectors: Health, education and justice. Moreover, its decentralization strategy grants significant importance to relations between the regions and the municipalities. This initiative is in keeping with Québec's progression toward becoming a knowledge society in which information becomes the cornerstone of the new economy.

This is why the current government must ensure the generalized use of ICTs in the main areas of State activity, as well as in municipalities. In fact, ICTs must be used to help transform the services offered, not only by the public administration itself, but also by all stakeholders in the health, education, justice and municipal sectors. These stakeholders must be able to use ICTs to transform their services to citizens and businesses with the ultimate goal of improving them. The use of ICTs will also enable the stakeholders, as well as citizens and businesses themselves, to obtain and exchange quality information efficiently in order to make better decisions.

This will also lead to greater coherence and increased complementarity in Québec's efforts to realize the technological revolution. Finally, the use of ICTs will contribute to economic growth, as the economy will be more competitive and innovative.

Already, several pilot projects have confirmed that the appropriate use of these technologies results in much more efficient delivery of services. Nevertheless, the use of ICTs is for the most part fragmented in Québec. The government must work with all stakeholders in the health, education and justice networks and with municipal leaders so that ICTs are used as systematically as possible. Government leaders must be called upon to secure these efforts and bring about the technological shift that will propel Québec to the forefront of knowledge societies.

With the aim of building a true knowledge society, the government must create **theme information sites** in each of its main its main sectors of activity. The sites will be accessible to citizens and businesses via the one-stop government service portal (theme sites on health, education and justice).

Finally, the government must forge strong partnerships with municipalities. In this case, municipalities will be able to access ICTs and make use of the advantages they offer in order to provide the best possible services to their clientele.

d) E-Democracy

The establishment of e-government is also an opportunity to draw on the potential of new information and communication technologies to improve the democratic workings of our society and preserve the values inherent in the system. This will also enable Québec as a society to maintain some degree of control over its own destiny, which is particularly important in the context of globalization, where the State must increasingly justify its existence to its citizens. When used judiciously, technologies can stimulate participation in democratic life and improve the transparency of its constituent processes. Finally, ICTs can be used to keep citizens better informed and enable them to become more involved in social debates.

In fact, ICTs ensure better transparency of information, both by facilitating access to government documents and by requiring the government to justify its choices and decisions to citizens. Moreover, through new communication methods, such as e-mail, citizens who have used a government service could be asked to answer an on-line survey, which could then be compiled and published.

Public consultation can also be made easier by ICTs : Citizens will be able to express their opinions on draft bills or government policies through e-government without necessarily taking the traditional route of the parliamentary committee. The government must also implement the tools that will facilitate **active participation on the part of citizens in public debate on major social issues**. Discussion groups can be created for public dialogue and broader public debate. To guarantee the non-involvement of the government in debates, the discussion groups must be governed by an independent authority. This is a vast undertaking that will take several years and involve all of Québec society.

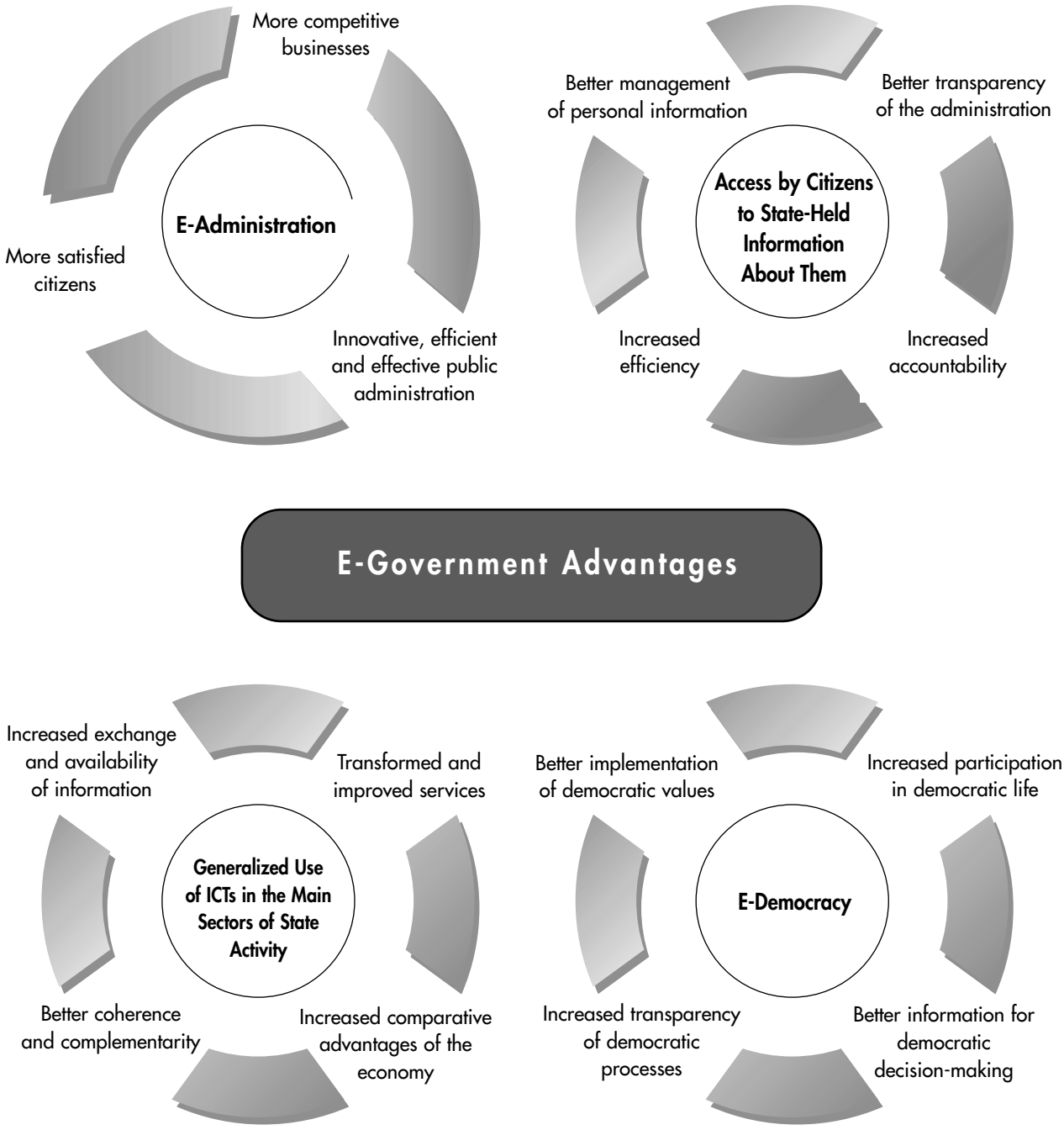
The new possibilities related to e-democracy must be complementary to traditional communication methods, since all citizens, whether or not they have access to ICTs, must be able to participate in democratic debates.

e) Québec's Place on the World Stage

Québec, like Canada, is well positioned on the world stage in terms of the development of information and communication technologies. Whether in the area of e-administration, the democratization of access to information or, more generally, the development of new technologies to improve citizens' quality of life, the government has the responsibility to combat the digital divide between Northern and Southern hemisphere countries. Accordingly, Québec, as the largest French-speaking society in the Americas, must, through its expertise, take its place on the international scene and actively participate in making the Internet the foundation of the knowledge society.

Furthermore, Québec has a key role to play in the use and promotion of French in information and communication technologies and in the respect for cultural diversity. Accordingly, the government must encourage the development of Web sites with Québec content.

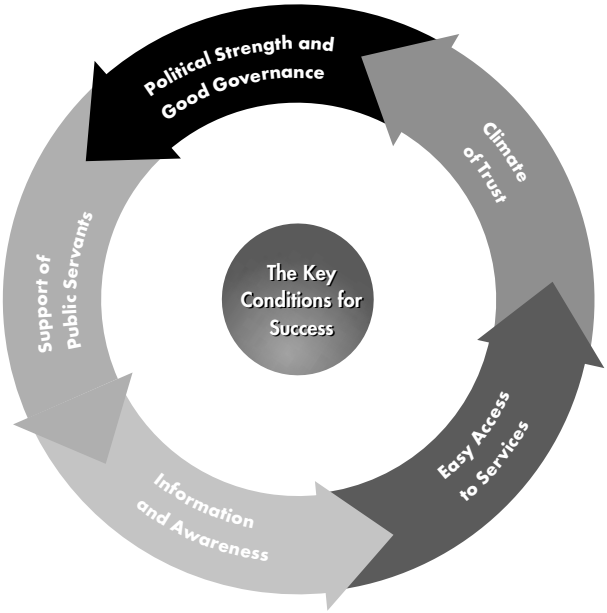
E-Government Advantages



2. Conditions Needed for the Success of E-Government

Far more than just the implementation of new technology, e-government raises political, economic, social and cultural issues which must be addressed before the project can be considered a success.

Conditions for the Success of E-Government



a) Governance

The development and deployment of the e-government project requires strong leadership characterized by a governance structure capable of implementing all planned projects in order to solidify the government's vision and orientations in this regard. This is key for the success of the project.

This is why we recommend that the Premier assume a leadership role in the development of e-government and make it a priority of his government. The Premier's leadership in getting all of the various stakeholders to commit to the development process according to a comprehensive vision is imperative. E-government far exceeds the simple delivery of e-services–it involves all of the networks, particularly the health and education networks, as well as all municipalities. It also aims to improve the democratic process.

To ensure government consistency, we recommend creating **the position of Chief Information Officer (CIO)**, mandated to oversee the *Secrétariat au développement du gouvernement en ligne*. The *Sécretariat* will be responsible for drafting e-government strategies and ensuring implementation of projects. We recommend mandating an **independent service delivery agency** to commission the projects. The networks, specifically the health and education networks, must play a major role in the projects developed.

We also suggest using external resources related to e-government that are already present in Québec through the creation of a **strategic committee on e-government** that will advise the Premier and support the CIO. To break through the isolationist structure, we recommend creating a **committee of champions**, comprised of the senior managers of the major business sectors related to citizen services (health, education, justice, municipalities, etc.). The committee of champions would act as a liaison between the D/As, the networks and the municipalities, and the CIO to apply e-government policies and strategic orientations consistently.

Furthermore, to reflect the government's priorities and especially to harmonize all procedures within each department and agency, steps should be taken so that all briefs submitted to Cabinet include a section on the implications of the proposed development measures for e-government.

Finally, to ensure that e-government is a priority for the D/As, it is recommended that each minister sign a performance and accountability agreement with any person he/she designates regarding e-government. This agreement must contain an annual action plan for the development of e-government, as well as the indicators to be used in measuring results. At the end of each year, a management report describing the results achieved must be produced and tabled in the National Assembly by the minister concerned.

b) Establishing a Climate of Trust

The support of citizens rests primarily on the presence of a **climate of trust** associated with the delivery of e-services. This is a prerequisite if citizens and businesses are to use the e-services offered. The government must not only establish a climate of trust, but also implement the necessary means for maintaining it. The climate of trust essentially depends on an adequate legal foundation, effective measures for the protection of personal information, a positive identification process and the assurance of secure systems.

The Legal Foundations of a Climate of Trust Within E-Government

First, the *Act to establish a legal framework for information technology*, adopted in 2001, forms the main legal basis for the use of information and communication technologies in the delivery of services to citizens and businesses. By identifying the various issues and possibilities related to new information and communication technologies, the *Act* is the first major step toward implementing true e-government. However, the e-government project can only be successful if the entire legislative corpus is adapted in order to respect the principles laid out in the *Act* and to permit the adoption of transactional laws.

Second, the challenge of the dazzling rise of new information and communication technologies since the 1970s and the repercussions in terms of the protection of privacy is a pressing reality that the government must take seriously by constantly examining the impact of these new technologies on the right to privacy. This said, it is imperative that the Québec government equip itself with clearly defined legal and institutional mechanisms that must then be consolidated to guarantee its citizens that the personal information used when delivering e-services is protected against any infringement on their right to privacy. These mechanisms must also be defined so they can be adapted to rapidly changing technologies.

Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information

In the context of the implementation of e-government, it is appropriate to ask whether the current legal framework ensuring the protection of privacy, specifically the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*, must be reformulated to cover the circulation of information needed for the smooth and efficient delivery of government e-services. In fact, the future development of integrated online public services for citizens and businesses, as well as their smooth operation, rests essentially on the use of and the increased exchange of personal information between the various stakeholders. This sharing of information is vital to enable the government to optimize the quality of its services.

Moreover, it is important to design a legal framework in which personal information can be assigned varying degrees of protection depending on its sensitivity. In other words, the goal of the legal framework must be to provide technological systems in which measures taken to protect personal information can be changed to meet the circumstances. Lastly, to meet the new realities generated by e-government more completely, the legal framework must encompass the use of personal information by departments other than those for which it was initially collected.

Strengthening of Institutional Mechanisms (Structural and Technological)

The government must also promote an approach in which the technological systems and organizational rules implemented keep the potential for infringements on the right to privacy to a minimum.

To this end, the *Modèle de pratiques de protection des renseignements personnels dans le contexte de développement des systèmes informatique par les organismes publics,* recently developed by *the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration* (MRCI), is a tool that must be systematically applied in the development of any project related to e-government. In addition to this practice model, it is crucial that the project be subject to risk assessments regarding privacy so that the stakeholders can manage them effectively by creating specific organizational rules or by including new technological functions. On this point, a Risk Impact Assessment grid must be developed as quickly as possible. Lastly, to solidify these organizational mechanisms, it is crucial to actively involve the D/A personnel responsible for protecting personal information (PRPPI) at the project design stage.

Even when technological measures are implemented, they are still subject to human factors, which the government cannot totally prevent. This is why the training and awareness-raising programs for public servants must be implemented to ensure the rules and the framework for risk management are understood, assimilated and applied in compliance with the spirit of the law.

At the technological level, the government must also implement institutional mechanisms, and even laws, to promote the use of specific technologies for protecting personal information and privacy. Technologies are currently available that are specifically designed to improve the protection of privacy (known as privacy-enhancing technologies-PETs). These technologies seem to have certain features that not only guarantee, but also strengthen the protection of personal information. They enable a better protection of the right to privacy by restricting the use of personal information to only those situations where it is actually necessary, but without limiting the performance of computer systems or the management of the delivery of e-services. Accordingly, the government must take the necessary steps to raise awareness among public servants of the importance of considering these technologies at the design stage of the systems. Furthermore, research into the development of these technologies must also be encouraged.

Toward a Culture of Security

The protection of personal information is the outcome of numerous components, security being just one of them. However, security also includes many other components. As part of the new virtual reality in general, and the implementation of e-government in particular, security takes on significant importance. Most stake-holders–businesses, individuals and the government itself–still do not seem to be fully aware of the issues related to information and network security, relying for the most part on the efficiency of common tools such as firewalls and antivirus software. And yet, systems are becoming increasingly complex and involve inter-connected networks and infrastructures. The risks are therefore considerable: Loss of information, breach of confidentiality and, above all, lack of citizens' faith in ICTs. Lastly, the financial losses resulting from computer security incidents can result in not insignificant costs for the economy.

It is for these reasons that information and network security in Québec is a major issue for everyone involved. Accordingly, it is imperative that measures be taken to develop a security culture in Québec by raising awareness and making everyone involved accountable at every level, including the citizens who use e-services. Several years ago, the Québec government initiated actions to ensure the security of technological systems within the public administration, among others, by adopting the *Directive sur la sécurité de l'information numérique et des échanges électroniques dans l'administration gouvernemental* and by creating the CERT/AQ, which supports the D/As in managing security incidents.

To counter these growing security issues in civil society, the *Centre de recherche informatique de Montréal* (CRIM) is proposing the creation of the *Institut de la sécurité informatique du Québec* (ISIQ) under a public-private partnership. The institute would be intended as a catalyst for services, expertise and the best security practices for digital information. Its mission would be to promote and coordinate actions aimed at assuring the security of digital information in Québec society. The creation of such an institute must be supported by the government.

On-Line Identification

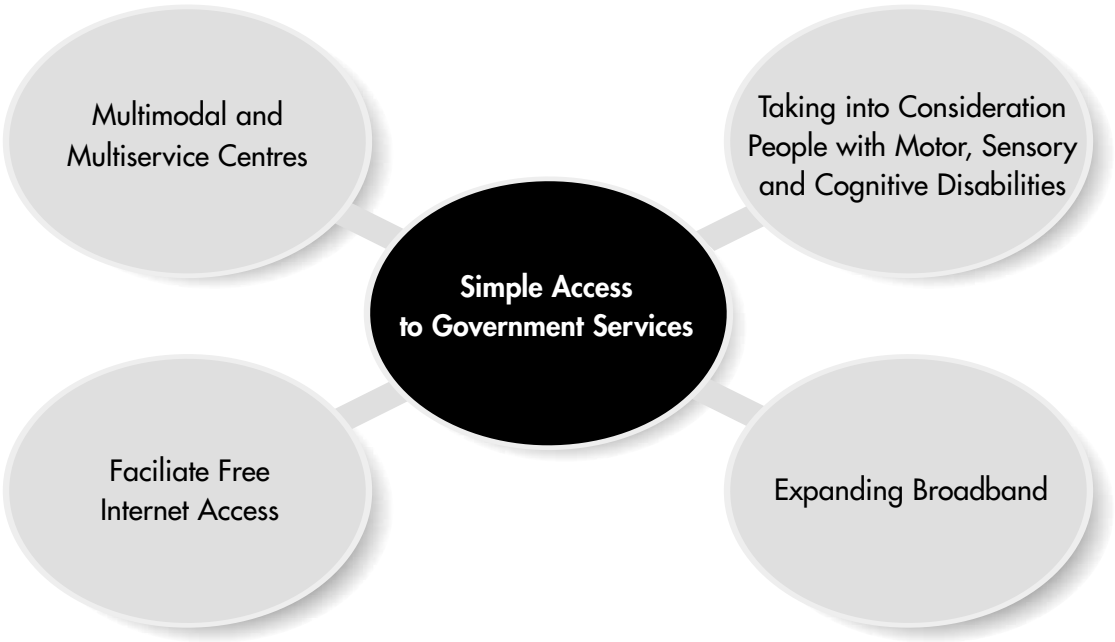
Lastly, in the context of developing e-government, in which the government is increasingly called on to offer interactional, transactional and integrated services, the identification of users becomes a major issue. In a virtual world where services are delivered remotely and where there is no physical interaction, a secure identification mechanism for users is essential to ensure that the person sitting at the computer is eligible for and entitled to receive an e-service. The actions taken must prevent identity impersonation, although without infringing on the right to privacy. The Québec government is currently developing an identification system called the *Service québécois d'authentification gouvernementale* (SQAG). The objective is to deploy an identifier that can be used by any government department. It must provide an acceptable level of certainty and be able to move toward higher levels of certainty. The SQAG was also designed to be compatible with the authentication system developed by the federal government. This could eventually give citizens and businesses access to both federal and provincial government e-services using the same identifier.

The SQAG represents a promising avenue to resolve the issue of on-line identity authentication. However, the current system does not fully eliminate the risks related to the protection of privacy. These risks can be managed by adopting additional organizational measures or by reviewing the design of the system with the aim of adding privacy-enhancing technologies.

c) Simplifying Access to Government Services

The e-government project aims to improve services to citizens and businesses by **simplifying access to government services**.

How Can Access to Government Services Be Simplified?



The Democratization of Access to Services

On this point, it is important that the e-government project not be reserved solely for citizens who have Internet access. Accordingly, it is necessary to develop, parallel with the government's one-stop service portal, **multiservice centres** that can provide access to all services offered by the government via telephone or at service counters. Public servants working in these centres will see their work decompartmentalized to enable them to answer any general queries or requests that go beyond the strict boundaries of a department or agency.

Accommodating citizens who do not have Internet access in no way indicates that the government is abandoning the possibility that these citizens gradually switch over to e-services. It is the government's responsibility to combat the digital divide between those familiar with the Internet and those who are not **by favouring the possibility of free Internet access and by supporting citizens unfamiliar with new technologies** to help them acquire the necessary skills. Access to information must be viewed as a right, just like any other basic right in a democratic society. An individual's personal financial situation should not prevent him/her from accessing the Internet. This is why the government must promote the multiplication of free public access terminals, for example, at public libraries or in the multiservice centres being developed. Community action groups have already initiated several projects to make free public Internet access stations available to Quebecers. The government must support these initiatives by promoting partnerships with these groups.

Extending the Broadband Network

Generalized access to broadband or high-speed Internet is also a factor to consider in the process of democratizing access to government services. In fact, access to broadband services is necessary to be able to profit from the full potential of services offered on the Internet. Québec telecommunication companies estimate that over 90% of Quebecers are able to access high-speed Internet. Although this proportion is encouraging, the government still has a responsibility toward the remaining portion of the population that does not have access to these services, all the more so since it is often the most remote populations that could benefit the most from these services. **The *Villages branchés du Québec* program** involves a partnership between school boards, municipalities, private firms and the government in order to extend high-speed Internet access to remote regions. By connecting schools and municipal buildings to the broadband network, the program provides leverage to accelerate the deployment of private sector infrastructure. This type of initiative must be encouraged by the government so that high-speed access is a reality for almost all Quebecers by the end of 2007.

Acknowledging People with Motor, Sensory or Cognitive Limitations

People with motor, sensory or cognitive limitations must not be left behind by the project, especially since the Internet can be a particularly rich sea of information for this specific clientele, as well as a way to communicate with others in similar situations. The Internet not only gives them a more practical way to access government services, but also opens up possibilities that would otherwise be inconceivable. Québec has already moved ahead in this matter by adopting the *Cadre de diffusion de l'information gouvernementale sur l'Internet*, which proposes several minimum guidelines for accessibility. This *Cadre de diffusion* should be enhanced, and the government must take the necessary steps to ensure its systematic application. Also, the user-friendliness of Web pages is critical in gaining the support of users (use of signs and pictures to explain actions, for example). Moreover, the level of language must be understood by as many users as possible and satisfy the need for fast, even instantaneousness communication provided by the Internet. The government must take the necessary steps to ensure that efforts in this direction continue at an accelerated pace.

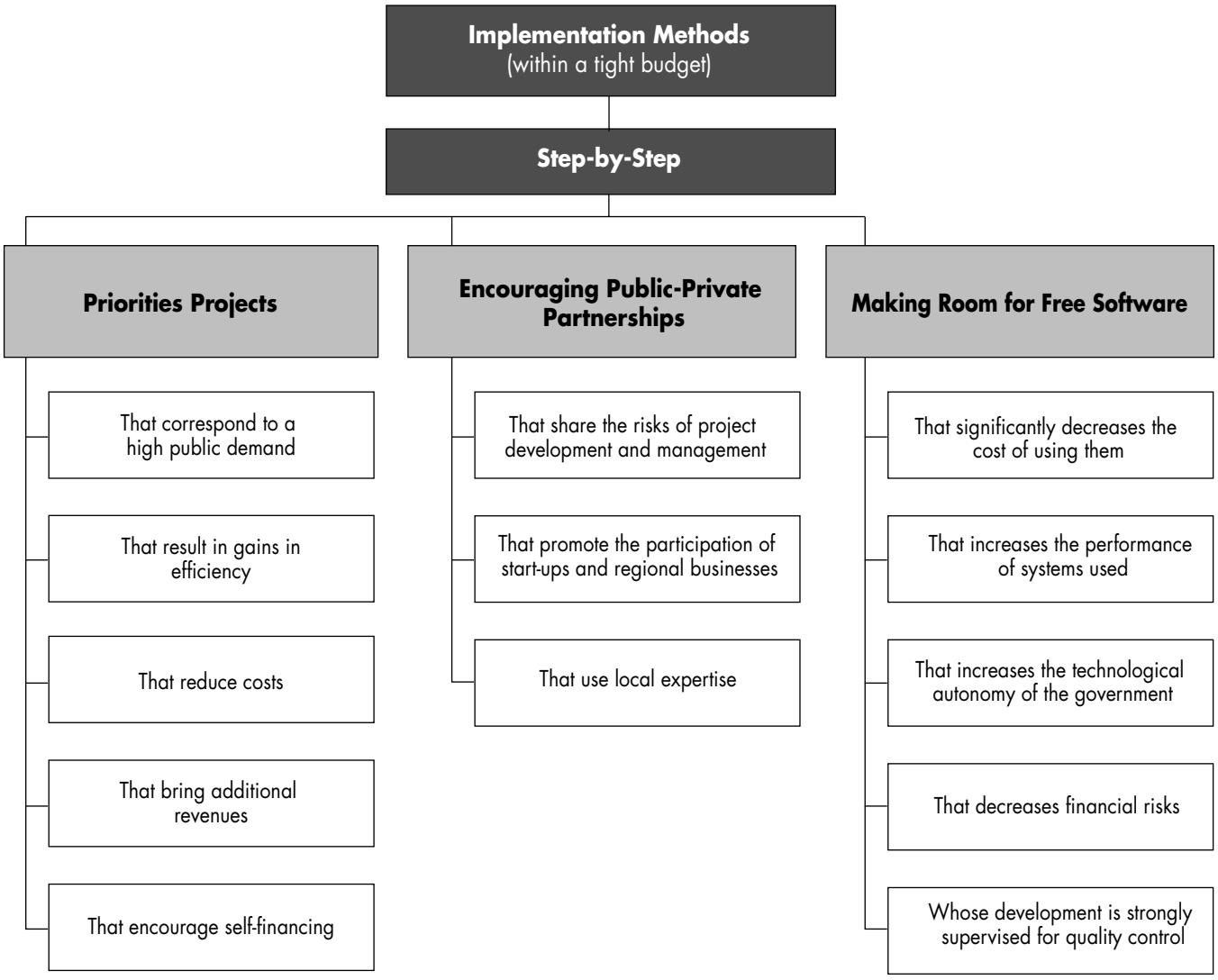
d) Informing the Public and Raising Awareness about New Ways of Interacting with the State

Taxpayers' money risks being invested needlessly if the reflex to use e-services for dealings with the State does not develop. The government must therefore provide adequate information so that **citizens and businesses are informed about and made aware of the new possibilities offered by ICTs**. The government must show that using these new methods to deliver services translates into real gains in efficiency. To implement such a strategy, the government must mount a large-scale communication campaign. The government must also contribute to facilitating the posting of content useful to Quebecers and, above all, sites with Québec content.

e) Commitment of the Public Service and Networks

The implementation of e-government creates a unique opportunity to enhance the role of many public servants by assigning them tasks that require their situational judgment and ability to provide training and simple explanations. Public servants must view the transformation of services stemming from the implementation of e-government as an opportunity rather than an imposition. The implementation of e-government must be achieved by involving public servants in the resulting changes. To assist public servants through these changes, training programs must be planned in terms of decompartmentalizing their roles and the technological innovations they will have to deal with regarding the various mechanisms for protecting personal information.

3. Implementation Methods



All actions required to make e-government a reality by the end of the government's first mandate are spread over a three-year period. Over the coming years, other State priorities will surely compete with the e-government project for available funding. However, the departments and agencies already spend a great deal of money on the delivery of e-services, whether to develop or maintain direct services to the population, or for management systems that incorporate information and communication technologies. Overall, *Conseil du trésor* estimates indicate that the budget for all information resources, including the delivery of e-services, is in the order of $851 million for the 2002-2003 fiscal year. This figure includes the continuation of projects and the development and administration of new projects. Expenditures for the 2003-2004 fiscal year are estimated at over $1 billion.

By using the amounts already spent more judiciously and by pooling elements that can be reused or shared between the D/As for the delivery of e-services, we can do more and we can do better. It is a question of political willingness, good governance, increased coordination and systematic sharing of expertise and infrastructures.

To minimize the risks associated with implementing large-scale projects, the government must implement e-government projects gradually. In addition to providing tangible results for citizens and businesses in the near future, this approach–which breaks down project implementation into several steps–has the advantage of allowing adjustments to be made as they are identified. Several functionalities must therefore be placed on-line, even if project completion is not expected for several years.

Projects for Citizens and Businesses

As the current budget is limited, it is essential to set priorities in order to invest in the right places. Meeting the needs of citizens should be the foundation of all choices related to e-government. E-services must therefore meet a strong demand on the part of the public. Placing these services on-line must result in significant gains in efficiency and reduced costs for the government. This will lead to optimized management of public funds and better delivery of services for citizens. This is why, in the first phase of the implementation of the project, i.e., by the end of 2007, the projects that result in what citizens and businesses consider concrete applications should be systematically favoured. Finally, the government must also consider projects that both bring in additional revenues for the public treasury and can be self-financing.

Public-Private Partnerships

The current government intends to refocus the State's role on its essential missions. In a context where Québec companies have shown remarkable innovation in recent years, and given their accomplishments in this regard, they must be called upon to play a major role in the e-government project. This project is counting on the active participation of the private sector within public-private partnerships (PPPs) that promote and encourage participation on the part of emerging and regional businesses in Québec by using their expertise to the maximum. These agreements must set benchmarks for successful partnerships that encourage a sharing of the risks of implementation and project management.

Making Room for Free Software

Finally, with the aim of reducing costs, free software is an avenue of interest for the future that the government intends to explore in more depth. In fact, free software leads to a significant decrease in acquisition costs. Moreover, the use of free software offers greater technological independence and does not rely on the financial future of one or more companies. In addition, the supervised development of free software applications in many ways increases their efficiency and performance. Most of the time, a group of programmers collaborates in designing and upgrading these applications. In assessing the benefits of free software, we must systematically take into account the benefits and drawbacks of each system, the total cost of ownership, the durability of data and the respect for government standards. This systematic assessment will enable the government to create an environment conducive to a policy on free software, provided the assessment criteria show it to be desirable.

A number of features have been included in the text to make it easier to read. First, there are inserts throughout the document. These complement the text itself and provide examples, identified by

or more detailed explanations of the concepts presented, identified by

However, since they are not critical to understanding the text, reading them is not essential. Figures are included to illustrate some of the concepts proposed to help the reader understand them.

The recommendations are presented as inserts and are identified by

Also, please note that throughout the document the term citizen is used in its broadest sense to include individuals, businesses, interest groups and other for-profit and non-profit organizations.

MFQ:	***Ministère des Finances du Québec***
MILLE:	***Modèle d'infrastructure de logiciel libre en éducation***
MJQ:	***Ministère de la Justice du Québec***
MRCI:	***Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration***
MRI:	***Ministère des Relations internationales***
MRNFP:	***Ministère des Ressources naturelles, de la Faune et des Parcs***
MRQ:	***Ministère du Revenu du Québec***
MSP:	***Ministère de la Sécurité publique***
MSSS:	***Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux***
MTQ:	***Ministère des Transport du Québec***
OECD:	**Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development**
OFPC:	**Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner (Australia)**
OLF:	***Office québécois de la langue française***
PET:	**Privacy-Enhancing Technologies**
PIN:	**Personal Identification Number**
PKI:	**Public Key Infrastructure**
PPI:	**Protection of Personal Information**
PPP:	**Public-Private Partnership**
QST:	**Québec Sales Tax**
RAMQ:	***Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec***
RCM:	**Regional County Municipality**
RDPRM:	***Registre des droits personnels et réels mobiliers***
REQ:	***Registraire des entreprises du Québec***
RETEM:	***Réseau de télécommunication multimédia de l'administration publique***
RISQ:	***Réseau d'information scientifique du Québec***
RRQ:	***Régie des rentes du Québec***
RTSS:	***Réseau de télécommunication sociosanitaire***
SAAQ:	***Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec***

SCIAD: *Suivi clinique intelligent à distance*
SCT: *Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor*
SDGL: *Secrétariat pour le développement du gouvernement en ligne*
SECR: *Services électroniques Clic Revenu*
SÉPAQ: *Société des établissements de plein air du Québec*
SIGAT: *Système d'information et de gestion en aménagement du territoire*
SIIJ: *Système intégré d'information de justice*
SIM: Senior Information Manager
SIRU: *Système d'information sur la recherche universitaire*
SMB: Small and Medium-Sized Businesses
SNB: Service New Brunswick
SQAG: *Service québécois d'authentification gouvernementale*
SQCA: *Service québécois de changement d'adresse*
SRAD: *Soin régional à domicile (Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont)*
SSIGRI: *Sous-secrétariat à l'inforoute gouvernementale et aux ressources informationnelles*
UN: United Nations
UNCITRAL: United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VSB: Very Small Business
WNV: West Nile Virus

LIST OF ACRONYMS

For reasons of simplicity, frequent use is made of acronyms throughout the text. The most commonly used acronyms are given below with their full definition.

List of Acronyms

ADAE:	***Agence pour le développement de l'administration électronique (France)***
ADELE:	***Administration électronique 2004/2007*** **(French project for e-government)**
BAPE:	***Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement***
BDGE:	***Bureau pour le développement du gouvernement électronique***
BDSQ:	***Banque de données satellitaires du Québec***
CAI:	***Commission d'accès à l'information***
CAMO:	***Comité d'adaptation de la main-d'œuvre***
CAN:	**Canadian**
CC:	**Committee of Champions**
CCGP:	***Comité consultatif de gestion du personnel***
CDGA:	***Conseil des directrices et directeurs généraux de l'administration***
CEFRIO:	***Centre francophone d'informatisation des organisations***
CIDREQ:	***Centre informatique du registre des entreprises du Québec***
CIO:	**Chief Information Officer**
CLSC:	***Centre local de services communautaires***
CRDP:	***Centre de recherche en droit public***
CRIM:	***Centre de recherche informatique de Montréal***
CRISP:	***Conseil des responsables de l'informatique du secteur public***
CSGL:	***Comité stratégique du gouvernement en ligne***
CSJ:	***Commission des services juridiques***
CSRI:	***Comité stratégique des ressources informationnelles***
CSS:	**Cascading Style Sheets**
CSST:	***Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail***

CTQ:	***Commission des transports du Québec***
CV:	**Curriculum Vitæ**
D/A:	**Department(s) and Agency(ies)**
DAS:	**Deductions at Source**
DGÉ:	***Directeur général des élections***
DGÉQ:	***Directeur général des élections du Québec***
FADQ:	***Financière agricole du Québec***
FAPAQ:	***Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec***
FQRNT:	***Fonds québécois de recherche sur la nature et les technologies***
FQRSC:	***Fonds québécois de recherche sur la société et la culture***
FRSQ:	***Fonds de recherche en santé du Québec***
GST:	**Goods and Services Tax**
HTML:	**Hypertext Markup Language**
ICT:	**Information and Communication Technologies**
IP:	**Internet Protocol**
IPC:	**Information and Privacy Commissioner (Ontario)**
ISIQ:	***Institut de la sécurité de l'information du Québec***
ITHQ:	***Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec***
ITU:	**International Telecommunication Union**
LEC:	**Local Employment Centre**
MAMSL:	***Ministère des Affaires municipales, du Sport et du Loisir***
MAPAQ:	***Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec***
MCC:	***Ministère de la Culture et des Communications***
MCÉ:	***Ministère du Conseil exécutif***
MDER:	***Ministère du Développement économique et régional et de la Recherche***
MENQ:	***Ministère de l'Environnement du Québec***
MEQ:	***Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec***
MESSF:	***Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille***

A Commitment to Be Respected

In the Premier's inaugural address to the 37th legislature on June 4, 2003, Jean Charest stated that one of the four management principles underlying the government's administration would be transparency and efficiency. The Premier asserted that his government "was going to give Quebecers a more effective, less expensive, less bureaucratic government, a government of today."

Following on from this commitment, the Premier added, "that he would use modern technological methods to support the vitality of our democracy. One of the results of reengineering the State is the creation of an e-government that will provide citizens with all applicable services via the Internet more efficiently and at a lower cost. This e-government will also make it possible to consult citizens on public policy and on their satisfaction with services provided by the State."

This report is intended as an initial step toward solidifying this commitment. It is the result of a broad consultation of various stakeholders in Québec, especially the growing number who have already begun studying the prospect of e-government with the goal of helping to improve the services rendered to citizens. However, far more than just an election promise, e-government is a project that over the long term will profoundly alter the relationships between the State and its citizens, organizations and businesses. The current government must set clear objectives by the end of its first mandate in 2007. By then, it will be possible to contemplate a "connected" Québec, delivering at least 50% of services to citizens and businesses on-line, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Tangible results in terms of closing the digital divide must also be achieved by 2007–every citizen, regardless of age, education, ethnicity or socioeconomic status must be able to access on-line services if they so wish.

What Is E-Government?

E-government can be defined as a process of departmental development that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) to more effectively guide the government in its response to the needs of citizens and businesses and other members of society. In short, it means using technologies to improve the performance of departments, i.e., the governance of the State. E-government therefore involves redefining not only the relationships between citizens, businesses and the government, but also all other activities within society and its organizations that may be related to the use of ICTs. This redefinition also affects the structure and internal workings of public administrations, as well as the relationships between these bodies and citizens, businesses or any other public agency. The development of e-government is essential in a context of globalization in which the public administration is in a state of flux. In such circumstances, the State has no choice but to redefine its role.

The concept of e-government means different things to different people. Some just associate it with on-line administration–for them, simply developing Web sites for the main departments is a form of e-government. Others, however, view it more as a set of innovations that both simplify the undertakings of citizens and businesses and provide access to a broader knowledge base. For them, e-government leads to a better life within society and even contributes to society's development through greater involvement on the part of citizens and businesses made possible by more accessible democratic processes.

Accordingly, e-government will be designed around four major elements–delivery of e-services, access by citizens to State-held information about them, increased use of ICTs in the major sectors of State activity (health, education, justice) and the networks (such as the municipalities), and e-democracy (see Figure 1, page 32).

Why E-Government?

E-government does not result from a political affiliation or an individual preference–it is a must for any State wishing to enter the 21st century through the use of new information and communication technologies for the benefit of its citizens. Today's States are undergoing profound transformations that could greatly affect societies' ability to shape their own destinies. Québec, like all other States around the world, cannot delay redefining its role. Our institutions must be redefined and improved to guarantee ongoing economic and social development and ensure better sustainable development so that future generations can profit from a viable environment. Accordingly, in its 2003 report, the Government On-Line Advisory Panel, which is responsible for monitoring the e-government project at the federal level, stated that:

> "If the federal government transforms its services along the lines we recommend, it will improve the efficiency of its operations and provide higher quality services to Canadian citizens and businesses. Canada will be branded internationally as a service leader, and positioned to compete effectively for skilled immigrants and new investments.
>
> If the federal government does not transform its services, they will deteriorate in the face of rising demands resulting from demographic, economic and social trends. As services deteriorate, government will lose its relevance to Canadians."[1]

E-government is therefore one of the driving forces behind the modernization of the State. It is crucial to bear in mind that e-government is not a technological project, but rather a project that harnesses the extraordinary potential of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve services to citizens. This is why:

[1] Government On-Line Advisory Panel, Connecting with Canadians: Pursuing Service Transformation, December 2003, p.6.

a) The project must take all Quebecers into consideration, including those who do not have access to a computer by providing alternate methods of accessing government services (counter services, telephone).

b) The project must also give consideration to citizens unfamiliar with new technologies and to citizens with motor, cognitive or sensory disabilities.

c) The project must also fit in with the logic of citizens who wish to obtain a service; this objective can only be achieved through the flexibility and decompartmentalization of the government structure.

It is important to specify from the outset that our fellow citizens' questions and needs in terms of services are not the exclusive domain of the provincial government. Focusing government actions on citizens' needs will require access to a variety of information sources, i.e., provincial or federal government databases, or even those in municipal administrations, where necessary. This is why there must be harmonization between projects at different levels of government.

A Unique Opportunity

Québec must take advantage of an opportunity that will not occur again for several decades. In fact, in order to deal with the simple issue of retirement over the coming years, Québec will have to renew its public service significantly. This, therefore, is a unique opportunity to redefine the role of the State and to reexamine the work of public servants with a view to integrating elements of added value.

The Québec project must also take into account the considerable expertise developed here in terms of information and communication technologies, accessibility, training and public awareness by involving the various partners at every step of the project, including members of the public service, community groups and other non-profit organizations, private enterprise, etc.

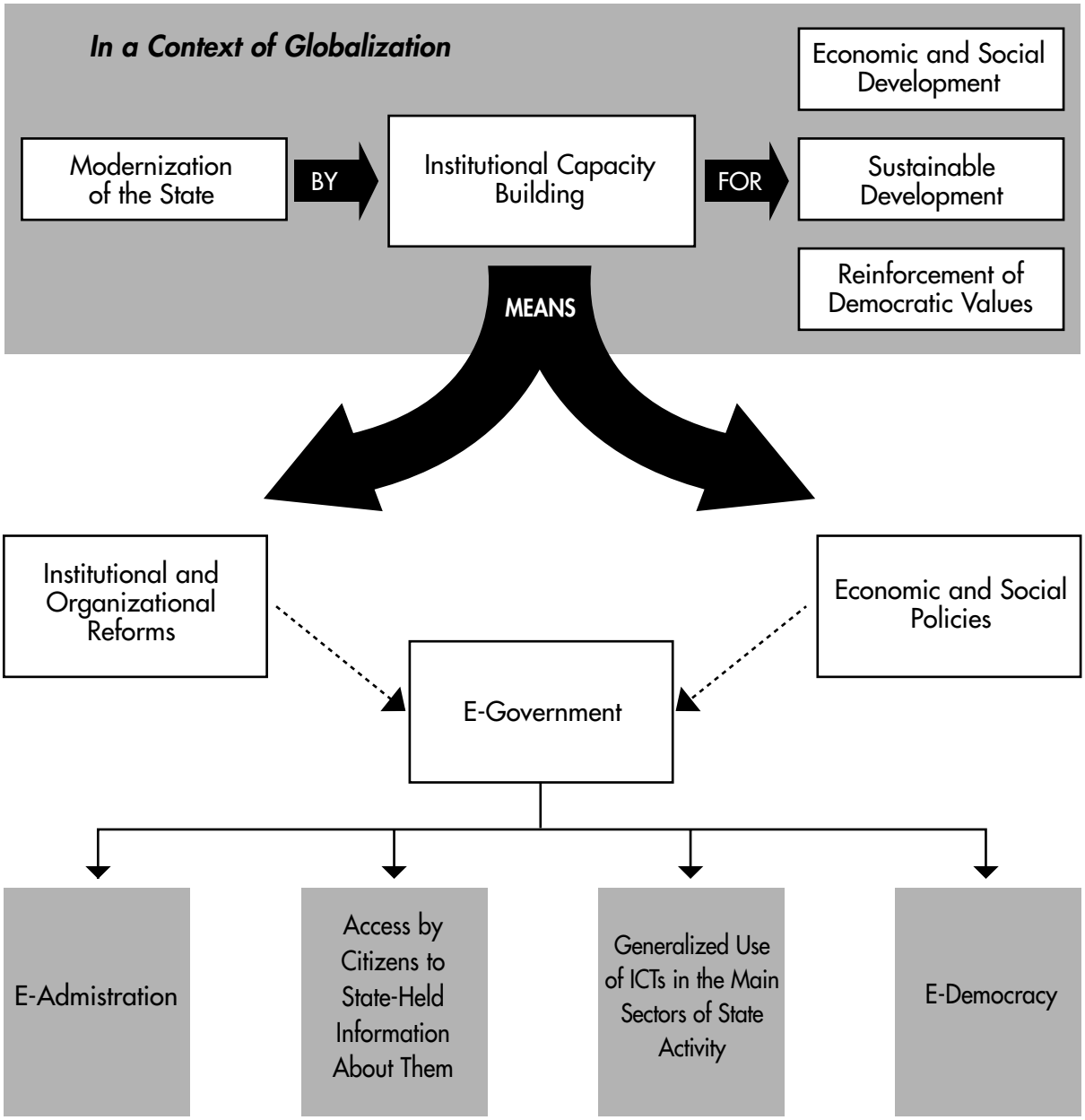



Figure 1: E-Government and the Modernization of the State