E-Government in Iran & Ecological Footprint

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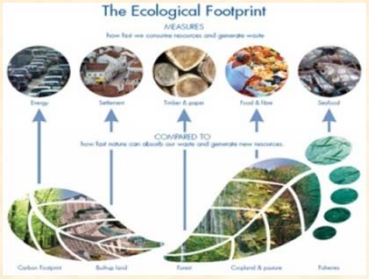
Definition of e-Government:

Electronic government refers to the delivery of government services to citizens (G2C), businesses (G2B), and government organizations (G2G) or employees (G2E) through internet, web based applications, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to improve and/or enhance on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector.



Main goals of e-Governments :

- Offer effective delivery of public goods and services to citizens via response government
- Build up good governance mainly promoting a transparent and accountable government
- Expand public involvement
- Improve the productivity and efficiency to cut red tape and minimize the expenses
- Promote priority economic sectors

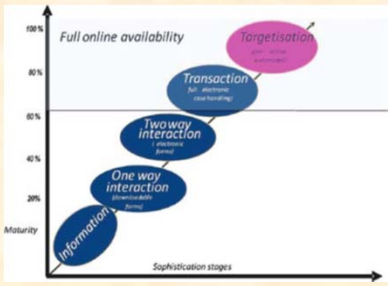
Ranking e-Governments:

The United Nations Public Administration Network conducts a bi-annual survey including a section on *e-Government Readiness*. It uses **two primary indicators**: i) the state of e-government readiness; and ii) the extent of e-participation. The Survey assesses UN member states according to a quantitative composite index of e-government readiness based on website assessment; telecommunication infrastructure and human resource endowment.

The five maturity stages of e-Governments:

Five-stage maturity model for benchmarking e-governments is as follows:

1) Emerging stage: Some government agencies establish web sites and provide information
2) Enhanced stage: Websites are increased and provide more information
3) Interactive stage: Users download forms, send e-mails and make enquiries in websites
4) Transactional stage: Users can pay for services and conduct transactions
5) Seamless stage: Seamless electronic service is fully provided in all administrative areas



Five-stage maturity model

Development of e-Government in Iran:

TAKFA (Development and Use of Information and Communication Technology Plan) was prepared by the Management and Planning Organization (Secretary of High Council of Informatics) in May 2000. This plan was approved by the Ministers Council in July 2000 and then referred to related agencies. In 2002-3 , the Parliament approved a budget of US$100 million for implementing and developing information and communication technologies in the public sector in Iran, which incorporated projects such **as e-government, e-commerce, e-banking, e-learning and e-health**. United Nations assessment showed that in 2005, Iran ranked 98 among 179 countries. At present, it is proposed that Iran is in the **Transactional Stage**.

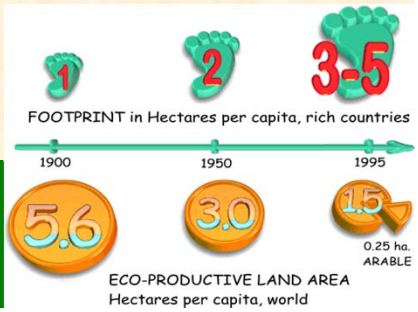
Role of e-Government in reducing Ecological Footprint:

Iran with an area of 1.6 million sq Km and an estimated population of 76.9 million (2010), was estimated to have an Ecological Footprint of 2.47 (global hectares per person). In 2010, the Global Footprint Network (2010) indicated that the world average EP was 2.7. Therefore, Iran could be classified as a country with a "**Moderate Ecological Footprint**".

However, considering the need for reduction of the Ecological Footprint at all levels, more reliable, efficient, and accurate e-Government initiatives, plans, guidelines, and strategies are recommended. Previous studies have shown that the main obstacles for **Iran to move towards the fifth Stage** of e-Government maturity are mainly:

- low ICT skills and knowledge among government authorities, employees, and citizens
- legal issues within the country
- high costs of infrastructure and electronic devices (aggravated by the sanctions)

Finally, e-Government also contributes to **e-governance**, which could be a valuable asset for environmental protection and impact reduction, as EF is also a societal choice!



Ecological Footprint by definition is a measure of the surface of ecologically productive territory necessary to supply the resources of energy and matter that a population consumes and to absorb its wastefulness considering its current Technology (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996).