



THE VOICE OF EUROPE'S REGIONS

REGIONAL FOCUS

Io partecipo - The eParticipation community in Emilia-Romagna



Io partecipo - I participate - is the new project set up by Emilia-Romagna Region to provide its citizens with information services, listening/open communication channels, aiming at promoting participation in public life.

Io partecipo is part of PiTER (The regional ICT programme for Emilia-Romagna) its strategic frame work. The main access channel is the web area www.iopartecipo.net which uses the e-democracy open source kit developed and used by a consortium of regional agencies, within the framework of the Partecipa.net project.

MISSION: setting up of a system of permanent and meaningful relations with citizens in Emilia-Romagna Region, with methods and tools fostering participation in regional policies. The goals of Io Partecipo are translated into specific services delivered online.

INFORMATION: iopartecipo.net delivers customized information: at the basis of the services, there is the identification of users' groups having specific interests and needs. Now we have 18 topics available and during the 2009 we sent more than 50 newsletter.

SUPPORT: iopartecipo.net offers customized consulting services. Experts in different fields answer directly to specific citizens' questions and, if of general interest, publish them on the web. All the consulting services are delivered free of charge. These "consulting services" are active on 18 topics and managed by experts participating in the editorial board of the newsletter.

CONSULT: iopartecipo.net carries out polls on specific themes, it represents a venue for direct and active participation of users according to their interests and needs.

The goal consists in creating a two-way relation with users, based on a concrete and constant mutual exchange of data between the administration and its citizens.

DIALOGUE: iopartecipo.net activates periodical online forum to open a direct dialogue with citizens on issues and topics of particular public relevance. In a virtual space, different subjects discuss together, and have the opportunity to exchange opinions and points of views.

COOPERATION: iopartecipo.net offers citizens the opportunity to become editors! Through a specific form they can send news, indications and articles to the Io partecipo editing room. The project focuses on two types of targets which can be classified as:

• **Internal:**

The project **internal target** comprises the services of the administration which can use the new communication system to optimise and/or increase their information channel to citizens. To reach this target, **internal marketing actions** are carried out within the Regional Administration; they are: project promotion (fostering knowledge) and support tools for participants (fostering utilisation).

• **External:**

The **external target** is the primary one, the citizens (4 million in Emilia-Romagna). Only if they are reached, the goals can be considered as reached; with respect to citizens, the actions to be activated are both information/promotion and education/consultation. Besides making use of the classic channels of mass communication, traditional media and new-media, the project will be promoted with a campaign which will bring all over the territory.

Amongst the activities already carried out there is the integration with **Bread & Internet**, another initiative within PiTER, aimed at reducing knowledge divide for citizens.

Io Partecipo has been selected among the online services part of the digital literacy course, so that citizens learn what they can do with the network once they learn how to use it.

Io Partecipo is amongst the services developed within PiTER that have been selected for the promotional campaign on what constitutes the Emilia-Romagna e-government. The campaign includes promocards, radio spots and advertising on local press.

Implementation and Management Approach

The organisational structure has been designed to support the project management in terms of **direction, control and coordination of activities** comprised in the work plan, in accordance to defined objectives. In particular, the roles defined are:

1. Project Coordination.
2. Central editing room.
3. System administration.
4. Local URP editing room.
5. Local editing room.
6. Experts.
7. Editors.

Technology solution

Io partecipo establishes its foundations on the **reuse and open source/free software tools** chosen by governments for e-democracy initiatives have to be totally "transparent" in the management of information.

Transparency must be met, at a technical level, for the management of data/information that people "provides" to the authorities and vice versa. A participation process must ensure the possibility of access and retrieval and verification of data that have been exchanged.

(Continued on page 6)