



Country: AZERBAIJAN
Initiation Plan

Project Title: Enhancing the professional and operational capacities of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations

Expected CP Outcome(s): 2011-2015 CP Outcome 3.2: Efficiency, accountability and transparency within public administration is enhanced through capacity development of State entities, including gender sensitive approaches

Initiation Plan Start Date: February 2013

Initiation Plan End Date: February 2014

Implementing Partner: UNDP, and State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations

Brief Description

In 2012, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan prioritised the delivery of high quality public services by creating a dedicated State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (hereinafter "State Agency") and establishing under the latter's authority ASAN(easy) Service Centres as a new way of service provision. The first public ASAN Service Centre was established as a pilot initiative in Baku. Over the past decade, UNDP has been the key partner of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan in modernising state institutions making them more transparent, and efficient. ICT in general and e-Government solutions in particular have played the critical role in such modernisation. Future progress will require advancing further and faster the ability to manage the use of technologies in the work of government by upgrading and expanding its state information systems. The formulation of the National e-Government Interoperability Framework, in combination with other supporting activities aimed at strengthening the Agency's institutional and operational capacities will be the main focus of this project.

Programme Period:	2011-2015
CPAP Programme Component:	
Atlas Award ID:	00072188
PAC Meeting Date:	23 January 2012

Total resources required	\$ 100,000
Total allocated resources:	\$ 100,000
• Regular	\$ 100,000
• Other:	
o Donor	\$ _____
o Donor	_____
o Donor	_____
o Government	_____
Unfunded budget:	_____
In-kind Contributions	_____

Agreed by UNDP: Antonius Broek, Resident Representative

I. BACKGROUND

On 13 July 2013, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued a Decree (No. 685) to create a State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations. This decision was followed by a Decree of 5 September 2012 (No. 706) that specified the Agency's structure and Statute. The first ASAN Centre was established as a pilot project in the capital city of Baku. In the recent future more 2 or 3 centres will be created in the Baku city in addition to those to be established in Sumqayit and Ganja cities one in each. They should generate new high-quality public services provided by the state to citizens in offline and online modes, as well as ensure the service uniformity and efficiency. Initially, the Centre will provide 23¹ services generated by nine government agencies. Alongside the traditional services that the state entities are extending to citizens the ASAN Service Centres are expected to provide e-services in innovative way in much respect.

Up to date the state sector of Azerbaijan has already developed 417 public services that are present on various state entities' websites in different form; as many as 168 of e-services produced by 36 state entities have been recently activated on the main e-Government portal EHDIS. The rest needs further integration with the portal which will be a very challenging and complex task in its own right. While many public services are not yet technically compatible with the portal's requirements, others are not part of the Register of Public e-Services at all.²

Over the past decade, UNDP has been one of the main partners of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan in enabling the use of ICT in the public sector to increase its effectiveness, transparency and accountability, with e-services being an important part of UNDP's assistance. This cooperation covered:

- development of the "National Information and Communication Technologies Strategy for the Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2003-2012)" which was approved by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 17 February 2003
- set-up of the data transmission network "AzDATACOM" aimed at providing robust, affordable, accessible and secure connectivity for governmental institutions, public sector and citizens and removing digital gap between capital and regions of Azerbaijan. The network is the practical foundation for creation of e-Governance platform and makes possible implantation of various formats (G2G, G2B, G2C) of e-Governance.
- establishment of the State Register of Population as a single, reliable and comprehensive database on the population of Azerbaijan which facilitates electronically the registration of the civil status acts and issuance of certificates and national citizens documents;
- reorganization of the State Social Protection Fund to increase its managerial and technological capacity, raise efficiency of the social insurance and pension provision systems through automation of main operational processes and data exchange procedures, including the development of efficient communication between the Fund's HQs and local/regional branches;

¹ 23 services regroup number of services which is more than 150

² From the interview given by Mr. Isbandiyar Aliyev, Head of the Strategic Planning Department of the Ministry of Communications & IT of Azerbaijan <http://abc.az/eng/news/main/70045.html>

- modernization of Customs Service through infrastructure development, automation of the processes, and personnel training, including the facilities of the Target Centre at the Head Department of Air Transport;
- work with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to use ICT to increase transparency in recruitment for civil service, introduction of performance appraisal system, and establishment of online support services and database of civil servants;
- modernization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to increase the efficiency and transparency of its operations through e-government solutions which have enabled the upgrade of its information systems, improvement of internal and external communication with other government bodies and the general public at large;

As a result of UNDP's long history of enhancing the capacity of the country's public sector with the help of e-Government solutions, there is a lot of good practice, experience and lessons learned that has been accumulated in Azerbaijan. Such expertise covers various domains of infrastructure development, data bases creation and information digitalization, ICT-driven business process reengineering, data sharing and introduction of new e-Government services for citizens, businesses, as well as to other state entities.

With the creation of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations, Azerbaijan enters into a new phase of governance development when the both number and quality of public services for citizens and businesses is growing rapidly. The Agency is expected to become not only a front-office provider of existing and planned services online, but also to act as the principal integrator of e-Government solutions at both the back- and front-ends according to its Statute. The first step has already been undertaken by acquiring an Estonian x-Road platform (called EHDIS in Azerbaijan) that enables data sharing from disparate register/data bases via a special service layer above them. As a result, the EHDIS solution ensures that the exchanged data are interoperable, i.e. compatible regardless of their sectoral origin.

However, the *technological interoperability* that links computer systems, defines open interfaces, data formats and protocols³, is not sufficient for the creation of reliable, seamless and trustworthy state information systems – a basis for effective provision of e-government services. The next step should be the elaboration and implementation of (a) *organizational* and (b) *semantic interoperability* in order to ensure that the internationally recognized e-government principles of, accessibility, security, privacy, subsidiary, use of Open Standards/Open Source Software,⁴ use of multilateral services are present in Azerbaijan's national e-government system as a matter of overarching regularity policy.

Organisational interoperability ensures that public administrations are client-oriented to better serve the vital needs of citizens and businesses. That means that the importance of the organisation's functions and internal processes should be aligned with their client's interests via the one-stop shop approach (not vice versa). Semantic interoperability assumes that information exchanged between computers (e.g. the EHDIS service path) should be meaningful (i.e. not technical but substantive) beyond exchange protocols and data formats; that requires additional connections with other

³ 'Determining relevance of "best practice" based on interoperability in European eGovernment initiatives' by Robert Deller and Veronique Guilloux (European Journal of ePractice) <http://www.epractice.eu/files/4.7.pdf>.

⁴ See more at <http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/servlets/Docd552.pdf?id=19529>.

(re)sources reflecting upon specific contexts in which the data are generated, shared and used. 'This will allow automated tools to share and process information, even when they have been designed independently. The objective is not only to allow information resources to be linked up but also to allow information to be automatically understandable, and, consequently, reusable by computer applications that were not involved in its creation'.⁵ As many countries' experience proves, without such a comprehensive – not just technical –integration framework it will be impossible to increase the number of e-services at the required level of quality.

Given that UNDP has an excellent record in promoting e-Government in the country since the early 2000s,⁶ the accommodation of such request would be a natural continuation of the previous and ongoing support so as to move the e-Governance agenda to a new level of maturity and utility.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this project document is to support the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations by building its operational and strategic capacities to perform the assigned functions as the country's leading e-Government institution acting on behalf and in cooperation with other state entities in public service provision. Two main types of activities will be supported under this project, namely:

- increasing the Agency's operational and managerial capacity to plan and implement its functions as an effective, efficient and open state institution;
- increasing the Agency's strategic capacity to become a leading e-Government agency competent in a) policy development and implementation through close collaboration with other government institutions, expert community, ICT industry, academia, civil society, and b) direct provision of citizen-centric services in a multi-channel manner.

Specifically, the project includes two components:

- 1) Organisational development and coordination;
- 2) Creation of regulatory basis for the interoperability of citizen-centric public e-services

⁵ European Interoperability Framework for pan-European eGovernment Services (page 19) <http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/servlets/Docd552.pdf?id=19529>; see also Estonian Interoperability Frameworks <http://www.riso.ee/en/information-policy/interoperability>.

⁶ As of end-2012, there have been seven active cooperation projects between UNDP and the Government of Azerbaijan in various fields of the public sector (as described above) where ICT is considered a major driving force of administrative reform and service provision under the Country Programme 2011-2015 Outcome "Efficiency, accountability and transparency within public administration is enhanced through capacity development of State entities, including gender sensitive approaches".

III. EXPECTED OUTPUT

The Initiation Plan provides a framework for the implementation of the preparatory activities for the development of the fully-fledged Project. The Initiation Plan covers such activities as enhancing operational and knowledge-based capacities of the State Agency to become an effective, service-oriented institution; formulation and implementation of e-Government interoperability framework (including organizational, technical and semantic interoperability solutions); surveying citizens' needs in e-services; providing expert support on demand, networking, coordination and competency development. The experience obtained during the preparatory phase will help create a necessary regulatory framework and relevant operational capacities for a more open public sector under the leadership of the State Agency as the implementing partner of a new e-Governance initiative.

The Initiation Plan is expected to produce the following activities by components:

Component 1: Organizational development.

This component aims at enhancing the capabilities of the staff of the State Agency to plan strategically and planning and operational management. This component will help create an open, knowledge-based, collaborative, networked and organisationally effective government entity in charge of public services.

Activities:

1.1 Develop an internal Strategic Management Plan for 2013-2015, with well-defined priorities and performance indicators on communication and awareness rising;

1.2 Develop analytical capacities and skills of the State Agency staff via training/study tours and best practice familiarization;

Component 2: Creating a legal/regulatory basis for the interoperability of citizen-centric public e-services.

This component aims at creating a regulatory framework to enable the integration of public services through technical, organizational and semantic e-government interoperability solutions and thus to assist the implementation of the EHDIS platform (of shared services). Special emphasis will be made on the promotion of e-services to address development needs of citizens and business community, including the assessment of their expectations and readiness for more active participation in public life in general and in policy making in particular.

Activities:

2.1 Conduct a Citizen Report Card study (survey) to map out citizens' expectations in the range and scope of public services, their preference of delivery channels and the readiness to interact with the state electronically for public consultation; estimated budget;

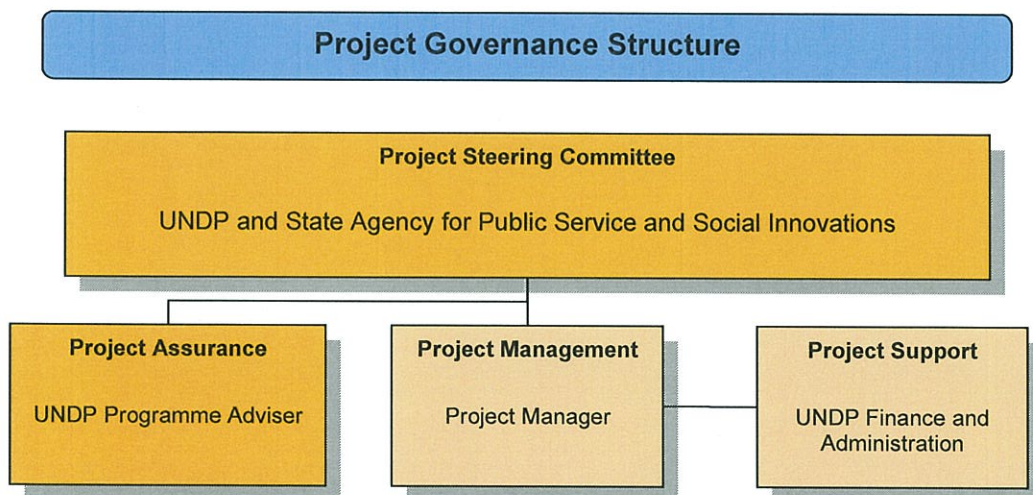
2.2. Establish a Working Group to formulate in close coordination with other government branches and expert community a National Interoperability Framework for e-Government Services in Azerbaijan (including the preparation of relevant Guidelines) according to the European Best Practice (such a Framework

will cover and interlink key interoperability areas - organisational, technical and semantic interoperability, target groups, underlying principles, security, standards, business requirements for e-services, etc; train the members of the WG in e-Government interoperability, organize a study tour to at least one of the two countries with recognised best practices (e.g. Austria and Estonia); hold a workshop for the Steering Committee members one-Government interoperability; estimated budget;

2.3 Create and operationalise the work of a Steering Committee (or Council) composed of IT project managers, Chief Information/Technical Officers (CIOs/CTOs) representing agencies' IT departments to ensure close collaboration and consultation across government bodies and facilitate the implementation of interoperability solutions as common policies; formulate TOR, meeting agendas, identify representatives; hold at least three meetings; organise in-country training for the Committee members; estimated budget.

IV. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

I. Project Governance. For the purposes of Initiation Plan, UNDP will serve as the Implementing Agency and carry out the activities in close collaboration with the State Agency for Public Services and Social Innovation and other relevant ministries, agencies and stakeholders. The Agency will be responsible for the facilitation of all project events, consultant missions undertaken within the context of this project, ensuring appropriate access to the project site, relevant data, records, agencies and authorities. During the Initiation Plan Phase, UNDP and the State Agency will also seek partnership with other UN Agencies and donors as far as the quality, scope and focus of public services are concerned. Project Governance Structure and the composition of Project Board are as follows:



II. Project Management. Project Manager (PM) will be recruited and tasked with the day-to-day management of project activities, as well as with substantive, financial and administrative reporting. PM will be responsible for project implementation, routine management and monitoring. His/her primary responsibility is to ensure that the planned outputs are produced by undertaking necessary activities in accordance with the project

plan and meeting the required standards of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost.

III. Project Assurance. UNDP will designate a Programme Advisor to provide independent project oversight and monitoring functions, to ensure that project activities are managed and milestones accomplished. The UNDP Programme Advisor will be responsible for reviewing the project reports, produced by the PM.

IV. Project Support. UNDP will provide financial and administrative support to the project including procurement, contracting, travel and payments.

V. Expert support. Local/international experts and/or consultancy companies will be recruited by UNDP as required for the implementation of each component, to develop training/awareness raising materials, conduct of studies and surveys.

V. MONITORING

In accordance with the programming policies and procedures outlined in the *UNDP User Guide*, the project will be monitored through the following:

- PM will carry out on-going monitoring and quality assurance, along with the oversight of daily project implementation.
- PM will submit Project Progress Report (PPR) at the end of the initiation plan, using the standard report format available in the Executive Snapshot;
- With inputs from PM, Issue Log shall be activated in Atlas and updated to facilitate tracking and resolution of potential problems or requests for change;
- With inputs from PM, Risk Log shall be activated in Atlas to capture the potential risks on the implementation of both the piloting activities and the future full-fledged project. Risk Logs will be regularly updated by reviewing the external environment that may affect the project implementation;
- With inputs from PM, Project Lessons-learned log shall be activated and regularly updated to ensure on-going learning and adaptation within the organization, and to be included the preparation of the PPR.