

6<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN CONFERENCE IN E-GUIDANCE: *WIDENING ACCESS TO LIFELONG GUIDANCE*

**ABSTRACT**

**TITLE OF THE SPEECH**

***Integrated and multichannel e-guidance services: Effectiveness and perspectives of the eGOS prototype system***

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**Cristina Cogoi** (Melius srl). She is the transnational and technical co-ordinator of the eGOS project and the project idea developer. She has been actively involved in project planning and managing of national and transnational projects in the educational and vocational guidance fields. Her particular field of research is ICT-based guidance and activities and services for the insertion of unemployed people into the labour market. She published several contributions in the field of ICT-based guidance services and projects. She is one of the co-organizers of the Riga conference in e-guidance.



**Stefano De Liso** (Totem srl). He is one of the founders of Totem srl and since the beginning has been involved in Marketing and sales management. He gained significant experiences in leading developing kiosk projects, with particular competence in ergonomic and specific software applications. He has been involved in developing sales organization all over Europe, promoting strategic partnership in several European countries. Nowadays his activity fields are equally shared among business administration project management and coordinating in developing of new products.

**ABSTRACT**

The eGOS – eGuidance and eGovernment Services project started on November 2008 and it will finish on October 2011. It is co-funded by the European Commission under the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) as part of the Competitiveness and Framework Programme.

The partnership is composed by 22 public and private partners from 5 countries: Bulgaria, Iceland, Italy, Romania, Spain. The project leader is the Provincia di Arezzo (Arezzo Provincial Government), strongly interested in the project idea and in its future development due to its institutional responsibility of setting up useful and efficient tools promoting active citizenship and employability. The group of core partners is composed by Melius (guidance contents and

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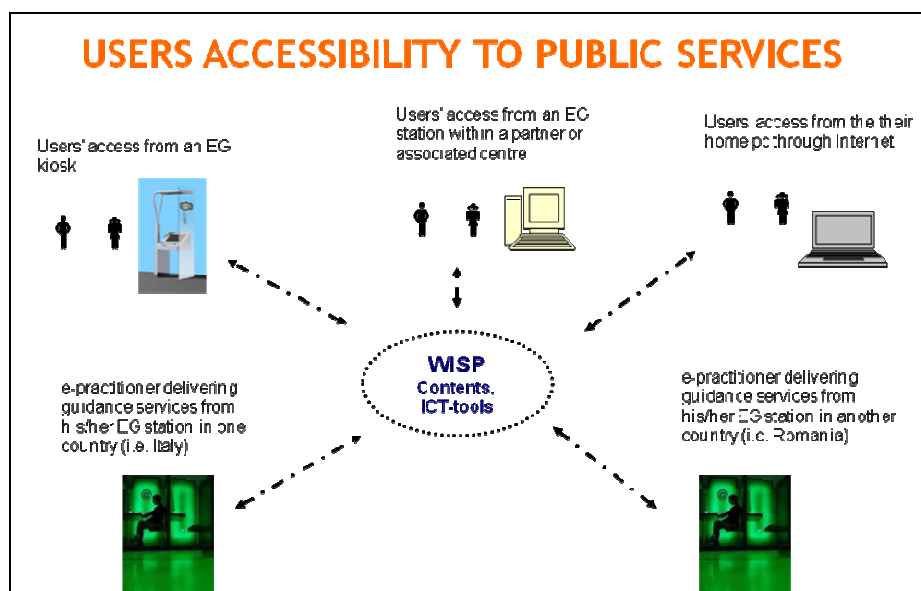
methodology, transnational co-ordinator), Lynx (software), MasterStudio (design, communication, dissemination), Totem (hardware). They are the developers of the eGOS prototype service and will commercialise the service after the service prototype testing in the partner countries.

The project mainly aims at improving users' employability through the delivery of educational and vocational e-guidance activities, also to cross-border mobility. Secondly, the project will improve guidance practitioners' capacity building as specific training for e-practitioners using the eGOS prototype service will be organized during the project's length.

The eGOS system is based on the integrated use of software, hardware and guidance contents' supply:

- *Software.* A multi-channel open source platform (WISP) will enable the delivery of the eGOS guidance services by guidance practitioners and their use by final beneficiaries.
- *Hardware.* Kiosks will be settled down in remote areas; in areas with few or no traditional guidance services; near public centres (i.e. employment centres, universities, etc.) in order to deliver guidance services after the closing time of the traditional guidance centres; within public centres where no practitioners give support to clients (i.e. sport centres, chambers of commerce, etc.).
- *Contents' supply.* E-guidance practitioners will be trained to deliver customised guidance services to their clients. Contents and communication fluxes will be managed by the WISP.

Figure 1. Architecture of the eGOS service



The eGOS prototype service will be piloted in 5 partner countries (Bulgaria, Iceland, Italy, Romania, Spain), for a total of 9 pilots, and e-guidance activities will be delivered to final beneficiaries according to 4 levels of sophistication delivery:

*First level delivery.* Information on educational and vocational issues, also to cross-border mobility. That will include the following activities for final beneficiaries: Collecting, organising and maintaining information on the WISP pertinent to education, training, occupations and employment opportunities.

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Second level of delivery. *Advice to educational and vocational issues, also to cross-border mobility.* That will include the following activities with final beneficiaries: Help clients in the effective use of information found out on the WISP; Help clients in clarifying some information resources found out on the WISP; Refer clients, when needed or required by them, to traditional guidance services available in their territorial area or in other ones.

Third level of delivery. *Counselling on educational and vocational issues.* That will include the following activities with final beneficiaries: Assisting individuals to select courses; Make educational plans; Overcome learning difficulties; Prepare for post-secondary education/training; Fostering the attitudes, beliefs and competencies that facilitate mastery of vocational development tasks, the ability to plan and adaptation to work-role transitions over the life-span; Supporting individuals in their efforts to obtain occupational positions by teaching job search skills and creating employment opportunities.

Fourth level of delivery. *Vocational guidance specialised actions.* That will include the following activities with final beneficiaries: Prompting self-reflection to clarify self-concepts, identify options, make decisions and resolve difficulties for what concern the insertion into the labour market or the change of the professional plan; Measure an individual's abilities, aptitudes, barriers, life roles, interests, personality, values, attitudes, educational achievements, skills and other relevant information for what concern the insertion into the labour market or the change of the professional plan.

Specialised guidance actions will be framed into 3 main e-guidance interventions:

- Group counselling for the active job search;
- Skills assessment paths;
- Tutoring and support paths to employability for people with more difficulties.

Figure 2. Summary of e-guidance activities

<i>Tested in all countries</i>	<i>Only tested in Italy</i>
<p><b>1) information, also to cross-border mobility</b> Available by everybody in the WISP/self-guidance</p> <p><b>2) advice, also to cross-border mobility</b> TOT 1 individual session 20 minutes per session</p> <p><b>3) counselling</b> TOT 2-6 individual sessions 1h per session 1 session each week / To be concluded max in 2 months</p>	<p><b>4.1) skills assessment</b> TOT 7 individual + 5 group sessions 1h per session 1 session each one or 2 weeks / To be concluded max in 3 months</p> <p><b>4.2) group sessions for the active job search</b> TOT 6 group sessions 1h per session 1 session each one or 2 weeks / To be concluded max in 3 months</p> <p><b>4.3) tutorship to job insertion for disadvantaged users</b> TOT 6-12 individual sessions 1h per session 1 session each week / To be concluded max in 3 months</p>

eGOS has to be considered as a first innovative service in its complex as it gathers in one prototype services for educational and vocational e-guidance the following key issues that are recognized by the EC as topics to be addressed in an inclusive eGovernment:

- Sophistication in the delivery



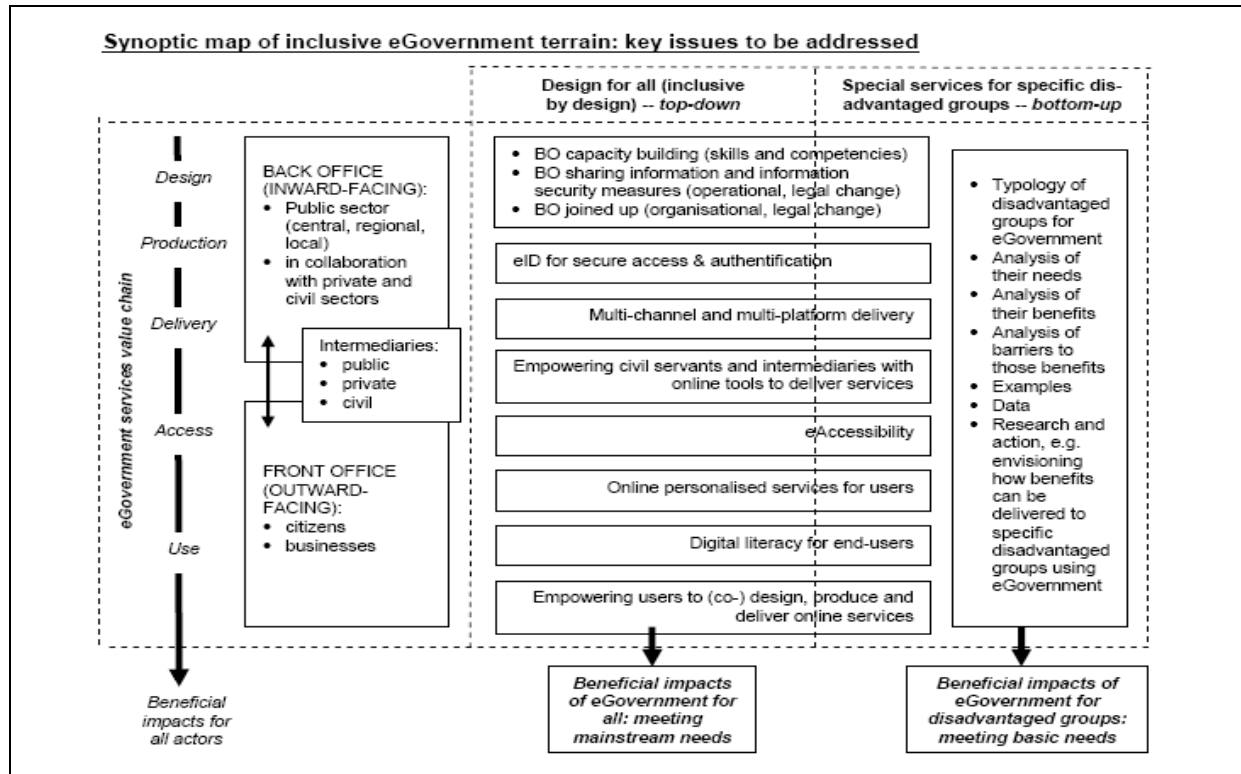
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- Customization on users needs
- E-interactivity practitioner-final beneficiary
- Multi-channel delivery
- Capacity building of guidance practitioners in terms of guidance-related ICT competences
- Collaboration among private and public bodies in the frame of the system and delivery of e-guidance actions
- Secure access to the WISP managing contents and treating personal and sensible data of final beneficiaries
- Empowering final beneficiaries with digital literacy through specific information and training activities
- Equipping public services with the necessary hardware and software in order to manage e-guidance
- Improve eAccessibility of the services by nearing eGOS services access to final beneficiaries (EG-kiosks, EG-stations, etc.)
- Involving users (e-practitioners and final beneficiaries) in the evaluation of the system for a future improvement and commercialisation
- Raise-awareness among stake-holders and public officers on benefits of ICT-base tools in guidance delivery and on potentialities of such a system

The eGOS key issues listed above can be tracked in the following scheme on the inclusive eGovernment issues (i.e. correspondence of the project towards an inclusive eGovernment according to the EC).

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Figure 3. A map of inclusive eGovernment key issues<sup>1</sup>



The eGOS service represents a structured project capable to provide through various and different channels a biunivocal communication between a team of professionals and practitioners and the final user.

Multichannel communication means, in this case, the possibility to provide information using technological instruments as for instance video communication, chat, email, or a phone call through a network composed by stand alone kiosks, internet connections from the home PC or point of access located in selected points of interest inside public offices or outdoor decentralized locations.

The multichannel software platform (WISP), available from every point of access, provides through its power engine the management of the communication flows in the right direction, in order to connect every user with the identified e-practitioner according to the requested e-guidance action.

The added value of such a system consists in the ability to work on two different points of view, according to the objectives set:

- The WISP software platform can be easily adapted to manage different contents and information resources, a part of guidance, such as local information, public health services, tourism and so on.

<sup>1</sup> eGovernment Action Plan, European Commission; DG INFSO eGovernment unit. *Analysis of European target groups related to inclusive eGovernment* (27th November 2006), p.9.



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- Every kiosk could provide different services in the same way.

As a result we could imagine a local network providing different kinds of information through advanced access points placed in selected locations available by most citizens.

The eGOS project is just the top of a new way to manage public communication and services. It makes them effectively nearer to the citizen by offering real time information ready to be easily updated to every new necessity, thanks to the software flexibility and the collaboration of a professional team ready to support every new requirement.

### **FOR ADDITIONAL INFO**

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