



e-Government Project

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

FOR

**e-Session application to be used by the Government of
the Republic of Macedonia**

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e-Government Project

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INTRODUCTION

The USAID funded e-Government Project and the General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia are designing and creating a software application which will introduce electronic sessions of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

This system will replace the current paper based system of preparing, organising and conducting sessions of the Government with a sophisticated electronic system that will assist the Government to increase its efficiency and transparency.

1. USERS OF THE SYSTEM

1.1 General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia

The General Secretariat of the Republic of Macedonia - *Department for organizational matters in relation to the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (Department for Organisational Matters)* is responsible for organizing, carrying out and finalising the sessions of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and its staff members will use the e-session software.

State advisors and other civil servants are assigned to read and give opinions on materials and acts submitted to the General Secretariat and participate at the *working meetings and the Experts' Collegium*.

The *members of the General Gollegium*: the Secretary General, State Secretaries of the Ministries and the Secretariat for European Affairs, the Secretary of the Legislation Secretariat, as well as *other civil servants* assigned by the Secretary General participate in the work of the General Gollegium.

Each of the above listed persons shall be users of the e-session software application.

1.2 Members of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia

The *Prime Minister* of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, the *Vice-Presidents* of the Government of Republic of Macedonia and *Ministers* attend the sessions of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia with a right to vote. *The Secretary General* and the *Secretary of the Legislation Secretariat* attend the government sessions without a right to vote.

They shall use the e-session software.

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT

The work of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and its services is governed by the following legal acts:

- **Constitution:** defines the position and the role of the Government as holder of the executive branch and sets the basis of its work.
- **Law on the Government** (59/00, 26/01, 12/03, 55/05): on the basis of the Constitutional provisions this Law regulates the organization, manner of work and competencies of the Government.
- **Rules of Procedure on Work of the Government** (“Official Gazette” no.38/01, 98/02, 9/03, 47/03, 64, 03, 67/03): based on the provision from the Constitution and the Law on the Government, this bylaw regulates in more detailed manner the following: internal organization and manner of work of the Government and its working bodies, the manner of cooperation with the other power branches, state bodies and legal entities, as well as other issues of importance for the Government.
- **Decision for establishing a General Secretariat as an Expert Service of the Government** (13/02/2001): with this decision the General Secretariat is established and its positions and competencies regulated in general manner.
- **Instruction on the manner of using and acting upon materials and acts submitted to the Government of the Republic of Macedonia – General Secretariat of Republic of Macedonia and on the manner of keeping and using the stenographic notes and audio tapes.**

3. OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

3.1 Phase I – Reception of proposal documents

Proposals for topics to be discussed by the Government are initiated by state administration bodies; legal entities with public authorisations; public enterprises; agencies; business companies, citizens’ associations and other legal entities and physical persons.

The originals of the materials and acts are received at the **Reception Desk**. Every new document received at the Reception Desk is given a **number** which follows the document through the whole process.

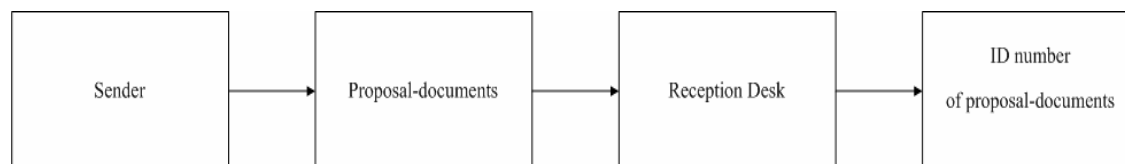


Figure 1 - Reception of proposals-documents for discussion at government sessions

3.2 Phase II – Preparation of Government session

Topics that have been duly elaborated by the respective Ministry are submitted to the General Secretariat; the Head of the Department for organizational matters in relation to the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and an **ELABORATE** is opened for every new subject. Proposals are scrutinised as is illustrated by figure II.

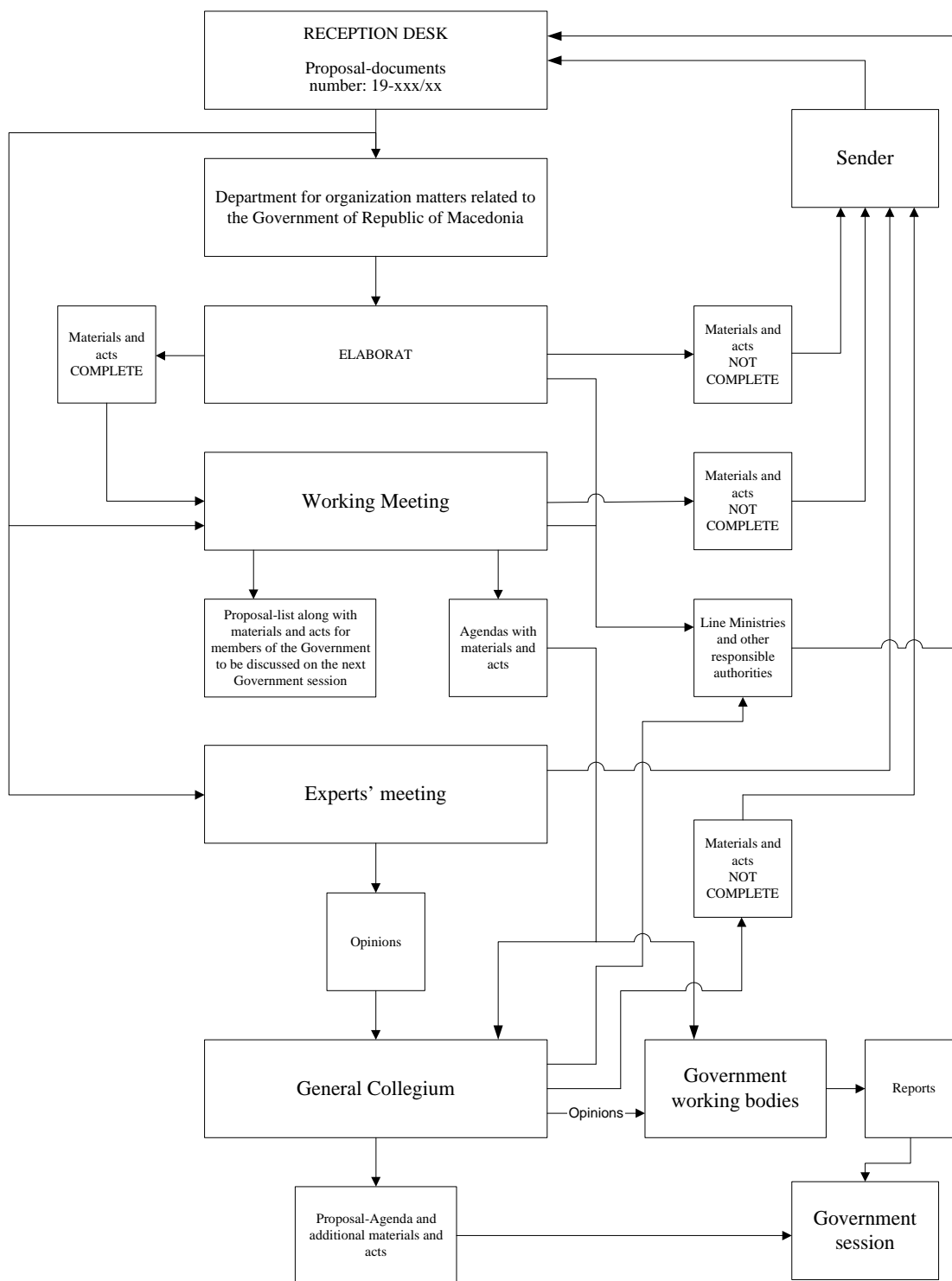


Figure II - Preparation of Government session

3.3 Phase III – Execution of Government session

The Prime Minister leads the session of the Government. In case the Prime Minister is absent, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Government, assigned by the Prime Minister, shall replace the Prime Minister. Besides the Ministers who attend the session with a right to vote, the Secretary General and the Secretary of the Legislation Secretariat also attend the session but without any right to vote.

The Government first adopts the Conclusions from the previous session of the Government (presented in form of minutes) and then adopts the agenda for the current session of the Government.

The members of the Government have the right to add new items on the agenda, before the agenda is adopted. Each item of the agenda (usually 20-40) is individually discussed and a *conclusion* is drawn. Stenographic notes and audiotapes are taken at each Government session.

During and after each government session, the representatives of the Department for Organizational Matters prepare:

- list of present members and participants of the government session and other present at the government session;
- list of absent members and participants of the government session and other absent at the government session;
- list of conclusions made upon each item of the agenda;
- acts (decisions, solutions, etc);
- opinions upon request of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia, enterprises and other legal entities and physical persons;
- answers to questions from the members of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia;
- list of postponed materials and acts.

The Secretary General is responsible for the Minutes.

3.4 Phase IV – Adoption of conclusions

The conclusions and the other acts are prepared and delivered to the appropriate Minister (Ministry) / Director in 48 hours after the session is concluded. The draft-conclusions are adopted at the following session of the Government.

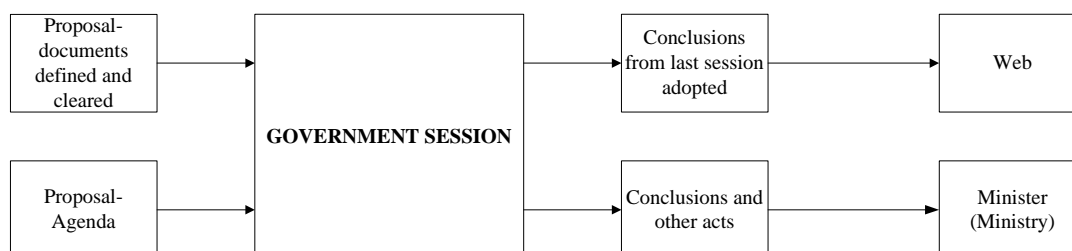


Figure III - Execution of Government session and Adoption of conclusions

4. ICT INFRASTRUCTURE

General Secretariat is well equipped with hardware and software necessary for their every day operation.

General Secretariat uses the following Microsoft Servers and technologies:

- Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
- Microsoft Office 2003 System (InfoPath 2003)
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Microsoft ISA Server 2004
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Standard and Enterprise Edition

The e-session system has to be fully compatible with the current ICT platform used by the Government for collaboration including the database, the communication, and the security systems. Moreover, it must work on one-to-one basis with the existing applications already deployed at the General Secretariat and provide seamless integration with:

- Intranet portal of the General Secretariat (gs.gov.mk)
- G2G Intranet portal for collaboration between the Government and Ministries (uslugi.gov.mk)
- System for archiving within Government of RM and the Ministries.

5. E-SESSION SOFTWARE SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

This is essentially a Web based document management system that is able to guide the flow of the documents that fully characterize all the current activities of the Government expressed and represented by e-sessions or meetings. It integrates the multi-level and multi-source decision making, from the proposal and draft phase up to the conclusions, by facilitating document submission, review and approval process, and is able to provide the basis for future automatic document classification and information selection.

The system supports the traditional document management functionalities such as version control (unambiguous labelling and continuous tracking), formation of a document library with the possibility to use efficient search mechanisms, document sharing, collaborative working, and appropriate security and privacy mechanisms. All of the system modules, as well as the data elements, should be able to use and communicate with the existing databases and applications that are part of the IS of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

The document lifecycle, both active - it pertains to a current e-session of the government, and passive - it is part of the past e-sessions and appropriately archived in the document management system library, should reflect revision history and the uniqueness of the authorship both with respect to the original document, and the subsequent modifications. Any acknowledgment or revision of a document should be authenticated and confirmed (box checking, label switching, or tag indication).

The communication between the new system and the existing systems shall be based on the Web services and XML as a cross-platform language for data exchange.

5.1 Module I: Identification / User Management

Users of the system are comprised of two major types: end users and IT Administrators.

All end users should register before they start using the system. The registration procedure must be simple, i.e. reduced to a few elementary steps.

Different access rights (read only or read/write) are granted to different end users and different level of users. User authorization should support Role based Security.

IT administrators are verifying and approving access rights for the end users based on the well-established government security policies and procedures.

5.2 Module II: Document submission

The basic functionality of this module to establish a unified flow of information and a common communication platform, which is very much needed due to the diversity of sources (the Ministries) that are allowed to propose documents for the e-session. Users of the module, restricted to the authorized personal within the Ministries only, send via the system already prepared document directly to the General Secretariat as proposals for discussions at the next Government session.

For preparation and submission of each document from the Ministries into the system, existing G2G intranet portal should be used. The metadata information, represented as a XML file, should accompany each document. This additional data should be comprised of information which can be added automatically or selected by the end user:

- The institution where the document is sent from;
- Date and time; and
- The level of classification: internal, confidential, top secret or state secret.

For each material submitted by the Ministries and entered into the system, the appropriate attributes that define its statuses must be checked and consequently updated. This should be done into the existing intranet portal, namely in the module for Tracking of the annual government programme.

An important part of this module is its external representation, or an open submodule, whereas any citizen and company, entity, should have the opportunity to make a proposal online. The open part can accept documents from the public without any registration, however there will be no possibility of submission without a proper identification of the user.

The external representation submodule should work with any Web browser commonly used on the Internet.

5.3 Module III: Reception Desk

Documents, materials and acts from everyone with the right to propose are submitted to the virtual Reception Desk of the General Secretariat. Each received document, as well as different versions of the same document, is registered with a unique identification (ID) number, which stays the same throughout the whole process until archiving.

Documents that are received in form of a hard copy are turned into electronic version (usually via scanning) and then uploaded into the system. All uploaded documents are verified and approved. Only then, the system should allow to all other users to access the documents based on their respective access rights.

This module should be an upgrade of the existing module within the Reception Desk of the General Secretariat. It should exhibit sufficient level of independence and functionality to work as a separate module in the reception desk of each Ministry.

5.4 Module IV: Review and approval

The Department for Organizational Matters can access all proposal documents with rights to store them into folders termed as **ELABORATE**. A folder of the type **ELABORATE** is created for every subject and it includes all relevant documents to the particular subject and different versions of the same document. The folder is continuously filled with new documents such as opinions, suggestions, conclusions, decision, again relevant to the subject that semantically identifies the folder.

The Department for Organizational Matters checks the proposed documents and acts for completeness.

Documents deemed to be incomplete, preliminary by the department employees and then by the working group, are sent back to the original sender along with the notes specifying the reasons for return. All the correspondence is signed by the Secretary General.

No one in the General Secretariat has a right to change a proposal document.

5.5 Module V: Collaborative working

The idea behind this module is to provide the basis for sound and effective next generation collaborative working environments, which will eventually increase creativity and boost productivity. This type of environments should provide collaboration services that make possible the development of flexible, scalable and adaptable electronic sessions of various end users. This should enable seamless and natural collaboration amongst a diversity of users within distributed, knowledge dominant and virtualized working meetings such as:

- Internal working meetings;
- Expert Collegiums;
- General Collegiums and Governmental working bodies;
- Government Sessions.

The module manages the entire process of calling a meeting, associating documents/elaborates, sending notification and instructions for the participants. The possibility to notify the participants via mobile phones must be included (special or urgent sessions). When the meetings/collegiums are closed, authorized users can use the module to create and upload minutes and opinions from the session.

The session of the Government is a special case of this module.

Conclusions from the e-government session must be automatically entered into the existing intranet portal in the module for Tracking of Government conclusions. In the same time appropriate statuses for each conclusion must be updated.

Final versions of the accepted materials on the Government sessions must be uploaded into the existing module for Tracking of annual government programme.

5.6 Module VI: Dynamic Web Portal

The system should support optional (check box) automatic publication of the items of the Agenda and Conclusion documents on the Government. Developer should create a dynamic web portal <http://sednica.vlada.mk>, where information and documents related to the session will be published, if previously approved by the relevant authorised person.

6. ACCESS RIGHTS

Following categories of system users or groups of end users can be identified with different access rights and different roles:

- **Authorized personal within the Ministries** to submit (upload) proposal documents;
- **Public Users** who will submit their proposals online without registration;
- **Employees of the Department** for Organizational Matters who have read access to all proposal documents and right to send comments and notes directly to the sender;
- **The IT Administrator**, an employee of the Department for Organizational Matters, the only one authorized to highlight text during the e-session and display documents electronically, makes the discussed modifications and amendments online;

- *Civil servants*, members of the **internal meeting**, who have read right to all proposal documents;
- *Members of the Expert Collegiums*, who have read or/and edit right to the proposal documents depending on the classification and subject of the same;
- *Members of the General Collegiums of State Secretaries*, (comprised of Secretary General and State Secretaries) have read or/and edit right to the proposal documents and the related opinions and recommendations, depending on the classification and subject of the same;
- *Secretary General*, who has read/write access rights to all proposal documents and authorization to upload to the system official opinions, recommendations and other documents that our outcome from the Expert Collegiums and General Collegium;
- *Secretary of the Legislation Secretariat*, has read/write access rights to the proposal documents and the related opinions and recommendations, and right to upload opinions and proposal to certain subjects on the system;
- *Members of the Government working bodies*, (comprised of Ministers), have read/write access rights to the proposal documents and the related opinions and recommendations, depending on the classification and subject of the same;
- *Members of the Governments session*, (members of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Secretary General and Secretary of the Legislation Secretariat, have read/write access rights to the proposal documents and the related opinions and recommendations; they all have access right to modify and amend the proposed agenda before and at the beginning of the session, and to upload proposal documents;
- *Prime Minister*, has read/write access rights to all proposal documents and acts, opinions and recommendations, right to modify and amend the proposed agenda before and at the beginning of the session, and to upload proposal documents; this user declares Government e-session opened and closed and officially authorizes all the conclusions, decisions and other documents that are outcome of the Government e-session before uploading to the system (distribution).

7. LANGUAGE

Software interface shall be in Macedonian language.

8. SECURITY & PRIVACY

Due to the sensitive and confidential data related to the inner workings of the Government, which is usually classified up to the highest level, a special attention should be paid to the design and the implementation of security and privacy mechanisms. These mechanisms, in addition to being based on stratified and open standards, should mirror and follow the established and approved Government security polices and strategies.

The security modules should have authentication and authorization matrices providing different levels of access, and combining current positions, functions and time limits. This includes, but is not limited to passwords, electronic signatures, digital certificates, and one time e-cards. The designers are strongly encouraged to envision and try at least some biometric security mechanisms, which may be later fully explored and implemented.

Naturally, the monitoring and record keeping concerning any use of the system by anyone should be on the 24/7 basis, generating a security trail for analysis, review, evaluation, and system checking. The automatic processing of the logs should be subject to searches for access and usage behaviour patterns and consequently semantic reports.

If possible, there should be a single identity representing each user across the whole system and a single-sign in.

9. ARCHIVING, BACK UP AND RECOVERY

A complete subsystem or a module should be devised that will deal with the issues of data archiving, back-up and recovery. The archiving feature should be based on storage mechanisms that would facilitate easy and speedy retrieval of the requested information. The procedures for back-up and recovery should emanate from the well-established and practiced policies of the Government. The back-up should be done in an orderly and periodic manner, both on an internal and external media, with the later being mirrored on dislocated places.