

# Introducing IT and modernising working procedures in government - A challenge and a commendation

The former Government Centre for IT has been commended by the leading computer company IBM for outstanding achievement and innovative solutions involved in the project of electronic government sessions. SRC and its experts played an important role in the development of these solutions.

In 1998, SRC began analysing and preparing a plan of solutions for government use in cooperation with the Government Centre for IT, where the main requirement was to provide a platform to monitor government sessions in a manner which would give all parties involved in the procedure an overview of relevant documents.

The General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia had a system which allowed recording input documents (record part only) and preparing and designing documents for sessions – agendas, minutes and resolutions. Internal operations and the system were based on the project called Information System of the Executive Council of the SRS from 1980. The need for modernising this system was evident from its inability to allow an overview of document preparation procedures: from the basic proposal which is delivered to the government, to the agenda, resolution and final text passed by the government. In that period, logging into the system allowed only an overview of existing documents, without insight into the content, and it did not allow tracking all document preparation procedures from start to finish. The need for computer support for the decision-making process by allowing easy access to key documents was the greatest motivator for beginning work on modernisation of the system. In order to carry out all procedures at government level, office

administration procedures in government had to be modernised first. The new method of operation would allow insight into archival data on documents as well as the actual content, which meant that all mail received also needed to be delivered in electronic format. This was also made possible by resolutions and instructions issued by the government regulating the format and manner of sending electronic documents to the government. Because the Lotus Notes/Domino application server was selected in accordance with the CVI's strategic decisions, the Lotus Notes e-mail server was set up in 1998, which marked the beginning of establishing the application environment. After the SPIS application was introduced as the basic administration application, modernisation of other procedures could continue. Modernisation of office operations also included archival procedures and special procedures for adopting laws (IDC) and transferring data from the old system. The transfer ensured continuity of past cases, and only archival data on such documents was available. The next step was modernising sessions of the government and executive government bodies: the committee for state administration and public matters and the economic committee. The system of each of the aforementioned sessions is connected to SPIS so that SPIS matters are included in the session as items on the agenda. Individual sessions

are also interlinked, as agenda items can be moved from one session to the next. Sessions began to be called and recorded using the new system in April 2000. After one year of business and two changes of government, the need for additional improvements emerged. A step in this direction was reflected in the promulgation of the amended Rules of Procedure of the Government of the RS. It modernised working procedures in terms of introducing a new method of operation afforded by the government system. Thus, individual solutions for particular procedures, SPIS, Sessions, merged into the Government Information System, which included a larger number of users at the General Secretariat, the ministries and government agencies. The first modernisation of procedure was the introduction of remote sessions, which replaced the previous practice of correspondent sessions defined in the Rules of Procedure of the Government of the RS. The introduction of remote (electronic) sessions is a show of courage and the will to use modern technology in order to implement a broad-scale modernisation of operations in society at large. Development of government operating procedures did not stop with the modernisation of government sessions. In 2002 we integrated electronic signatures into the system, which enables sending government resolutions electronically.