

e-Governance

“e-Estonia puts the citizen and the citizen’s rights at its centre.”

Kersti Kaljulaid, Former Estonian President



e-Governance is a strategic choice for Estonia that aims to improve the competitiveness of the country and increase the well-being of its people. Our aim is to keep the government working seamlessly 24/7. This is supported by digital identity, secure data exchange, and high-quality databases.

E-Governance consists of transparent and efficient use of ICT in state administration (e-Administration), user-friendly public services provision online (e-Services) and active involvement of citizens in decision-making processes (e-Participation). The development of the Estonian e-Governance ecosystem has been supported by strategic vision, trust of citizens and cooperation with the ICT sector.

Personal data protection is the cornerstone of building trust towards e-Government. Citizens have the right to know who is using their personal data. Enforcement of ‘once-only’ principle means that citizens only have to submit their data once to the government to be used and re-used. Estonia is striving for provision of proactive and invisible services by relying on the efficient use of data which the state already has. Proactive service delivery means that the government starts service provision without waiting requests from citizens.

e-Cabinet

Saving time and delivering transparent government has always been the goal of e-Estonia.

Information necessary for the decisions of the Government of the Republic (the Cabinet) can be queried directly from the e-Cabinet infosystem, 24 hours a day. Avoiding the need to prepare extensive documents substantially reduces bureaucracy. As a result, e-Cabinet has become a multi-user information source and scheduler that keeps relevant information organised and updated in real time, while offering ministers a clear overview of each item under discussion. After adopting the e-Cabinet system, the average length of the weekly cabinet meetings of the Estonian government have been cut from 4-5 hours to as little as 30 minutes.

State portal

The state portal **eesti.ee** is a central gateway to government agencies and hundreds of public services. Once logged into the system with a secure and government-trusted electronic ID, the user does not have to repeat the log-in to access any of the other available services.

Gateway to legislative drafting

The information system for legislative drafting (Eelnõude infosüsteem) enables transparent and paper-free preparation of the policy documents, draft laws and regulations. Citizens can see which documents are open for public consultations and ask for updates on topics they are interested in. Each year up to 100 drafts are uploaded to the information system for government approval.

i-Voting

I-Voting is an additional voting method to increase accessibility to elections, and should not be confused with other electronic voting systems used in other countries. The Estonian solution is simple, convenient and secure, allowing voters to cast their ballots from their location.

Citizen initiatives

The Citizen Initiative Portal (**rahvaalgatus.ee**) enables to write collective proposals, hold discussions, compose and send digitally signed collective addresses to the Estonian Parliament on how to amend existing regulations or improve the society. During the period from spring 2014 until the end of winter 2024, over 220 collective initiatives have been presented to the Parliament and local governments and over 750 000 signatures have been given.

Questions & answers

What are the benefits of e-Governance?

E-Governance creates transparency and accountability. It raises citizens' trust towards public organizations and the government, and also in tech innovations in the public sector. For example, among the most trusted government organizations in Estonia are the Rescue Board, Police and Border Guard Board, and Tax and Customs Board. Also, it helps the government to meet citizens' expectations on modern, hassle-free interaction with the government for getting public services, and raises citizens' will to participate in the decision-making processes.

Direct savings can be expressed in working hours. For example, government decisions today are made in about 30 minutes instead of 5 hours (10x more effective), e-Government and especially digital signatures save people an average of 5 working days a year — by using digital signatures the government saves 2% of GDP annually.

Facts

- 99% of all government public services are online
- Most used e-service is medical prescription
- 82% of all users are satisfied with the public e-services
- 54,7% of votes were cast during the last local elections in 2021
- Estonia's e-Government is ranked 8th on the UN e-Government Survey 2022
- Estonia is ranked 6th on the Index of Economic Freedom 2023 globally and 3rd in Europe
- Estonia is ranked 2nd on the internet freedom, Freedom House Index 2022
- Estonia is ranked 3rd on the e-Participation Index, UN Government Survey 2022