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While it is understood that there is limited space in the Action Plan and that there are many deserving issues that warrant greater consideration, it is our belief that the following additions to the e-government sections should be included as the theme of e-government is receiving greater attention as a driver of the broader ICT agenda and as many companies turn to the public sector for partnerships after the Dot.Com bubble burst. Moreover, given the very high failure rate of e-government projects and the strong tendency to focus on technology, it is particularly important to stress its linkages with national needs and development objectives and sustainability.

Para 36 e-Government

Public administrations should deliberately align e-government development with public sector reform and good governance goals, as well as with nationally determined needs and priorities. Based on sound and sustainable strategies and action plans governments should *strategically* utilize ICT as a tool to enhance transparency, accountability, efficiency, *effectiveness and participation* – at all levels of government, and in particular at the local level:

- - In the delivery of public services to citizens and enterprises.
- In the design of online services, adapted to the needs of citizens and businesses.
- In the better management of financial, human and public resources and goods.
- *In the development of mechanisms to include and encourage the participation of citizens and non-state entities in decision-making and policy development.*

Special attention should be paid to privacy concerns in the development of more advanced e-government applications, as well as the need for back-office re-engineering and change management reform.

Para 45a Benchmarks

"all central governments departments to have a website and email address by 2005 and all local governments departments by 2010."

This benchmark only measures a very narrow aspect of e-government, focuses on quantity and says nothing of the quality or type of online services offered and whether these are aligned with citizen needs. It is suggested that the above benchmark is rephrased as follows:

"By 2010, all government departments – central, state and local - have their web site presence aligned with established national development goals and with the goal of genuine participation of citizens in the political process."

In addition, it is recommended that an additional benchmark is added which captures government to government or back end applications (e.g. GIS applications) which can greatly enhance service delivery but are not part of a government website. In fact, where connectivity is very low, back-end applications which enable an intermediary (e.g. a civil servant on the ground) to deliver better public services can be extremely important. It is recommended that the following benchmark is added:

"By 2010, governments develop government to government applications to promote a more effective, integrated and networked government."