The Business Facilitation Program

Submitted by: UNCTAD

Ease of Doing Business Workshop: One-Stop Shops to Improve the Business Environment
Lima, Peru
26-27 February 2016
EFFICIENT TOOLS AND POLICIES
TO IMPROVE THE BUSINESS, INVESTMENT AND TRADE CLIMATE

UNCTAD’s Business Facilitation Programme offers a series of efficient tools and participative methodologies to clarify and simplify procedures. Applied sequentially, they compose an integrated programme for the modernisation of public administration. Aiming at producing quick and measurable results, the Business Facilitation programme was designed to reduce informality and corruption, to empower small entrepreneurs, to remove bureaucratic barriers to trade and investment and to increase government revenue.

THREE SEQUENTIAL COMPONENTS

THE eREGULATIONS SYSTEM: AN ELECTRONIC PORTAL TO CLARIFY AND PUBLICIZE PROCEDURES

The eRegulations system is an affordable, turn-key solution for governments to clarify and publicize administrative procedures. It shows administrative procedures step-by-step, from the user’s point of view. For each step, it provides the following data: contact data (entity, office, person in charge), expected result of the step, required documents, cost, duration, legal justification and ways to complain. Users can complain online. Any type of administrative procedure can be documented/clarified through an eRegulations portal (company creation, tax payment, activity licenses, construction permit, import and export, etc.). eRegulations portals have been implemented in 26 countries. Since the information is presented in a standardized way, procedures can be compared among countries and among cities where the system has been installed. This makes of eRegulations a good platform to harmonize procedures at the regional and national levels.
The Business Facilitation program

2 | **10 PRINCIPLES TO SIMPLIFY ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

Once clarified, procedures are easier to simplify, by comparing the practice to the law and limiting the number of interactions and documents to what is necessary and sufficient. UNCTAD’s “10 principles to simplify administrative procedures” generally allow governments to decrease steps and requirements by more than 50%, without changing the laws.

The Business Facilitation programme is particularly helpful to:

- **Improve the business and investment climate:**
  - Speed up business registration processes
  - Boost formalization of small entrepreneurs
  - Online single windows for licenses and construction permits

- **Trade facilitation:**
  - Trade portals (in application of art 1 of the WTO Bali Agreement)
  - Online single windows for foreign trade (art 4.7, WTO Bali Agreement)

- **Good governance and regional integration:**
  - Municipal online information portals
  - Harmonization of procedures

3 | **THE eREGISTRATIONS SYSTEM: ELECTRONIC SINGLE WINDOWS**

Simplified procedures are computerized using UNCTAD’s “eRegistrations” system, a web-based application conceived to create electronic single windows which allow simultaneous registration with multiple public agencies. Single windows for company creation have already been created in El Salvador, Guatemala and Tanzania. A single window for municipal licenses is in operation in Argentina.

![eRegistrations System](image)

### BUSINESS FACILITATION MAP

- **49 SYSTEMS IMPLEMENTED IN**
- **28 COUNTRIES**
- **1936 PROCEDURES DOCUMENTED ONLINE**
- **80% REDUCTION OF BUSINESS REGISTRATION STEPS, FORMS AND DOCUMENTS**

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT**
Division on Investment and Enterprise - Investment Capacity-Building Branch - Palais des Nations, 1211 Genève 10, Switzerland
Tel. +41 22 917 55 61 | businessfacilitation@unctad.org

www.businessfacilitation.org
The eRegulations system

AN ONLINE STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO BUSINESS-RELATED PROCEDURES

The eRegulations system is an electronic tool developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to help governments make rules and procedures fully transparent and facilitate business, trade and investment. It has been installed in various countries and cities worldwide, since 2005 (www.eregulations.org).

PROCEDURES FROM THE USER’S POINT OF VIEW

Procedures are presented step-by-step, from the user’s point of view. Every necessary interaction with a civil servant is considered a step. The system shows all required information to complete each step:

• Name of the step
• Result of the step
• Entity/office/officer in charge, with contact data
• Requirements (forms and documents)
• Cost
• Duration (minimum and maximum)
• Entity/office/officer in charge of attending complaints, with contact data
• Legal justification
• Authority certifying that the step is correctly described

For each procedure, the system presents a list of required steps and a summary showing the entities involved, expected results, requirements, minimum and maximum processing time and all legal bases.

www.businessfacilitation.org
AN ENTIRELY ADAPTABLE SYSTEM

eRegulations is a Content Management System (CMS). All texts, colors, pictures and logos of the public interface can be modified, procedures and all the corresponding data can be registered and updated, menus can be organized and administration rights can easily be configured from an administrative interface.

Information is displayed through a user-friendly, public website. Users can interact with the site and its administrators through email and online chat, for any inquiry, suggestion or complaint. The public website is fully configurable, through a password protected administration website (extranet) which can be administered without computer expertise after a few hours of training. Data on procedures are registered and updated in the database through the administration website.

The system is installed on a local server or in the cloud, as decided by the recipient country. Technical maintenance doesn’t require any specific technical knowledge (normal server maintenance). UNCTAD provides complete technical documentation. The source code is available upon request.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

User countries are granted an unlimited right to use the system and to configure it according to their needs. They decide freely which procedures they want to register and they maintain full ownership of all information in the database.

GUIDANCE AND TRAINING IN INFORMATION COLLECTION

Detailed information on procedures is often not readily available. The challenge is to adequately reflect procedures as they are practiced (and not how they are thought to be). Building a comprehensive and orderly list of steps and collecting, for every step, the required data (contacts, forms, requirements, duration, legal basis, etc.) usually requires repeated field visits to all offices involved. Keeping the information updated also implies a certain level of organization.

UNCTAD can assist countries in developing adapted methodologies and in building the capacity to collect and maintain the information on procedures.

MAIN BENEFITS

- Total transparency in rules and procedures and practical up-to-date description of steps to go through, from the user’s point of view.
- Facilitates the simplification of procedures. Field investigations undertaken to collect the information are an opportunity for government agencies to review and streamline procedures. Once they are clearly documented online, it becomes easy to identify unnecessary steps and requirements.
- Promotes public awareness of rules and procedures and stimulates public-private dialogue thereon.
The eRegistrations system

**ELECTRONIC SINGLE WINDOWS FOR EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATIONS**

**eRegistrations** is an eGovernment system, designed to computerize simple or complex administrative procedures. It can be easily adapted and configured to any administrative process and may apply to procedures such as company registration, construction permits, export licenses or the transfer of a property title.

**eRegistrations** is suited both to operations involving only one public-agency (such as registering at the business registry) and to simultaneous operations at multiple agencies (such as registering a company at the tax office, with the municipal council, with social security, at the labour department and at the business registry). It acts a single electronic window. It can be installed at the municipal, national or supra-national levels.

**USER CENTRIC**

**eRegistrations** places the user at the centre of eGovernance. It allows simultaneous requests to several institutions, with a single form; documents need only be uploaded once. It combines the procedures of participating institutions and determines, according to each user’s profile, the data and the documents that are required. The multiplicity of agencies involved is no longer a problem, the user has the feeling of dealing with only one.

**The user database is the core of the system** and the link between the institutions. Requests are made from the database and administrative certificates are stored therein once issued.

**CONFIGURABLE**

**eRegistrations** is a generic eGovernment system applicable to any administrative procedure, all consisting, ultimately, in an exchange of information between a user and one or several agencies. The system is able to computerize multiple processes and to organise their co-operation.

**eRegistrations** can be installed at the city, national or supra-national level, integrating multiple institutions’ processes. A possible application is the creation of online windows through which simultaneous requests can be made in various countries (business registries, sanitary licences, business visas, export permits, etc.).

**INTEROPERABLE**

**eRegistrations** doesn’t require any change in the internal processes of participating institutions, nor in their computer systems. It doesn’t need to access their databases. It is not necessary that the institutions be interconnected nor that their processes be computer-ized.

Conversely, **eRegistrations** offers total access to its own database, and public agencies can automatically extract the information they require. Interoperability is ensured through the common access to the eRegistrations database - which is the user database, where the administrations come to seek and store information.

**HIGHLY SECURE**

Users’ data are stored on highly secured servers, with protected connections, in order to guarantee their integrity.

Users have total control over their private space in the database, thanks to their access codes. They can open all or part of their information to third parties, through a URL and a password that will give access only to the information they want to share.

Digitalized administrative documents that have been uploaded directly by agencies, with electronic signature, can’t be modified by the user.

www.businessfacilitation.org
The eRegistrations system

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Procedures must first be documented and simplified

The first phase consists in documenting, in a detailed way, the procedures which will be computerized: the steps, the administrations involved, the forms and documents required, the costs, the administrative certificates that will be issued and the legal basis.

Once clarified, procedures can be simplified, by eliminating requirements that are not relevant or legally justified. The data requested by the various administrations are grouped in a single online form. A solution is found so that payments are combined, at the cashier of one of the institutions, at a bank or online. Arrangements are made for a single location where users will collect the certificates issued by the administrations involved in the procedure. Simplification is quicker if a physical single window is already in place, but this is not essential.

UNCTAD can help countries clarify and simplify their administrative procedures, thanks to the eRegulations system (www.eregulations.org).

System configuration

The system is configured to take into account the quantity and the identity of public agencies involved, the data and the documents requested by each institution, the choice of the agency that will be in charge of reviewing requests (the reviewer can vary according to the certificates that are requested), the place where certificates will be collected (also variable depending on the requests), the order in which agencies will process the requests (parallel or sequential), the text and the timing of alert messages sent to users and to agencies, and statistics which will be generated (registered users, requests initiated, requests submitted, certificates issued, average processing time per institution, etc.).

A public interface is developed, i.e. a homepage and a few additional pages (about us, contact, etc.) to present the site to the users. The public interface is tailor-made for each city, country or region.

Testing and training

Tests are organized to ensure that the system adequately takes into account the information and conditions requested by each institution, that rejected applications are correctly listed and that alert messages reach designated officers. The review module, processing order, messages sent to users, statistics and internal case monitoring modules are also checked.

Tailor-made manuals are handed over to each institution and training is organised for their officers.

Testing is completed with the processing of real cases, in order to fine-tune the system and to validate operators’ abilities in live conditions.