

Product Sheet Improving Basic Registers

Basic registers

Wherever in the world, governments need authenticated registration systems to do their work properly. Services like mother and child care, vaccination schemes, or education, cannot be offered in a coordinated and inclusive manner, if there is no proper birth register. For fair elections, a civil register is indispensable in order to know who has the right to vote. And a well-functioning land register is needed to provide security about ownership of property, and for the effective and transparent collection of property tax. For a variety of policy objectives, vast amounts of information are needed. Information concerning citizens, businesses, geography and government services.

Reducing the administrative burden

There is no discussion on the need to have basic registers. But a 'red tape' reduction in the public sector is also highly needed in many countries. In order to facilitate local social and economic development, local governments have to restrain themselves from collecting too many data, in too many databases, with too little interfaces, and of 'too poor' quality. It all comes down to: what information is really needed, and how are we going to manage it in an efficient way. This becomes even more important in times of severe budget cuts, pressure on services standards, and public scrutiny.

The experience in many cases is that much of the required information is present somewhere in the administrative systems of the public administration, but:

*scattered throughout different tiers of government, or in different departments, without the possibility to connect or combine data;
present in more than one tier of government, with uncontrolled differences or contradictions.*

This leads to:

*wrong policy decisions;
citizens being asked to provide information already available;
double work and loss of efficiency;
loss of credibility of the public administration.*

In the experience of The Netherlands a system of well coordinated basic registers is a prime answer to these challenges, but also a substantial challenge in itself.

A system of basic registries consists of a set of shared and coherent databases with key validated information about citizens, businesses and geographical aspects of a country, whose usage by all government organizations is mandatory.

Sharing experience

Starting with the civil register as instituted by Napoleon Bonaparte the Dutch government has developed a coordinated system of basic registers that now spans all tiers of government and is continually developing to meet new demands. VNG International and KING invite you to share in the lessons learned by the Dutch municipalities in particular, in creating your own system of basic registers or putting the system you have to better use in achieving your policy goals. Many governments have implemented a set of basic registers, but more and more countries are coming to realize that a measure of coherence and connectivity between these registers is where the real benefits lie. We can help you realise those benefits.

We offer assistance in

The challenges of developing a system are manifold. Depending on the current level of development the assistance that is required may vary from *long term planning* to the *implementation* of a basic register. The expertise of VNG International and KING is diverse and can be made to fit the specific needs in a particular situation. The assistance we offer includes, but is not limited to:

- Plotting a long term national or local e-governance agenda;
- Planning the development of a system of basic registers;
- Support of a national or local implementation programme.

About VNG International and KING

VNG International is the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities. We support decentralisation processes and facilitate decentralised cooperation. We strengthen local governments, their associations, training institutes and decentralisation task forces both in developing countries and in countries in transition. We have project offices in various countries and work with a large group of local government experts with broad international expertise.

Together with VNG International, KING (Local Government Quality Institute) is part of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities. KING makes its experience available for beneficiaries abroad, through VNG International with its wide international network and experience.

VNG International is familiar with the procedures of donors such as the European Commission, the World Bank, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and some other bilateral donors. However, more and more often, VNG International is also contracted directly by the beneficiaries of its work.

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