Norway February 18th, 2003

STRATEGY FOR ICT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR
Strategy 2003 – 2005

Major areas of focus in promoting user-oriented services, increased efficiency and simplification at the local level.

Summary of proposals

The goal of the strategy is to support good local solutions by creating a national ICT infrastructure and providing framework conditions. By doing this, the practical utilization of ICT remains a local responsibility.

Enhancement of user-orientation, efficiency and simplification must be carried out in the various sectors and agencies in ways that results in gains for both the public administration as a whole and for its users. The proposed actions presented in the strategy have been designed in order to bring this about.

The term *public sector* shall in this context be understood to include public agencies at both national and local government levels.

A proactive ICT development must take account of the need for a functioning infrastructure to enable coordination between public ICT systems in the various sectors, administrative levels and geographical locations. This is the core of the strategy. However, this does not mean that user orientation of services, efficiency and utilization of ICT in democratic processes are less important. In accordance with the modernization principles of delegation and decentralization, these areas of utilization must take place at the local level, in sectors, agencies and municipalities.

The point of departure is the challenges we are currently facing in the use of ICT in the public sector in Norway. On the basis of a survey conducted by Statskonsult in summer 2002, these challenges are:
- User-orientation of information and e- services is underdeveloped and uncoordinated
- Data interchange and communications across agency and sectoral boundaries constitutes a problem in many areas
- Security and confidence in connection with electronic transactions must be improved
- The focus on cost-benefit assessments and realization of gains in working processes and organization is underdeveloped
- ICT is too poorly utilized for exchange of experience, competence building and innovation
- Strategic managerial competence in the ICT area needs to be improved

The strategy deals with the challenges that must be solved centrally.

Enhancement of user-orientation, efficiency and simplification must be carried out in the individual sectors and agencies. To support this work, the strategy proposes actions within areas of major importance.

Strategic managerial competence is not further dealt with.

The action areas that have been considered are:
- Reporting, re-use and availability of data
- A common infrastructure for digital signatures (PKI)
- Development of broadband facilities
- Electronic services
- Market conditions
- Democratic participation and transparency
- E-business
- Knowledge management
- Benchmarking

The above challenges are used as criteria for prioritizing of action areas and proposed actions. Emphasis is also placed on restricting the area of focus in order to ensure feasibility and achievement of results.

The strategy has a time perspective frame to the end of 2005, in accordance with the plan for eNorway 2005.

On the basis of the strategy and challenges mentioned above, the priority areas and their associated proposed actions are as follows:

Reporting, re-use and availability of data

1. **Electronic reporting**
   - Coordinate reporting routines, including reporting schedules and work processes.
   - Eliminate reporting of information which is not used or which can be obtained from other sources.
   - Customize and standardize the central governments agencies' data capture interfaces for reporting.

1. **Re-use of data**
   - Coordinate use of terminology, work routines and ICT solutions, including areas other than the Register of Reporting Obligations of Enterprises (e.g. the Norwegian Centre for Medical Informatics - KITH).
   - Establish a council with expertise in the various fields that can provide independent views on coordination of specific terms and work routines.
   - Establish criteria for data quality, describe maintenance routines and appoint agencies to

be responsible for retrieving, maintaining and making available public information.

1. **Making information available**
   - Implement necessary standardization for retrieval of data from public agencies/registers and making them available to others.
   - Consider extending the Register of Reporting Obligations of Enterprises with data relevant for development of electronic services and re-use, which today are not included in statutory reporting to the register.
   - Establish principles for pricing of the provision of public information to the general public, business and industry and public administration, in order to encourage coordination, re-use and business development.

1. Establish a **secretariat function** for ICT standardization in the public sector in order to review relevant needs for standardization and interface requirements, in relation both to data interchange and to ensuring compatibility between the different ICT solutions employed.

A common infrastructure for electronic signatures (PKI)

1. A coordinating body is to be set up according to section 28 of the Regulations relating to electronic communications with and within the public administration, which entered into force on July 1st, 2002. Among the coordinating body responsibilities, are the following:

   a. Systematizing experience, supporting agencies that take development initiatives and implementing the necessary impact assessments.
   b. Categorizing ICT solutions in the public administration according to the need for security and use of electronic signatures and, on this basis, establishing some common security levels for such solutions. This work involves assessing the requirements of the various services and proposing common solutions that include as many services as possible.
   c. Developing common requirements and guidelines for use of PKI in the public sector. The requirements are to be based on established market standards and pay due consideration to current regulations in the area. The requirements shall moreover safeguard necessary considerations regarding coordination with other countries. This may include work on certificate content and profiles, certificate policy and technical requirements. The body will also assess solutions available on the market against the common requirements in order to establish their suitability for use in the public sector.
   d. Establishing necessary cooperative fora for public agencies in both central and local government sectors and encouraging coordination of different ongoing projects in the public sector.
   e. Establishing or participating in a suitable arena for dialogue with market players who offer solutions for authentication and electronic signatures.
   f. The use of common requirement specifications, for example in standard agreements, should be considered in order to promote the desired development in the area,

particularly as regards the need for open solutions, re-use and common requirement specifications.

1. Funds should be allocated to supporting development projects in the public sector that are willing to utilize common solutions in cooperation with each other and with the private sector in order to ensure the greatest possible increase in the benefit to users.

Knowledge management

Knowledge management is in this context defined as identification, development and dissemination of knowledge critical for agencies. This should be strengthened by systematically developing the learning and knowledge network both within and across sectors as an instrument for promoting the goals of the modernization programme.

ICT has an important role to play in achieving this. A pilot project is therefore proposed for an ICT-based network for knowledge management. The goal of the project is to extend the scope to embrace other parts of the public sector on the basis of the results. It is proposed that the established network for 'reference municipalities' shall be one of the pilot projects. This network is a part of the modernization programme.