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e-Estonia

— Estonia
2001-

A country committed to information technology with advanced digital governance

Key Issue

The Republic of Estonia is located in North Europe. It was under Soviet rule until it attained independence after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Subsequently, the country, lacking natural resources, worked to foster its core industries. Since it had to build the country with a low population density and design its systems from scratch, the country faced the challenge of developing an efficient administrative service infrastructure that covers the sparsely populated areas.

Project Approach

The e-Governance strategy for actively utilizing domestic ICT personnel which serve as a source to increase national wealth

Estonia is known as the country of origin of Skype. Ever since the period of Soviet rule, it has had a large number of skilled IT personnel. The country launched the e-Governance strategy as a policy for increasing its international competitiveness and its national wealth. The replacement of the obsolete information systems from the Soviet era was a good opportunity to develop cutting-edge information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure including eID (secure digital identification cards) and X-Road (data exchange layer for information systems). Its simple administrative mechanism, which is peculiar to a small state, and the high level of IT literacy of its population helped achieve various electronic administrative services such as electronic voting (i-voting), ID bus tickets, the e-Land Register and e-Health Records.

Issued to every Estonian citizen, the eID card is used for identification, electronic authentication and electronic signature. For non-residents, e-Residency (as shown in the photo) is issued.
Source: e-Estonia HP (photos and videos)



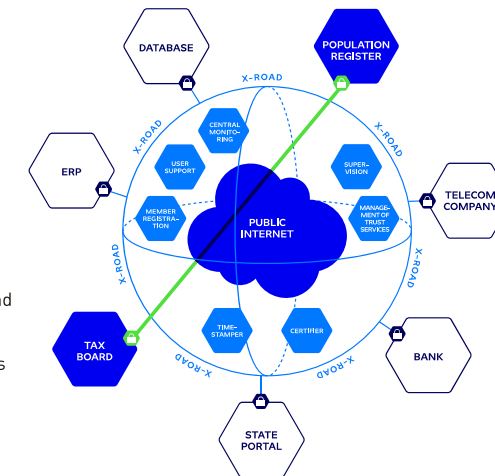
The Startup Ecosystem aimed to further boost international competitiveness

Estonia is taking positive actions to implement ICT technologies in society. For instance, it has established the e-Residency system, under which e-residents are eligible to obtain similar rights to that of actual residency in Estonia without living there, and has utilized blockchain technologies to support X-ROAD. As a result, the country is attracting entrepreneurs and building a startup ecosystem. The start-up businesses that have accumulated in the country are developing various services and systems to produce a positive cycle in ICT industry development.



Tallinn, the capital city of Estonia, has two contrasting facets. One is its historical Old Town near its old port, and the other is the New Town, where relics of the Soviet era still remains in its streetscape. This is where new corporate investments are being made.
Photo by: Kaupo Kalda
Source : the Tallinn City Tourist Office & Convention Bureau

X-ROAD is a platform for secure linkage between distributed databases which came into operation in 2001. Used by approximately 620 businesses and 500 public institutions, it offers approximately 2,700 different services. It integrates procedures involving many different organizations into a one-stop process.
Source: e-Estonia HP (e-Estonia presentation slideshow)



To the Next Phase

Tallinn University of Technology and other institutions are devoted to develop highly skilled human resources in the area of digital governance. They conduct a broad array of joint research projects with overseas universities and businesses. Estonia is working to foster domestic businesses and is expanding exports of ICT technologies as well as advanced and integrated services.

Data

Area: Approx. 45,000 km² [one ninth the size of Japan]
Population: Approx. 1.32 million (as of January 2019)
ID card penetration: 97%, Number of e-Resident registrants: Approx. 60,000

