

# Action-Oriented E-government Strategy for Countries of the Caribbean Region 2004-2007



18 June 2004

## Introduction

This Strategy was adopted by the 5<sup>th</sup> Caribbean Ministerial Consultation on Regional Cooperation for E-government Capacity Building held in Barbados on 17-18 June 2004.

Its preparation, undertaken with due consideration of the CARICOM Connectivity Agenda, has been mandated by the decisions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Consultation in Montego Bay, Jamaica, 11-14 December 2001. The Working Group on E-government and Information Technology in Public Sector Management has been established by the same Ministerial meeting, with the purpose of preparing such a strategy. During the consecutive Ministerial Consultation (Point Salines, Grenada, 14-15 January 2003), “the participants confirmed the need for developing a regional e-government strategy for the Caribbean in order to benefit from economies of scale, harmonize individual country efforts, foster regional integration and cooperation and build upon progress already made in a number of countries.”<sup>1</sup>

The Ministerial Consultations are part of the broader initiative for administrative reform and e-government capacity building by the countries<sup>2</sup> in the Caribbean Region and the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), one of the institutions of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); the Government of Italy; and, the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DPADM / UNDESA).

The Strategy has been developed on the basis of the political consensus that has been built by the consecutive Ministerial Consultations. This consensus focused on the need of capacity building for thoughtful public sector reform;<sup>3</sup> on using ICT to take advantage of new development opportunities in general and to improve the quality of public services in particular;<sup>4</sup> on the need to make e-government programs part not only of ICT strategies, but also of national plans on economic growth and social development.<sup>5</sup> It was also established that “even if the situation for e-government development might be different from country to country in the region, there is ample space for regional cooperation and for benefiting from the economies of scale, within the

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<sup>1</sup> Final Report, Fourth Caribbean Regional Ministerial Consultation and High-Level Workshop on Public Sector Management: Strategies for E-government”, Point Salines, Granada, 14-15 January 2003

<sup>2</sup> This initiative is open to participation by all countries identifying themselves as Caribbean countries. Its natural focus is on Caribbean countries – Members of CARICOM: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands are the Associate Members of CARICOM); the Caribbean Member States of the United Nations (Note: Neither Montserrat nor any of the CARICOM Associate Members are members of the United Nations. Cuba and the Dominican Republic, Member States of the United Nations, are not members of CARICOM); and the Associate Members of ECLAC (not Members/Associate Members of CARICOM, and not Caribbean Member States of the United Nations (Aruba, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands).

<sup>3</sup> See: Conclusions and Recommendations, The Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-Level Workshop, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 15 – 17 May, 2000

<sup>4</sup> See: Summary Conclusions and Recommendations, Ministerial Consultation on Capacity Building for Caribbean States, Rome, 2-3 October, 2000

<sup>5</sup> See: Conclusions and Recommendations, Caribbean Regional Ministerial Consultation and High-Level Workshop, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 11-14 December, 2001

context of Caribbean regional integration.”<sup>6</sup> Within this consensus, it is understood that the Strategy and cooperation program should not seek a one size fits all model to e-government development and implementation in the Caribbean, but should instead pursue a variety of implementation models based on common variables for success. These variables should be harmonized to the extent possible. This should ensure that the full range of development is represented and that activities support those less advanced in e-government development, as well as those at more advanced stages.

The Strategy has also taken into consideration numerous previous national and sub-regional studies, strategies and action plans.

It has been additionally informed by results of country surveys, conducted from September to November 2003 by CARICAD and DPADM / UNDESA in Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines.<sup>7</sup> The methodology for this survey has been developed by CARICAD and DPADM / UNDESA in the framework of the project supporting the regional cooperation for e-government capacity building – the project generously funded by the Government of Italy and executed by DPADM / DESA. The rich informative material collected during these surveys was made available by authorities of the countries surveyed, at the level of the central government, but in many cases also at the level of individual governmental departments and civil society organizations.

An additional source of information was provided by the UN Global E-government Survey 2003, part of the World Public Sector Report 2003: E-government at the Crossroads.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> A country survey for Cuba has also been planned, but has not been completed by the time of drafting this Strategy.

## **The Regional Strategy at a glance:**

### **Vision**

Better government (*page 8*)

### **Goals**

Participation, social services, transition to knowledge society (*pages 8-9*)

### **Domain**

All people in the Caribbean Region (*page 8*)

### **Values**

Integrity, professionalism, accountability, and diversity  
And, in the broader context of human development: freedom, equity, solidarity, tolerance,  
respect for nature, shared responsibility (*page 10*)

### **Context**

Reform of the public administration in the Caribbean (*pages 5-7*)

### **Focus**

Institutional and human resources capacity building (*page 12*)

### **Partnerships**

Among public administrations in the Caribbean countries;  
Between the public administrations and their national constituencies (civil society, business);  
Between public administrations and regional and international organizations as well as  
governments outside the region (*page 11*)

### **The Caribbean E-government Initiative**

The CARICAD-based Regional Facility to provide the Region with services and products (*pages 13-14*)

The Programmatic Framework, as reference for countries, regional organizations, donors (*pages 15-16*)

*“Specific project activities must be designed for improving productivity in all areas of public administration. (...) The necessary specific actions include: concerted actions to restructure and modernize the public sector with a view to promoting a new culture based on performance, customer services and results.”*

Conclusions and Recommendations, The Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-Level Workshop, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 15 – 17 May, 2000

*“E-government plans must introduce a new culture and systems of management in the public service, taking into account the [existing] constraints of efficiency and effectiveness.”*

Conclusions and Recommendations, Third Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-level Workshop, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 11-14 December 2001

*“Effective policy formulation and implementation will require consultation and dialogue (...)”*

Conclusions and Recommendations, The Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-Level Workshop, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 15 – 17 May, 2000

*“Strategic management (...) must be encouraged so that a common vision and strategic directions are accepted at all levels. This can include the need to question what is taking place (...) at the ground level, but also at leadership levels” .*

Conclusions and Recommendations, The Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-Level Workshop, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 15 – 17 May, 2000

## I

### **The context of reform of public administration in the Caribbean**

In July 2002, based on the acknowledgement of the current global technological revolution, and recognizing that the Caribbean region is entering a new economy and society defined by enhanced capacity to access and disseminate information, the Conference of CARICOM Heads accepted recommendations from a Special Meeting of Ministers responsible for Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) held in Antigua & Barbuda in June 2002, for a process of policy strategy for ICT development and enhancing the means of communicating in the Caribbean Community, and mandated the CARICOM Secretariat to present the CARICOM ICT/Connectivity Agenda for consideration at its Fourteenth Inter-Sessional Meeting scheduled for early 2003.

The CARICOM ICT/Connectivity Agenda 2003 was then prepared through a participatory series of meetings, and presented to the Conference through the Ministers of Information, Communication & Technology at its Meeting in Trinidad & Tobago, in February 2003. The CARICOM ICT/Connectivity Agenda 2003 outlines a framework for the development of ICT in various sectors including education, health, infrastructure, e-government and e-commerce.

The Strategy presented herein is being proposed having been informed particularly by the section on e-government of the CARICOM ICT/Connectivity Agenda 2003 and is intended to activate and support the advancement of the countries Caribbean Region into knowledge based societies, recognizing the potential useful contribution of ICT to enhancing government operations and ultimately good governance.

E-government is being developed in the Caribbean Region in the context of the on-going debate and efforts related to the reform of public administration. While this debate and efforts are not uniform and differ from country to country in the region, the current overwhelming concern is with the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, and also with introducing measures that

would make public administration leaner, flatter, capable of cross-departmental collaboration, more transparent and more accountable. Opening channels for more effective citizens' participation is also an area of focus of the reform efforts.

The Strategy adopts a broad view of these issues. It locates the drive towards public sector reform in the context of public value creation, i.e. the ability and the capacity of the governments to deliver the things that people want. In this sense, it ties its own content with the overall developmental framework, as defined by the people and adopted by the governments.

This focuses the Strategy on five crucial issues.

First, the Strategy will accept that the ability of governments to deliver public value hinges on the ability of the citizens to express their preferences. Citizens' participation in the policy setting process in general, but also (1) in setting the directions of the public sector reform; as well as, (2) choosing the modalities in the process of implementation of this reform (e.g. e-government applications) will constitute one of the cornerstones of the Strategy. In other words, impact on citizens' participation will constitute an important benchmark for assessment of e-government options at the planning, decision-making and implementation stage.

Second, the Strategy acknowledges the scarcity of financial resources for e-government development across the region. At the same time it acknowledges the need to balance the ICT development-related and other developmental needs of the Caribbean countries. Therefore it will treat opportunity cost as an important factor in choosing and implementing the e-government options. According to the principle that confirms the priority of public value delivery over modalities of its delivery (i.e. e-government applications), this will mean that another important benchmark for assessment of e-government options in planning, decision-making and implementing the Strategy will become the calculation of the cost-effectiveness of introduction of ICT to public administration operations not as a stand-alone undertaking, but rather in the context of competing public priorities. From this point of view, the Strategy will look for regional approaches to avail the region of the benefits of economies of scale and will always favor smart investments over large investments, regardless of the source of funding.

Third, the Strategy acknowledges the great existing need to raise the level of capacities and capabilities needed for effective digitization of functions of public administration in the region, and at the same time to deal effectively with the phenomenon of brain-drain as it relates to ICT-skilled professionals. Raising capacity and capability level must include a higher degree of ICT literacy, but it also relates to more general skills and professional competencies, like project management, change management or strategic planning; building and maintaining partnerships, particularly at the Regional level; results focus, client focus and work in a less hierarchical, less bureaucratic environment, with increased interdepartmental coordination and cooperation. The Strategy appreciates that these two processes, i.e. raising the overall level of capacities and capabilities in the respective public administrations; and that of digitization of functions of public administrations are intertwined and must progress in a parallel way. However, assessment of capacities and capabilities of a public organization before introduction of ICT into its operations and monitoring this level during the implementation and full rollout phase becomes one more important benchmark in the Strategy's realization.

Fourth, the Strategy will adopt also a very realistic approach to the ICT gap that exists in most Caribbean countries. As everywhere else in the world, this gap rests in the Caribbean on inequalities in income and education and does not yield to quick improvement. The Strategy will make every effort to avoid converting the ICT gap into a gap in access to the government and its services by the citizens of the Caribbean countries. However, the goal of raising the general ICT literacy and access cannot become a benchmark for e-government development – it belongs rather to the general ICT strategy of a country. Be this as it may, monitoring the development of e-government in the broader context of more general e-readiness of the society as a whole will also be treated as an important marker in assessing the progress and impact of e-government development in the Caribbean.

And fifth, the Strategy rests on deep conviction that tying it all together: general e-readiness of a society with capacities and capabilities of the public administration, that include the ICT literacy of the civil servants; with carefully targeted, well-chosen e-government applications; and, with the overall task of creation of public value that hinges on open debate between the citizens and the government and supports the adopted developmental goal of a society constitutes the only rational approach to the development of e-government in the Caribbean.

*“Consensus emerged that, in order to be successful, e-government initiatives need (...) comprehensive strategic vision, as opposed to fragmented approaches.”*

Conclusion and Recommendations, Third Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-level Workshop, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 11-14 December 2001

*“[The participants] reiterated that e-government does not only mean application of ICT in government operations, but also the pro-active and enabling role of government in fostering the utilization of ICT [in general] and promoting a knowledge society.”*

Final Report, Fourth Caribbean Regional Ministerial Consultation and High-Level Workshop on Public Sector Management: Strategies for E-government”, Point Salines, Granada, 14-15 January 2003

## II

### **Strategic vision and goals**

The vision behind this Strategy is that of a better government for all people in the Caribbean Region.

It is also the vision of a government that serves well the society in its transition to the knowledge society. In some cases, this would include a radical shift from the now prevailing traditional agricultural economy to the knowledge based economy that can embrace many diverse economic sectors, including agriculture, but at the same time increasingly rely on creating knowledge, on processing information (e.g. service sector) and on export of knowledge-based products.

Realization of this vision assumes overall reform, transformation and change of the public administrations in the region that is accompanied by using ICT in the operations of public administrations to achieve the following important goals:

- Deepening the political debate between the citizens and the government. ICT empowers this process not only by introducing greater speed and precision, but also by increasing outreach and adding networking capabilities. Increased ease and outreach of the political debate are two factors that can help measure success in achieving this goal. Increased inclusion of the marginalized groups of population would be the ultimate tests of change, transformation and reform as well as usefulness of ICT in public administration operations.
- Increasing the value and accessibility of public services to their consumers. The governments in the region have a broad constituency that depends on their services. These are individuals, families, communities, social organizations (e.g. schools, hospitals) and business firms. While the extent of social protection and business regulation differs from country to country in the region, using by governments the tax revenues to deliver things that that these constituencies need in an efficient and effective way is in the interest of all of them. Through the application of ICT governments can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their internal operations and of the public services they deliver. Increased ease, outreach and value of public services are the factors that can help measure success in achieving this goal. Rise of the level of human development of all citizens, but especially closing the gap in the level of human

development among the income, gender and ethnic groups, as appropriate, would be the ultimate test of transformation, reform and usefulness of ICT in public administration operations.

- Protecting and nurturing (1) people, (2) information and (3) an environment for creative interaction among people and between people and information, in the process of knowledge development. As all societies in the world, the peoples in the Caribbean have a great stake in successful transition to the knowledge society. This requires *inter alia* human development; low levels of risk and high levels of rewards for creativity and its expression; information that is authoritative, truthful and delivered when needed and in quantities that are needed; as well as, open systems for utilization of the fruits of human creativity. While successful transition to the knowledge society is a task for the whole society, not for the public administration alone, ICT in the hands of government can help – as a minimum - by: supporting human development in general; spearheading awareness raising and advocacy campaign; active promotion of appropriate attitudes and values; supporting institutional shift towards a more open to ideas, less hierarchical society; protection of human rights and freedoms (e.g. speech, association, assembly, privacy) essential for human creativity; supporting shared spaces for knowledge development; transparency of public administration's activities and their social outcomes; building up information systems and databases. It can help by example of a transformed public sector: less hierarchical, more networked, with proper systems for treatment and release of public information and with conscious effort to convert public administration organizations into shared spaces for knowledge development.

The Strategy will promote and facilitate the utilization of ICT in public administrations of region to support all these goals and the overall e-government vision as a whole. Improved political participation ties with better targeted, more efficient and effective delivery of meaningful services to the public: from the point of view of the overall developmental goal of high quality of life (a.k.a. human development) and from the point of view of the ensuing shift of the Caribbean in the direction of the knowledge society.

*“Public service values are to be maintained and nurtured, as the defining features of good governance, with special attention being given to integrity, professionalism, accountability and respect for diversity.”*

Conclusions and Recommendations, The Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-Level Workshop, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 15 – 17 May, 2000

### III

## Values

Taking into consideration the embeddedness of this Strategy in the framework of public sector reform in the Caribbean, the key values important for functioning of the public service must go to the forefront of consideration of values that are significant for successful implementation of the Strategy’s vision and goals.

Therefore, as mentioned by the Caribbean Ministerial Consultation of May 2000, integrity, professionalism, accountability and diversity must become the four crucial values for making all implementation decisions related to this Strategy and for development of an action program in support of these decisions.

However, the broader context of public value creation in pursuit of high quality of life dictates that this Strategy will also espouse the values of the UN Millennium Declaration (2000), those of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility:

Freedom – to enable the use of e-government for expression of developmental preferences via genuine participation; to enable public speech, expression and access to information that is not controlled by private interest

Equality – to consciously use e-government for working towards filling the gaps – in income, human rights, access to government, ICT infrastructure and information

Solidarity – to put in the planning of e-government applications the proper focus on the needs of the disadvantaged groups of the population, but especially those of the poor, women, disabled persons, minorities

Tolerance – to fully validate diversity (e.g. ethnicity, culture, language – related) in all public administration operations, including those supported by ICT; to respect and accept it as a source of strength

Respect for nature – to make sure that the growth and development that e-government facilitates is environmentally sustainable

Shared responsibility – to guide the process of ICT – supported political participation and the process of building and sustaining partnerships for the sake of e-government development

*“In the implementation of e-government programs, the building of creative partnerships with the private sector, consumers’ groups, the unions, the media and the civil society at large is crucial. In the same way, public awareness, sensitization and educational campaigns are fundamental in this process.”*

## IV

### **Partnerships**

Success of this Strategy hinges on well-chosen and carefully maintained partnerships. Therefore, the Strategy envisages robust development of the following partnerships:

- Among the public administrations of the Caribbean countries and their respective departments and services. In this process coordination – as needed – of policies, legislatures, investments and activities will be sought, to benefit in the region from the experience of each other, from the economies of scale; and, from amplification of effect by joint action, as appropriate, in solving problems of regional concern; in serving across the region constituencies with similar needs; in bargaining with vendors, etc.
- Between the public administrations and their constituencies in the civil society and business community. This will be pursued in search of creative solutions; local leadership; and, all kinds of resources. The overriding principle for this type of partnerships will be their visible ability to add public value. Every effort will be made to capitalize on the intellectual capacity of the local scientific community; on local social energy and resources; and, on the ability of the private sector to mobilize and allocate resources in a more efficient way. Important part of the public – private partnership will be support to the build-up of the indigenous ICT sector in the Caribbean and creation of ICT-related jobs.
- Between the governments of the Caribbean and their regional organizations and governments outside the region, especially in countries more advanced in introduction of e-government applications. In these contacts, experience and expertise will be sought. Of particular value would be lessons learned from failures. In case of countries with donor capacities, partnerships based on their financial support to the vision and goals of this Strategy will also be sought.
- Between the governments of the Caribbean and their regional organizations and international multi-lateral organizations, including international financial institutions. This will be done in recognition of the fact that many such organizations and institutions (e.g. UNDESA, European Union, IADB, World Bank) have been engaged in e-government development for a relatively long period of time, are depositories of experience and technical expertise in this area and, in some cases, represent capacity to support this Strategy with free-of-charge services, grants and loans.

*“Attention to capacity building for governance and state reform is an urgent necessity. (...) Creating organizational culture that is “results oriented”, promoting creativity and continuous high performance has to be a major goal of reform. This entails retooling persons and organizations; hence capacity building must be an on-going undertaking. (...) Capacity building should have a dimension by which to meet demands of changing environments and to cope with pressures derived from external factors, such as globalization. (...) There is a need to build capacity for transformational leadership (...)”*

Conclusions and Recommendations, The Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-Level Workshop, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 15 – 17 May, 2000

*“Governments should implement capacity-building programs for all levels of officials, particularly for those offering public services, in the area of e-government, which must include change management and project development.”*

Conclusions and Recommendations, Third Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-level Workshop, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 11-14 December 2001

## V

### **Institutional and human resources capacity building as the framework for action**

The Strategy acknowledges the prevailing lack of ICT-related competencies in the public administrations and among the general population of the Caribbean region . At the same time, it acknowledges the existing great interest among the population and public sector officers to raise their ICT-related qualifications.

Following this acknowledgement, the Strategy will value equally the impact of e-government development in two areas: (1) changing the posture of public administration vis-à-vis citizens and consumers of public services; and, (2) long-term, sustained change in the nature, structures and human capacities and competencies within the organizations of public administration. Both depend on each other and have a potential for a beneficial long-term effect.

The Strategy maintains therefore that activities to be undertaken in its framework must become central to the respective public administrations: in terms of visibility; in terms of transformation and change that they introduce and/or support; and, in terms of learning opportunities for all civil servants.

Conversely, the Strategy will not support initiatives that occur at the margins of the government; that are not visibly tied to the key reform initiatives; that seek appreciation and acceptance by mere digital cloning of the existing reality; or, that are developed as an ad hoc experiment without full backing of the political leaders or broad understanding by peers in the public administration structure and by the public at large.

The strategy fully endorses and adopts as a guiding principle for e-government development in the region the statement from the Ministerial Consultation in Trinidad and Tobago (May 2000) that the reform of public administration and *eo ipso* the e-government development must focus on “retooling persons and organizations”.

*“E-government introduction should take place in phases, taking into consideration the short-term and long-term investment vis-à-vis the immediate and sustainable results in the economic, social, cultural, and environmental spheres. (...) The participants recognized that e-government holds considerable potential to foster democracy and development in the region. (...) the introduction of e-government requires that citizens have reliable access to the appropriate infrastructure at affordable cost.”*

Conclusions and Recommendations, Third Caribbean Ministerial Consultation and High-level Workshop, Montego Bay, Jamaica, 11-14 December 2001

## VI

### **The Caribbean E-government Initiative**

The operational part of this Strategy will constitute the Caribbean E-government Initiative, open to all Caribbean countries.

Its aim will be:

1. To establish at the regional level, within six month from approval of the Strategy, a facility at the service of national and regional e-government efforts;
2. To provide a broad updateable programmatic framework for activities deemed crucial from the point of view of e-government development in the Caribbean, to be considered in national and regional plans and programs for e-government development and to offer programmatic information to the donors.

#### 1.

**The Regional Facility:** It will be established within CARICAD as part of CARICAD’s current mandate in the area of e-government and in implementation of the provisions of this Strategy.

It will be based on CARICAD’s in-house capabilities, enhanced by a limited number of additional resources (e.g. one staff member), as well as capabilities of CARICAD’s partners who will have agreed to put at the disposal of the region their technical resources.

In particular, the facility will play a catalytic, supportive role by offering the following services and products:

Services provided at the request of governments, at the national or regional level:

- Surveys / assessments to establish gaps in e-government readiness and prioritization of the remedial actions;
- Program and project development;
- Program and project evaluation;
- Regional and inter-regional partnership building;
- Mobilization of resources;
- Advocacy and awareness raising;

## Products:

- Regional E-government Observatory, comprising *inter alia* database of key country data related to e-government readiness as well as technical description of e-government applications rolled out in the Caribbean and technical solutions used, with evaluation of their effectiveness;
- Internet-based Regional Discussion Network comprising representatives of governments, scientific community, civil society organizations, mass media and business as an open forum for debate, exchange of ideas and experiences;
- A prioritized Roster of Project Ideas that stem from the discussion of the above Regional Discussion Network, with several at the top of the list developed into full-fledged project documents for funding by the interested Caribbean countries and/or external donors;
- Internet-based Portal of the Caribbean E-government Initiative. It will develop according to needs and opportunities, but at the outset, it will aim at featuring as a minimum:
  1. Links to all e-government web sites in the region
  2. Texts of all national strategies, action plans and reports developed by countries or groups of countries in the Caribbean
  3. Links to partner organizations and institutions from outside the region
  4. Links to globally available, applicable to the Caribbean on-line training sites (e.g., public sector reform, leadership training, project management, change management, e-government development, ICT skills) that provide training on line
  5. Links to globally available information databases that feature best practices in e-government development and describe / share technical solutions used, with special focus on low-cost solutions, including “open source” solutions
  6. Generic e-government application development modules
  7. Regional E-government Observatory (see above)
  8. Roster of Caribbean experts and business firms with capacity for technical assistance in e-government development
- General support to national e-government entities relating to training or technical advice.

It is envisaged that initially, donors’ support will be sought to meet the budgetary requirements for establishing such a limited in scope facility, with the intention to gradually shift this responsibility to sources of funding within the region.

## 2.

**Programmatic Framework:** While it is fully recognized that most Caribbean countries, regional Caribbean organizations and donors have developed their own strategies and/or action plans related to public sector reform and in particular to applying ICT within these reform efforts, it is believed useful to provide as reference a Programmatic Framework that would highlight directions of e-government development activities considered crucial for moving forward the e-government agenda in the region, as described in this Strategy. This is a Framework that needs periodic review and updating in consultation with the countries, regional organizations and donors. However, with a 3-year perspective in mind, the following initiatives seem of fundamental importance:

- Conduct – as needed - reassessment of national e-government readiness and/or reassessment of national e-government approaches, strategies and plans of action under implementation;
- Review relevant policies, programs, legislature, regulatory regimes and technical standards, with the view to align them regionally, if such alignment is needed from the point of view of development of regional cooperation; this should include *inter alia* due consideration of e-security and e-privacy related issues;
- Establish partnerships for launching a program of regional telecommunication infrastructure development, including broadband and wireless technologies
- Assure public sector – private sector interoperability, nationally and across the region
- Assist in the establishment of national bodies/units for the management and coordination all e-government initiatives.
- Launch a communication campaign to explain to government officials, business, media and to the public at large the potential of ICT, especially in participation and improvement of delivery of public services
- Develop strategies for using partnerships with business and civil society organizations for expansion of convenient, affordable access to e-government services (e.g. Public Internet Access Points)
- Launch training for the Caribbean civil service at all levels, in support of the public sector reform that is facilitated by e-government development; (role of other entities)
- Organize an e-government marketplace that would match government needs with capacities of Caribbean private sector providers;
- Organize “twinning” arrangements and exchanges of experiences between government counterparts in the Caribbean
- Share region-wide information obtained through participation in various international fora and as a result of cooperation with various international organizations as well as

coordinate regional position of the Caribbean countries vis-à-vis global initiatives and forums;

- Establish CARICAD's Caribbean E-Government Award;
- Launch pilot projects or shared applications in support of the stated goals of the Strategy. Of particular interest and in follow up to early expression of interest such project may include e-government solutions for:
  - Security, including border security, cyber security and anti-crime measures;
  - Disaster management;
  - Tourism;
  - Agriculture,
  - Political participation;
  - Local community development
  - Education, including computerization of schools and universities, distance education and learning,
  - Healthcare, including distance medicine and dealing with HIV/AIDS pandemic
  - Job search;
  - Financial management;
  - Market access, especially by SME (e.g. via but not only e-procurement);
  - Facilitation of trade among the Caribbean countries, especially in the framework of the Single Market Economy Initiative;
  - Cultural heritage preservation and development;

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The status of implementation of the above Strategy will be assessed at a Ministerial Consultative Meeting in 2007.