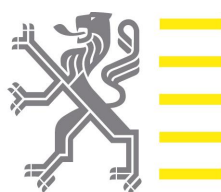


Policy Statement 2008

Your government of today

E-government and regulatory management



Geert Bourgeois

Flemish Minister of Administrative Affairs,
Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
2	REGULATORY QUALITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICATION.....	5
2.1	LOOKING BACK ON THE PAST YEAR.....	5
2.1.1	<i>Investing in high quality regulations</i>	5
2.1.1.1	RIA and its contribution to the regulatory quality.....	5
2.1.1.2	Measuring administrative burdens.....	6
2.1.1.3	Regulatory quality cells.....	8
2.1.1.4	Regulatory agenda.....	8
2.1.2	<i>Making simplification felt in the field</i>	8
2.1.3	<i>Training, monitoring and communication</i>	9
2.1.4	<i>Joint Simplification</i>	10
2.1.5	<i>Forms website</i>	10
2.1.6	<i>Cooperation</i>	11
2.2	EMPHASIS IN 2008.....	12
2.2.1	<i>Continuing to improve the regulatory quality</i>	12
2.2.1.1	Fewer but better RIAs.....	12
2.2.1.2	Measuring administrative burdens.....	12
2.2.1.3	Regulatory quality cells.....	13
2.2.1.4	Regulatory agenda.....	13
2.2.2	<i>Making simplification felt in the field</i>	13
2.2.2.1	Concrete simplification projects.....	13
2.2.2.2	Benchmarking of licences and accreditations.....	13
2.2.3	<i>Training, monitoring and communication</i>	14
2.2.4	<i>Joint Simplification</i>	15
2.2.5	<i>Forms website</i>	15
2.2.6	<i>Cooperation</i>	16
2.2.6.1	Current forms of cooperation.....	16
2.2.6.2	New forms of cooperation: the inter-institutional accord.....	16
3	E-GOVERNMENT.....	18
3.1	LOOKING BACK ON THE PAST YEAR.....	18
3.1.1	<i>The MAGDA platform in a higher gear</i>	18
3.1.2	<i>VIP projects 2006 - 2007</i>	20
3.1.3	<i>E-forms</i>	22
3.1.4	<i>Cooperation with other governmental bodies</i>	22
3.1.4.1	First service provision for the municipalities.....	22
3.1.4.2	Results of the inter-administrative e-government study.....	23
3.1.5	<i>www.aandeslag.be (front office employment)</i>	23
3.1.6	<i>Establishment of the Flemish e-government by decree</i>	23
3.2	EMPHASIS IN 2008.....	23
3.2.1	<i>Bringing MAGDA up to cruising speed</i>	23
3.2.2	<i>VIP projects 2007 - 2008</i>	25
3.2.3	<i>E-forms</i>	26
3.2.4	<i>New initiatives</i>	26
3.2.4.1	Electronic identity management for e-government.....	26
3.2.4.2	Closer integration with geographic data.....	27
3.2.4.3	E-government at the service of local authorities.....	27
4	MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS BY THE FLEMISH PARLIAMENT.....	27
5	SUMMARY OF 2008 POLICY INITIATIVES.....	28
5.1	REGULATORY MANAGEMENT.....	28
5.2	EGOV.....	28
	APPENDIX 1.....	28
	APPENDIX 2.....	34
	APPENDIX 3.....	35
	APPENDIX 4.....	36

1 Introduction

Administrative simplification and e-government are powerful weapons to make “your government of today” better and more efficient.

Regulatory management and e-government call for the permanent pursuit of quality (high quality services, high quality regulations) and are only possible with good cooperation.

It is my job to provide coordination and stimulation in the areas of administrative simplification and e-government. This is an outstanding example of horizontal powers.

I intend to work in close cooperation with my fellow ministers on administration and e-government in all policy domains. This need for cooperation will be the theme throughout this policy statement.

Improving the regulatory quality, reducing administrative burdens and implementing the motto “Don’t ask if you already know” is a responsibility to be shared by the whole of government, which I will support to the best of my ability.

The successes we enjoyed in 2007 were made possible by good cooperation: cooperation with my colleagues, with the agencies and administrations, with the local authorities, etc.

The forms site, the growing success of MAGDA and the VIP projects and the interest expressed by the local authorities are good examples of this.

One of the most ambitious innovations for 2008 is the introduction of zero measurements when it comes to administrative burdens and the formulation of reduction objectives.

We are also doing our bit in the area of e-government. We are taking the first steps toward the local authorities.¹

¹ To this end, the budget will be increased by EUR 500,000 in 2008.

2 Regulatory quality and administrative simplification

2.1 Looking back on the past year

In 2007, I again focused my policy of regulatory quality and administrative simplification on two objectives: improving the regulatory quality on the one hand, and carrying out concrete simplification projects on the other.

2.1.1 Investing in high quality regulations

We already monitor improvements in the regulatory quality with the help of two instruments: the regulatory impact analysis (RIA) and the monitoring of administrative burdens.

In 2007, we added two new structural measures: the regulatory agenda and the regulatory quality cells.

2.1.1.1 RIA and its contribution to the regulatory quality

As stated in my 2007 policy statement, I have taken measures to improve implementation of the RIA and to ensure that the RIA does not become an aim in itself, but, above all, helps increase the regulatory quality. I have, therefore, refined the scope of the RIA. The underlying philosophy was “fewer but better RIAs”.

The Regulatory Management unit also continued its assessment of the quality of the RIA and regulations on the basis of the quality criteria introduced in 2006. The results of this quality control are given below:

Table 1: The quality of the RIA

<i>Quality of the RIA</i>	October - December 2006	January - March 2007	April - June 2007	July - September 2007
Set of 8 criteria	67.68%	55.27%	64.66%	61.62%

Table 2: The regulatory quality

<i>Regulatory quality</i>	October - December 2006	January - March 2007	April - June 2007	July - September 2007
	72.41% (21/29 dossiers)	57.14% (4/7 dossiers)	100% (12/12 dossiers)	75% (15/20 dossiers)

In 2006 (January - December), a total of 107 of the 134 regulatory dossiers (79.85%) were of good quality. In 2007 (January - September), the same was true for 52 of the 68 regulatory dossiers (76.47%).

2.1.1.2 Measuring administrative burdens

General

In the past year, I continued to invest in the monitoring of administrative burdens. I did this by applying the compensation rule and by measuring the administrative burdens. The compensation rule gave me a clear view of the trend in Flemish administrative burdens. This trend in administrative burdens can be found on the website www.vlaanderen.be/wetsmatiging.

Implementation of the compensation rule was evaluated together with the RIA, and on 15 December 2006, was definitively approved by the Flemish Government. Adjusting the applicative scope of the RIA also resulted in a change in the applicative scope of the compensation rule for administrative burdens. From now on, changes in administrative burdens must *always* be measured, even if there is no RIA needed. In this case, the change in administrative burdens has been included in the paragraph on the RIA in the memorandum to the Flemish Government.

The below table shows the results of implementing the compensation rule for administrative burdens.

Policy domain	4th Q 2006	1st Q 2007	2nd Q 2007	3rd Q 2007
Services for the General Government Policy	0	0	-1,211,781	0
Administrative Affairs	+236,869	0	+93,078	0
Finance and Budget	0	0	0	0
International Flanders	0	0	0	+276,500
Economy, Science and Innovation	-174,901	0	+134,411	0
Education and Training	-3,596,320	+109,240	+330,259	+8,040
Welfare, Public Health and Family	-231,093	-2,069,909	0	-234,850
Culture, Youth, Sport and Media	0	0	+507,425	0
Work and Social Economy	+3,908	0	0	0
Agriculture and Fisheries	-73,007	-196,992	+5,203	+204
Environment, Nature and Energy	-1,415,406	-985,054	0	-1,296,173
Mobility and Public Works	0	0	0	0
Town and Country Planning, Housing Policy and Immovable Heritage	0	+45,875	0	+ 62,278
Flanders	-5,249,950	-3,096,840	-141,405	- 1,184,001

In 2007 (January -September), Flanders had a negative balance of EUR 4,422,246. This means that once again, Flanders has effectively achieved a reduction in administrative burdens via the compensation rule. Since the compensation rule was introduced in January 2005, the measured reduction in administrative burdens has amounted to **EUR 40,448,440**.

Per target group

As stated, I have continued to invest in the measurement of administrative burdens per target group. To this end, we mapped out all administrative burdens for which regulators are responsible vis-à-vis a specific target group (bottom-up approach). The areas for which Flanders is responsible were measured and simplified. The measurement was done using a scientific measurement method, which is based on the Standard Cost Model also used by the European Member States and the European Commission. This exercise was taken on as a priority for agriculturalists.

Measuring administrative burdens for agriculturalists

The study of the agricultural sector² reveals that a good 80% of respondents believe administrative obligations is one of the major problems facing their profession.

On average, an agriculturist spends five and a half hours a week meeting his administrative obligations. This equates to an average of EUR 7,668 per agriculturalist per annum and a total burden of EUR 264 million per annum. In addition, approximately EUR 30 million per annum is additionally spent on external support to help the agriculturalist meet his administrative obligations. The total administrative burden to agriculturalists in Flanders amounts to EUR 294 million per annum, or an average of EUR 8,537 per agriculturalist.

The various forms of registration (the animal production registers, the permanent cattle register, the animal medicines register, the cultivation files, the fodder register, the water consumption register, the collection request, land parcel declarations, the NIS count, etc.) are the main causes of administrative burdens.

The study also formulates a number of suggestions for simplifying the system. This year, I have worked with the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment to make things significantly simpler for the agriculturalist through the one-off land parcel registration³.

Measuring the planning burdens for local authorities

I have joined the Minister of Internal Affairs in instructing the Regulatory Management unit to measure the impact of existing plans imposed by the Flemish government on Flemish cities, municipalities and provinces. Together, the (measured) plan obligations represent almost EUR 40 million in planning burdens and well over EUR 14 million in administrative burdens⁴. The total one-off planning burdens are estimated at almost EUR 28 million and the related administrative burdens are well over EUR 11 million.

Concrete suggestions for simplification have been formulated on the basis of these measurement results. I have sent the final report to the Minister of Internal Affairs with the request that further actions be developed around these points.

Reduced administrative burdens thanks to the grant seeker

The grant seeker, established by the Minister of Housing, gives an overview of grants currently available from the Federal and Flemish governments, provinces and municipalities involved. This has created a virtual office where citizens can find out which grants they might be eligible for with regard to their current housing situation. CORVE is working on an advanced digital application form for requesting support measures concerning building, modernising or renting a home. It will be possible to retrieve data, such as family composition and rateable value, by setting up a link with the MAGDA platform.

The reduced administrative burden to the citizen, who is able to seek out the relevant grants himself and is no longer dependent on seeking advice from a council official, amounts to approximately **EUR 4.5 million** per annum.

² Bottom-up Quick Scan Administrative Burdens for Agriculturalists, Brussels, 13 June 2007, carried out by IDEA consult

³ This simplification represents EUR 3,599,800 in reduced burdens.

⁴ The planning burdens relate to the total costs for intrinsic and information requirements to be met by the players in the context of a planning obligation. Administrative burdens are part of the planning burdens and reflect only those costs involved in the players' obligation to provide information.

2.1.1.3 Regulatory quality cells

The Flemish Coalition Agreement announced the centralisation of regulatory power as an initiative to strengthen the regulatory process and improve regulatory quality. However, we note that there is not enough structure in the way Flemish regulations come into being, and that quality often suffers as a result. Indeed, passing good regulations involves much more than just focusing on the legalistic qualities of the text. A good organisational structure and a well considered process can substantially improve the regulatory quality.

On 20 January 2006, the Flemish Government fundamentally approved the development of regulatory quality cells within its policy-making domains (VR/2006/20.01/ DOC.0054 and DOC.0054Bis).

The Flemish Government's final approval of the concrete development of the cells was given on 16 May 2007.

The regulatory quality cells update the Flemish Government's register of licences and accreditations. They are also entrusted with the job of maintaining and updating the regulatory agenda.

The cells will be operational by mid 2007.

The Regulatory Management unit will provide the regulatory affairs officials with specialised training packages.

2.1.1.4 Regulatory agenda

On 16 May 2007, the Flemish Government approved the introduction and use of the regulatory agenda.

The first step was to screen all policy statements for regulatory initiatives and create an overview of these. Circular VR 2006/11 now stipulates that every policy statement must contain a summary of intended regulatory initiatives. This list is in fact the regulatory agenda in its primary form.

Late in 2007, this list becomes a public databank containing all the regulatory initiatives and extra information pertaining to them (identification number, title, indication of existing regulations that have been changed, legal deadlines where applicable, a brief summary of the aim, references to steps in the process, contact details). These lists will be made available on a website. The regulatory quality cells will be entrusted with maintaining and updating the lists.

Introducing the regulatory agenda will increase the transparency of the regulatory process in Flanders, and with this, the Flemish Government will have responded to the call made by the SERV in the 2007 SERA report.

2.1.2 Making simplification felt in the field

My policy is not limited to the development of methods and structural initiatives to improve the regulatory quality and relieve administrative burdens. It also involves initiating concrete simplification projects.

Based on my competency as a coordinator, I am following up on the progress of the Regulatory Management Action Plan approved by the Flemish Government on 25 April 2005. Naturally, the implementation of these simplification projects falls under the authority of the functionally competent minister.

In 2006 - 2007, 33 simplification projects were implemented (see appendix 1). When projects overlap with certain policy domains, I coordinate them in close collaboration with the functionally competent ministers.

The following projects were given particular care and attention:

1) Licences and accreditations stock-taking

As announced in “Flanders in Action” and in my e-government and regulatory management 2007 policy statement, I have had a register drawn up of Flemish licences and accreditations. This register can be viewed on the Regulatory Management unit website. The regulatory quality cells keep the register up to date regarding licences and accreditations within their policy domains. The Regulatory Management unit will issue the necessary instructions for these.

2) One-off land parcel registration for agriculturalists

The two land parcel declarations (manure bank returns and application for grants in a European and Flemish subsidies context) have been streamlined into a single annual land parcel registration. The definitions in the various regulations and the databanks for both the Manure bank and the Agency for Agriculture and Fisheries have been harmonised. The Flemish Government ratified the Decree on 22 December 2006 and fundamentally approved the order of implementation. Since January 2007, agriculturalists have had fewer forms to fill in, only have to register their parcels of land once and uniquely identify their business.

In 2008, I will see to it that the collection request form is simplified and earns the “simple form” quality label.

3) Harmonisation of rights of first refusal

The Flemish Parliament approved the Decree harmonising rights of first refusal on 16 May 2007. I have asked the functionally competent ministers to prioritise its continued implementation.

4) Simplification of the sports regulations

The Flemish Government decisions made on 31 May 2002, with regard to establishing the conditions for entitlement to grants for sports camps organised by the sports federations and for youth sports, have been evaluated with a view to simplification. The measurement results have been included in a final report along with suggestions for simplification.

2.1.3 Training, monitoring and communication

In 2007, I continued to invest in training for regulatory affairs officials. We put forward an extensive education and training package consisting of:

- an introduction to the RIA
- follow up RIA courses

- measurement of administrative burdens
- form design
- regulatory theory module A
- regulatory theory module B, as from autumn 2007

Every quarter, I report on the regulatory management indicators. We refined and extended the monitoring system in 2007 to ensure a better follow-up of the regulatory management results and developments. As a whole, these indicators give a picture of the efforts made regarding regulatory management.

Good communication with all the relevant target groups is a necessity if we are to achieve the objectives of regulatory management. The website www.vlaanderen.be/wetsmatiging serves as a central source of information.

Developments in regulatory management are communicated on a quarterly basis via the “Simplification in figures” scoreboard on this site.

Every quarter, the indicators are reported to leading officials via an e-newsletter. These reports give the leading officials the opportunity to adjust their regulatory management policy. In addition, the Regulatory Management unit publishes a general e-newsletter quarterly, which contains information on new developments in the area of regulatory management.

To help local authorities with the process of simplification, the Regulatory Management unit published two new instruments in 2007:

- The handbook for local authorities: simple rules for simple regulations: four telling examples and thirteen clear simplification tips for local authorities.
- High quality forms for local authorities: the application of regulatory management in Flanders.

2.1.4 Joint Simplification

Together with the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, and as the second thematic focus of “Joint Simplification”, I have launched an initiative for volunteers and associations.

The campaign, and the recommendations received from a variety of local advisory boards, resulted in a final report, which was communicated to the Flemish Government on 20 July 2007.

The majority of the bottlenecks identified - such as SABAM, NPO laws, tax certificates, law on volunteering - were related to federal powers. I passed these federal comments on to the federal Administrative Simplification Services. The suggestions made regarding local governance were passed on to the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities and the Association of Flemish Provinces.

The bottlenecks identified in the Flemish governmental tier were approached thematically. Work groups studied the bottlenecks listed for each theme and tested the feasibility of the suggested solutions. I am following this together with the functionally competent minister, and in close consultation with the Affiliated Associations.

2.1.5 Forms website

As stated, I invested in the continued development and improvement of the website for forms in 2007: www.vlaanderen.be/formulieren.

Since its online launch late in 2006, the Flemish site for forms has had, on average, 4000 visitors a month. Citizens, entrepreneurs and social-profit organisations can find approximately 840 forms on this site, classified per policy domain and target group. Approximately 600 forms from the Education and Training policy domain are available on a separate form site.

I have started an improvement trajectory to raise the quality of the forms site. With this, forms can be redesigned based on the Form Guidelines from the Language Advice unit and the Form Checklist from the Regulatory Management unit.

When a form meets the criteria listed in the form evaluation instrument, it is given the quality label of “simple form”. Today, some hundred forms now have the quality label. Naturally, it is my intention that all Flemish forms will carry this quality label.

2.1.6 Cooperation

Local authorities

I cannot simplify systems for the citizen without the cooperation of the local authorities.

Together with the Minister of Internal Administration, I would like get Flemish local authorities more involved in the Flemish simplification policy. To this end, I launched another call for projects, “*Simplest Municipality/City*,” among the local authorities in 2007. Twenty-one municipalities/cities have responded to the call for projects, and together, submitted 56 project proposals.

At a colloquium on 11 September 2007, the cities and municipalities present named Waregem as the “Simplest City 2007” in Flanders. Waregem took top spot among the 56 projects entered for the “Simplest Municipality/City 2007” competition with its proposal to set up a city shop. Together with the other four nominated municipalities (Hasselt, Hoeilaart, Laarne and Merelbeke), and the other 26 municipal projects, Waregem will receive tailor-made support to help implement its simplification project.

Federal government

Flanders participates in the official Administrative Simplification Consultation Committee between the Federal government, the Communities and the Regions. The Consultation Committee has assisted with a variety of dossiers and taken collective actions to reinforce simplification (e.g., the Federal Planning Bureau’s survey of administrative burdens, cooperation at a European level, measurement of the administrative burdens for agriculturalists and for government contracts).

Europe

Representatives of the European Member States (Directors of Better Regulation) meet every six months to discuss certain topics of regulatory management. The task of organising the event rests with the Member State that holds the EU Presidency for the next six months.

Due to its progressive role in the sphere of regulatory management, Flanders is also invited to take part as a member state of Belgium. This puts Flanders in a position to learn from the experience gained by the other EU Member States in their pursuit of better quality regulations. Not only that, but it allows us to present Flanders to our other European partners as a progressive region working towards better regulatory quality and administrative simplification.

The SCM network unites those European Member States implementing the Standard Cost Model (SCM) as a method for measuring administrative burdens. This network exchanges experience and

knowledge about the measurement of administrative burdens and the SCM. All Member States are represented in a steering group, and meet two to four times a year to discuss developments in this area. A secretariat supports the steering group by organising the steering group meetings, putting together the agenda and ensuring day-to-day management. Flanders takes part in the secretariat.

2.2 Emphasis in 2008

2.2.1 Continuing to improve the regulatory quality

2.2.1.1 Fewer but better RIAs

In 2008, I aim to increase the transparency and accessibility of both the RIA documents and the RIA process by developing an RIA databank on the Regulatory Management unit website.

The central objective is to increase the transparency of the Flemish RIA system and of the regulatory process in itself through the active publication of RIA documents. As a result, or so the SERV and international organisations like the OECD and European Commission tell us, the quality of the RIA will rise due to the greater possibility of external parties exercising quality control (civil societies, academic world, etc.).

2.2.1.2 Measuring administrative burdens

Compensation rule

The compensation rule has already demonstrated its concrete added value to administrative simplification. In 2008, I will continue to monitor and report the trend in administrative burdens per policy domain, per entity and per target group using the compensation rule.

Zero measurements

In implementation of the decisions of the European Council of March 2007, I will see to it that a start is made regarding zero measurements of administrative burdens in Flanders. We will formulate suggestions for simplification and an ambitious reduction target based on these zero measurements. A zero measurement is not a target in itself, but a means of achieving concrete simplification for the target groups. The zero measurements and suggestions will be put together in a final report. All zero measurements will be made using the scientific measuring method, which is based on the Standard Cost Model.

The implementation of zero measurements and the formulation of reduction targets were ratified, upon my suggestion, pursuant to a decision taken on 29 June 2007 by the Flemish Government.

Five policy domains immediately took on pioneering roles:

- International Flanders: Toerisme Vlaanderen
- Work and Social Economy: the entire policy domain (department, WSE grants agency and the VDAB).
- Culture, Youth, Sport and Media: the agency for Arts and Heritage and the agency for Socio-Cultural Work with Young People and Adults.
- Education and Training: the Higher Education regulations by the agency for Higher Education and Adult Education.

- Welfare, Public Health and Family: the entire policy domain managed by the department.

The pioneers carry out a zero measurement and formulate an ambitious reduction target based on the size of the administrative burdens measured by January 2008.

The other policy domains will follow this method in 2008 and formulate a reduction target by December 2008.

We will link a specific action plan per policy domain to the zero measurements to ensure that the reduction target can be achieved by 2012.

The Flemish Government will respond to the call made by the SERV in the 2007 SERA report with these specific action plans to help achieve the reduction targets.

2.2.1.3 Regulatory quality cells

The actual activities of the regulatory quality cells will be evaluated in mutual consultation during the course of 2008. Based on this evaluation, I will put the necessary policy proposals for improving these activities before the Flemish Government.

2.2.1.4 Regulatory agenda

The regulatory quality cells will draw up the regulatory agendas based on the template, which will then be added as appendices to the policy statements.

In this context, the Regulatory Management unit will have the following tasks:

- minimal or marginal quality control of the regulatory agendas drawn up;
- investigate, based on relevant experience, whether the template can be refined and whether we can progress to roadmaps of the type used in the European Commission.

2.2.2 Making simplification felt in the field

2.2.2.1 Concrete simplification projects

The policy domains will set up a specific action plan based on the zero measurements.

These specific action plans will follow the rolling action plan “Good rules, Simple procedures”, approved by the Flemish Government on 29 April 2005. The rolling action plan will conclude late in 2007 with a final Regulatory management report for the Flemish Parliament.

Based on my competency as a coordinator, I will monitor the progress of the specific action plans and report on them to the Flemish Parliament in an annual progress report. Naturally, the implementation of the action points falls under the authority of the functionally competent minister. I pay particular attention to projects that overlap with several policy domains.

2.2.2.2 Benchmarking of licences and accreditations

Obviously, the aforementioned licences and accreditations stocktaking is just the first step.

On 6 July 2007, the Flemish Government took note of the following proposals for a benchmark analysis:

- proposal by the Minister of Public Works, Energy, Environment and Nature concerning nature licences and felling permission as well as supply licences for electricity and natural gas suppliers;
- proposal by the Minister of Mobility, Social Economy and Equal Opportunity concerning the provision of transport certificates;
- proposal by the Minister of Administrative Affairs, Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism concerning licences for accommodation, and licences and accreditations for broadcasters and networks;
- proposal by the Minister of Economy, Enterprise, Science, Innovation and Foreign Trade concerning BEA and ARKIV accreditation.

The following extra proposals were listed in a communication (of 14 September 2007) to the Flemish Government (see appendix 2).

The ministers must report the results of the benchmarks carried out to the Flemish Government. Each minister, and the administration, can draw the necessary lessons from the results and use these to improve procedures wherever possible.

The benchmark itself can be done with the help of the “*exchange-learn*” system: personnel from the administrations involved go on study visits to other administrations, both at home and abroad, to learn firsthand about the licensing systems in place there.

Flanders will also use this exercise to check how compatible the Flemish licensing systems are with the stipulations of the European Services Directive. This directive imposes restrictions on the demands that other Member States can make on domestic and foreign service providers within their territory. All European Member States are required to report the demands they intend to retain and the reasons for so doing to the European Commission. All the other Member States then assess this information. Thanks to this planned benchmark exercise, Flanders is well prepared to submit its own reports and to assess reports submitted by the other Member States.

2.2.3 Training, monitoring and communication

The efforts made in the area of training regulatory affairs officials of the Flemish government will be further developed in the coming year.

Together, the Regulatory Management unit and the Agency for Government Officials will continue to provide RIA training courses, measure administrative burdens and design forms.

The regulatory theory modules, put together by the Inter-university centre for legislation, will be further developed in the coming year. Two regulatory theory modules will be offered as of the final quarter of 2007.

As a third component, the Regulatory Management unit will also offer specialised “study afternoons” biannually, which will deal with specific aspects of regulatory quality. The aim is to introduce the regulatory affairs officials to interesting findings and research results both at home and abroad.

By ensuring a better harmonisation of the information on Flemish regulations kept by the various entities of the Flemish government, it will be possible to report on a larger number of indicators in 2008. A distinction will be made between:

- quantitative indicators,
- European indicators,
- and regulatory management indicators

We will also communicate more about the dossiers behind the figures. The Flemish Parliament has already requested this in 2007 through a motion on the evaluation of the RIA.

Based on the specific action plans, I will refine the “completed projects” indicator for all policy domains in 2008.

I will also maintain clear communication in 2008 with all the target groups involved. In addition, the website <http://www.vlaanderen.be/wetsmatiging> will continue to be updated as the central source of information.

I will report developments in the area of regulatory management via the “Simplification in figures” scoreboard and via e-newsletters to the leading officials.

Every quarter, I will communicate the most recent developments in regulatory management and the activities of the Regulatory Management unit via the Regulatory Management e-newsletter.

2.2.4 Joint Simplification

There have been relatively few suggestions spontaneously submitted in comparison with the effort put into delivering the communication. Sending the form to the local councils enlarged the basis for the subject of volunteers and associations. However, this cannot be the intention behind the current concept. Therefore, I am considering changing the current Joint Simplification initiative and merging it with the action plans based on the zero measurements.

A permanent online contact point, with web form, will be set up on the website www.vlaanderen.be/wetsmatiging. Comments received via the web form will be passed on to the relevant administration(s). The Regulatory Management unit will then monitor the integration of the comments by the administration(s) involved.

2.2.5 Forms website

The list of forms on the forms website will be kept up to date by the form coordinators.

I will continue to encourage the form coordinators to work on the issue of quality improvement, with the help of the Form Guidelines of the Language Advice cell and the Form Checklist of the Regulatory Management unit. I will expand the evaluation instrument to include more specific criteria for administrative simplification. The Regulatory Management unit will test these added criteria. Then the simple form quality label will be awarded based on the extended evaluation instrument.

I will offer a solution for the forms associated with Flemish regulations using a forms decree. This decree will provide legal grounds for electronic forms by equating them with paper forms. It will also set the conditions for the electronic provision and delivery of forms.

The forms site will be further refined by making a distinction between forms associated with regulations (and therefore, unchangeable) and forms not anchored in regulations. Forms anchored in

Federal or European regulations cannot be adapted, and therefore, cannot achieve the simple form quality label.

In 2008, we will be shifting over to e-forms. In the initial phase, a number of priority forms validated by the cabinet, and carrying the quality label, will be digitalised using HTML. Validated priority forms without a quality label will be improved in order to earn the quality label. Once the quality label has been earned, these forms will be digitalised using HTML.

The objective of the forms site is to attach a quality label to all forms connected to Flemish regulations and to fully digitalise them so as to enable documents linked to one or more databanks to be filled in electronically. I also intend this digitalisation to include a link to the MAGDA platform (Maximal Data sharing between Administrations).

2.2.6 Cooperation

2.2.6.1 Current forms of cooperation

Regulatory management contacts

Regulatory management contacts have been designated for all departments and agencies. Their job will be taken over by the Regulatory quality cells. I will hold an information meeting with the Regulatory quality cells every six months.

Local authorities

I cannot simplify systems for the citizen without the support of the local authorities.

Together with the Minister of Internal Administration, I would like get Flemish local authorities more involved in the Flemish simplification policy. In 2008, as part of the “Simplest Municipality/City 2007” project call, those local authorities that have been selected will receive concrete guidance in implementing their project proposals. This guidance will consist of a training course in Form design, a course on Model regulations, and concrete advice made to measure.

Federal government

In 2008, Flanders will also actively participate in the official Administrative Simplification Consultation Committee between the Federal government, the Communities and the Regions.

Europe

In 2008, Flanders will also participate in the biannual meeting of the European Directors of Better Regulation to discuss certain topics of regulatory management. In 2008, Flanders will again be a member of the Standard Cost Model network.

2.2.6.2 New forms of cooperation: the inter-institutional accord

In 2008, we will look at how we might strengthen the ties between institutions outside the Flemish government, in this case the Flemish Parliament, the strategic advisory boards and the Flemish academic world, in order to reinforce the basis of regulatory management.

To strengthen the ties with the Flemish Parliament and strategic advisory boards, we will turn to a similar initiative at European policy level, i.e., the Inter-institutional Accord (IIA) between European Commission, Council and Parliament on better regulations and effects assessment.

The aim is to reach a similar inter-institutional accord, albeit with allowances made for peculiarities in the activities, tasks and structure of the three parties.

This inter-institutional accord is also a means of further developing the consultation policy within the Flemish government. The development of a consultation policy was one of the recommendations in the 2007 SERA report.

3 E-government

3.1 Looking back on the past year

3.1.1 The MAGDA platform in a higher gear

In 2007, the Flemish government evolved from an environment with islands of data (in which all data was gathered and managed locally) to one in which data is opening up from authentic data sources (federal and regional) ever more frequently and on an ever-increasing scale and in which data is being mutually exchanged. It is still the aim here that applications should be able to retrieve this information at the right time in the administrative process, without incurring management and maintenance burdens from the relevant authentic data sources. In addition, more and more applications in the Flemish administrations are communicating with each other directly and asking each other for the appropriate information at the appropriate time, without needlessly inconveniencing people and businesses with requests for information that is already known.

To this end, CORVE offers the most frequently requested general services via the MAGDA platform, such as the possibility to access data from federal authentic data sources. In addition, MAGDA allows Flemish administrations to exchange their own data and develop services across this central infrastructure. In 2007, the continued development of the system cost approximately EUR 1.2 million.

MAGDA services are being used ever more intensively, with more than 30 Flemish e-government applications making use of it since its beginning in 2006, and as many new applications expected in 2008. In the past year, more than one and a half million processes were run electronically thanks to MAGDA. It is safe to say that this year, MAGDA successfully shifted into a higher gear.

MAGDA is part of *Flanders in Action*. (Project IV.1: Customer-friendliness and efficiency):
“The information exchange between all administrations and agencies of the Flemish government is in need of improvement. The available information must be accessible throughout the Flemish government. The government must ensure that it does not ask its population and industry what it already knows. Cooperation in the sphere of data management, i.e., maximal sharing and exchange of data, is the way to go.”

2.2.1.1. Development of the VKBO and VKBO services

The Enriched Crossroads Bank for Enterprises (VKBO) allows for the information on an enterprise, institution or organisation to be found in the Federal Crossroads Bank for Enterprises (KBO), such as the official enterprise or establishment number and other basic information (name, address, status, etc.). MAGDA “enriches” this information with other official information on the same enterprises or institutions (employment, turnover, dossier information, etc.).

I have promised that in 2007, the VKBO service provision will continue to be expanded and that, above all, the number of users will rise considerably. I am in the process of achieving this objective. Currently, I count more than 15 connections from the Flemish government to the VKBO services supply. All of these relate to important Flemish government processes, in which the unique registration and status monitoring of enterprises (and other organisations/legal persons) forms an important part, and in which the authentic enterprise data held by the VKBO plays a crucial role. This use of the VKBO services results in significant gains in efficiency as well as cost savings for the users involved.

The considerable rise in the number of VKBO services users goes hand in hand with a substantial diversification of the VKBO supply. Whereas, in 2006, only 3 web services and 1 publication were available, by the end of 2007, the VKBO supply will be comprised of at least 10 web services and 6 publications⁵.

The main success story in this service supply is the delivery of so-called “municipal basic files” to local authorities. These are excerpts from the VKBO containing authentic enterprise data on all enterprises registered with the municipalities. This information on enterprises and their establishments is crucial for the improvement of municipal processes in the areas of taxation, local economy, mobility, employment, etc.

2.2.1.2. Development of the VKBP services

The Enriched Crossroads Bank for Persons (VKBP) services make it possible - given the right authorisations for accessing and using personal data - to retrieve official national register data on private individuals via the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (KSZ) or directly from the National Register for private individuals. This use of authentic personal data means significant progress in a great many administrative processes, and particularly in those processes in which benefits are awarded to Flemish citizens (such as online applications for educational study grants).-{}-

Just like with the VKBO services, the VKBP services saw a significant rise in the number of users this year, and a number of services have been further refined or newly developed⁶:

Without a doubt, one of the success stories in the VKBP’s service provisioning is the electronic ticket counter for purchasing De Lijn season tickets online. De Lijn is taking advantage of the opportunity this provides to retrieve data on family compositions via the VKBP in order to calculate the correct fare for subscriptions. Therefore, applicants are no longer obliged to collect an official certificate of family composition from the municipality. In the next version of this application, it will also be possible to automatically grant season tickets at a reduced fare by obtaining information from the KSZ on the applicant’s social status (e.g., WIGW [Benefits for Widow/ers, Disabled, Retirees, and Orphans] statute).

2.2.1.3. Improvement of MAGDA organisational support

In the past year, CORVE made a significant effort to professionalise the MAGDA platform. The application processes for access authorisations to the MAGDA services were formally drawn up and put in to practice. Improved safety and monitoring procedures must facilitate the correct use of these services by a closer monitoring of users and preventing improper use of the services. Extra systems,

⁵ The most important new VKBO service provision consists of: automatic transfer of changes in enterprise details (e.g., change of address) and data on enterprise bankruptcies; the possibility for a enterprise data user to indicate which enterprises he is interested in, so that he can filter the data he wants to receive on these enterprises; translation of the KBO addresses (based on addresses in National Register for private individuals) to CRAB addresses, so that enterprises can be coded; expansion of the search options for the VKBO-GO interactive web application.

⁶ The most important new VKBP service provision consists of: automatic transfer of changes in personal details (e.g., change of address); retrievals via so-called web services, so that these services can be used “from application to application,” and therefore, can be perfectly integrated in existing or new applications. This will make it possible to search for basic identification data (name, national register number, address, sex, marital status, nationality) on a person, to query family composition, etc.; a completely new VKBP-GUI interactive web application, which enables these web services to be used not only applicatively, but directly by the end user.

such as access control, logging, etc., will support these procedures. Altogether, these efforts make a significant contribution to increasing the safety and reliability of MAGDA.

The technical and business process documentation for service users is constantly being improved. Details on all the MAGDA services are posted on the new CORVE website. This should greatly simplify the integration and use in the Flemish administrations' existing or planned electronic government processes.

2.2.1.4. Strengthening the CORVE workforce

In my previous policy statement, I announced a strengthening of the Coordination cell activities through the recruitment of extra personnel. Indeed, in the past year, we have taken on 6 new employees: a personnel data integration expert, to support the continued development of the VKBP; a geographical data integration expert, to support the opening up of authentic geographic data; and an e-government jurist to provide legal support for e-government projects. In addition, two project leaders have been recruited to ensure better monitoring of e-government projects (in particular, the VIP projects) supported by CORVE, and to ensure monitoring of MAGDA work group activities as well as support for the efforts made in communication. With this extra staff, it should be possible to satisfy the sharply growing demand for MAGDA services and support of e-government projects in 2008.

3.1.2 VIP projects 2006 - 2007

The VIP (Flemish Integration Projects) programme is designed to provide intrinsic and financial support for projects that contribute to the objectives of Flemish e-government.

A call is launched every year to this effect. The submitted projects are assessed according to the following criteria:

- the project directly benefits the citizens and businesses;
- it makes use of the MAGDA service supply;
- it involves a clear administrative simplification;
- it involves cooperation with other entities in or outside the Flemish government;
- it involves harmonisation between front and back office of the government processes involved.

In 2006 and 2007, a number of important VIP projects, submitted in 2005, were completed.

- **“Digital application for a study grant”**. It is possible to electronically apply for a study grant for secondary and higher education with the digital application form. There are also forthcoming plans in the Education and Training domain to dispense of applications for child allowances for students over 18 years of age for more than 95% of employees and 100% of the self-employed. This information will automatically be passed on between the Flemish educational institutes and the child benefit funds.
- **“Integration of data on enterprises in the VDAB companies databank”** This ensures that the VDAB will have the most recent enterprise data at its disposal for use in its internal business processes. This will make the manual input and editing of a large amount of customer data by the VDAB superfluous.
- The **“Generic GIS”** (geGIS) software program, originally created for the project “Inventory of undeveloped land parcels”, grew into a full-fledged open source GIS platform in 2006. In the

meantime, geGIS has become widely known in Flanders as a reusable, cost-free GIS solution. Based on this technology, which is financed by CORVE, new projects have also been realised⁷:

Eight VIP projects were selected in 2006, thereby doubling the number of project proposals submitted, compared with 2005. These eight projects were or will be completed in the course of 2007:

- **“E-counter”** at De Lijn (Mobility and Public Works): construction of an electronic ticket counter for the sale of season tickets. The project involves, among other things, dispensing with the family composition certificate for calculating family discounts and eventually selling season tickets via the Internet. The MAGDA platform will also be used as a source of information for the proactive delivery of free season tickets for the 65 and older group, for example.
- **“One-off land parcel registration”** (Agriculture & Fisheries - Environment, Nature and Energy): the construction of an application for a one-off land parcel registration for agriculturalists. Agriculturalists are currently required to register their land parcels under both agriculture and environment. To a considerable extent, both sectors ask for the same information. Through this project, from which company data, among other things, can be retrieved via the VKBO, we can achieve a major administrative simplification.
- **“Automatic data retrieval for the grant seeker”** (Town and Country Planning, Housing Policy and Immovable Heritage):
 - the construction of an advanced digital application form for requesting support measures concerning building, modernising or renting a home.
 - By linking with MAGDA, data such as family composition and rateable value can be retrieved. The current application can be greatly simplified using this. We are also looking into the possibility of an application for support measures that is fully online.
- **“E-office right of first refusal”** (Services for the General Government Policy): the construction of a geographic information system for the development, management and promotion of the geographic theme file “Flemish rights of first refusal”.
- **“Digital Recreation office Flanders”** (International Flanders - Culture, Youth, Sport & Media): the construction of an electronic recreation office linking the tourism and culture sectors so that these can be integrated into a single application. In the first phase, the tourist offices will be able to offer both tourist and cultural information. Eventually, there will also be a website on which cultural and tourist information can be viewed.
- **“Vaccination information databank - Vaccinnet”** (Welfare, Public Health and Family): the transfer of children’s vaccination information between Child and Family and the educational sector (including the CLBs - Centres for Student Guidance). Vaccinnet aims to become the authentic data source for vaccination information. A system for registering and transferring the vaccination information between Family and Child and the education sector will need to be set up in order to achieve this.
- **“Exemption certificates for inheritance taxes”** (Finance & Budget): the construction of a dossier follow-up system for granting “exemption certificates for inheritance taxes”. The application is designed to automate back office processes for “exemption certificates for inheritance taxes” and to optimise the service provision for external clients (citizens and businesses).

⁷ Examples: construction of the inventory of undeveloped land parcels application; the municipal GIS office for Wevelgem; other applications are currently under construction in the tourism sector and for a variety of local authorities.

- “**Simulation and dossier follow-up module for study grants**” (Education & Training): the development of a simulation and dossier follow-up module for secondary and higher education study grants. In addition to applying electronically for a study grant, it must be possible for citizens to run a simulation as well as track the status of an application.

3.1.3 E-forms

We continued to build the forms site in 2007 within the context of the forms project (see above, no. 2.1.5). It was again found during development that in a great many of its forms, the Flemish government often asks for data which it already has. By linking these electronic forms to MAGDA, a large amount of this information can be entered in advance, or, where necessary, retrieved from the government’s underlying databanks. An e-forms facility is being developed to make this possible, i.e., a communal and central facility for the construction and management of electronic forms for use by all entities within the Flemish government.

We decided on the technology that would be used to create this e-forms facility in the first half of 2007. In addition, we made preparations to enable us to offer a number of existing and new (e-) forms in the autumn of 2007 with the help of this facility.

3.1.4 Cooperation with other governmental bodies

3.1.4.1 First service provision for the municipalities

This year, we continued developing an e-government service provision for local authorities in the form of, among other things, better communication regarding the services offered to the municipalities via CORVE, and by providing the municipalities with authentic enterprise data from the VKBO.

Efforts to improve communication regarding the services offered were heightened considerably. Among other things, a brochure was produced containing a detailed overview of e-government services.

CORVE also worked with the federal government (Fedict), the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) and the Association of Flemish Provinces (VVP) to organise generally well attended introductory afternoons in each province, at which local policy-makers were given information on the possibilities of e-government and MAGDA.

Until recently, the municipalities did not have access to an accurate and complete list of data on the enterprises (and their establishments) in their territories. I have seen to it that it is now possible to retrieve this data from the VKBO files, which contain authentic company data on all enterprises registered in a municipality. These “municipal basic files” are created free of charge, at the request of the municipality, and updated periodically, if required. Thanks to these files, the municipalities have quick access to enterprise data, which they can use directly in their local ICT applications. Additionally, municipalities can now interactively consult enterprise data by using the VKBO-GO interactive web application.

Currently, more than 50 Flemish municipalities have learned to use these “municipal basic files”. One example that appeals to the imagination is the Waregem municipal business guide, in which the VKBO enterprise data for that municipality are presented on a card. This way, for example, it is possible to see at a glance all the new enterprises now operating in the municipality’s territory, or which businesses could be inconvenienced by public works in a given street. This is a relatively simple achievement that certainly deserves more widespread imitation.

3.1.4.2 Results of the inter-administrative e-government study

A study entitled “inter-administrative e-government” was carried out in 2007 to determine the further service provision for the municipalities. This was done in order to define a strategy describing how integrated e-government (municipalities, provinces, Flemish government and federal government) might become a reality. The study highlights 4 major themes for a more integrated e-government:

1. *more structural cooperation*, so that the needs of the local and central authorities correspond with one another.
2. *more interactive communication*, in particular, more information on what is happening centrally, and above all, more dialogue between the local and central authorities.
3. *simplify maximal data sharing*, so that there is a once-only collection of data that can be maximally reused. The transfer of this data should be free of charge (as much as possible).
4. *establish a set of standards and norms*, because the proper arrangements are considered essential to make genuine cooperation possible.

I intend to base all further e-government actions and initiatives for the municipalities on these major themes.

3.1.5 www.aandeslag.be (front office employment)

In my 2007 policy statement, I announced the ambitious Front Office Employment project. Thanks to good cooperation with the other governmental tiers, I was able to successfully launch the website, www.aandeslag.be, on 20 March 2007. This website makes information and knowledge regarding labour cost reduction measures more transparent and accessible.

3.1.6 Establishment of the Flemish e-government by decree

In my previous policy statement, I promised to establish the Flemish e-government by decree. I am currently working with the Minister of Internal Affairs to draft a decree on the electronic administrative traffic for the Flemish administration and local authorities.

The main subjects outlined in this draft decree are:

- the principle of the one-off request for data;
- the principle of authentic data sources;
- personal privacy protection.

3.2 Emphasis in 2008

3.2.1 Bringing MAGDA up to cruising speed

Whereas 2006 was the year of MAGDA’s basic infrastructure development, the launch of the first generic services provision and the signing up the first Flemish service users, the year 2007 - as expected - has been the year of expanding and refining these services. A growing number of Flemish governmental administrations have found their way to MAGDA and are currently looking at how they can use the MAGDA services in their own applications (or already take full advantage of these).

These first two pioneering years were dominated by a pragmatic approach, in which it was attempted to get MAGDA up and running as quickly as possible and lower the threshold of use as much as possible, so that indeed, administrations and agencies could receive the initial impetus toward a maximum sharing of data between them.

Now that we have reached critical mass in terms of the MAGDA services available and the number of users interested, and the Flemish administrations and agencies are making ever more use of the authentic data sources system currently under development, I would like to see MAGDA and its basic services being used by as many administrations and agencies as possible, and not just those with an active ICT service.

3.2.2.1. Development of the VKBO and VKBO services

After having chiefly developed the VKBO service provision around the provision of basic information on enterprises (name, address, status, etc.), along with the set up of a service provision relating to the supply of the same basic information and the first necessary “improvements” (employment data, CRAB geocoding, etc.) in 2006 and 2007, I will devote much of 2008 to the intrinsic improvement of this basic information.

3.2.2.2. Takeover of VPR and continued development of the VKBP services

I have decided, in consultation with the policy domain WVG, to allow the existing Enriched Personal Register (VPR), which contains personal data on all people in Flanders and Brussels, to be taken over by CORVE, and to be used as the basis for the continued development of the Enriched Crossroads Bank for Persons (VKBP). With our own VKBP, it will be possible (provided that the right authorisations are in place for retrieving and using personal information) to retrieve official national register information, not only via the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (KSZ) and the National Register for private individuals, but also via our own Flemish authentic data sources with personal information. This will constitute a major step forward in the MAGDA service provision with regard to personal information. Not only the WVG policy domain itself, but many other policy domains (Education and Training, Work and Social Economy, etc.), will be important users of these services and use them in all manner of processes.

A significant section of the VKBP is the reference index, which will be kept, as is the case with the KSZ, where and when the Flemish government keeps dossiers on private individuals. This index will enable us to gain a complete picture of the extent to which a citizen makes use of the Flemish government services, and makes it possible to find and exchange the dossier data more quickly (within the confines of the personal privacy protection laws).

In 2008, I will also commission a number of new VKBP services which should make it possible for us to grant certain benefits to which the citizen is entitled with much more ease or even automatically⁸.

By combining new services like these with existing VKBP services, it will be possible to check whether the criteria specified in a particular provision of Flemish social legislation have been met. Thus, for example, as stipulated in the decree on childcare service cheques, we will be able to automatically check whether an applicant actually is a “single working parent residing in the Flemish region with children under the age of 3”, and then make the appropriate social correction to the purchase price of these service cheques. This means a considerable simplification of the relevant administrative process and a clear improvement in the social services provision for the citizen.

3.2.2.3. Safeguarding security and privacy

Along with assuring the optimal availability of MAGDA, I want to make sure that attention remains focused on safeguarding the security and confidentiality of the data. I would particularly like to emphasise the protection of the citizen’s privacy. Although MAGDA’s personal services were always operational within the strict legal context of the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (KSZ), I want to

⁸ Examples of these VKBP services include:
checking whether a citizen is employed (as a wage earner or self-employed in a main profession)
checking whether a citizen satisfies a given social status (WIGW, disabled, job-seeker)

ensure that protecting the personal privacy of the Flemish citizen continues to command extra attention in the development of the Enriched Crossroads Bank for Persons (VKBP).

In concrete terms, I will ensure that the granting of access to the Flemish authentic data sources system is based on the completion of a stringent application process.

I also want to see continued improvements in the existing MAGDA security and monitoring procedures so as to create a platform that is operated in a modern and professional manner. In the autumn of 2007, I will ensure that the Sectoral Committee of the KBO is informed of the ever-growing MAGDA service provision (purely for public purposes) based on KBO data.

3.2.2 VIP projects 2007 - 2008

Following a successful call for VIP projects in 2006, I launched a double call in 2007. Indeed, the project proposals in 2006 revealed that a number of likely projects did in fact contain good ideas, but were not yet ready for implementation. Therefore, it was decided to include the possibility of supporting these good ideas in the 2007 VIP project call as well by drawing a line between analysis projects and implementation projects. Analysis projects are projects that yield information that can be put to immediate use in a future implementation project. Implementation projects are projects for which a thorough functional and/or technical analysis has already been done and which are ready for implementation in 2007 or in the course of 2008.

The 2007 VIP project call resulted in 18 proposals for implementation projects and 18 for analysis projects, from which the panel selected seven in each category. The number of dossiers submitted rose by 25% compared to the figure for 2006. Furthermore, this call reached the whole of the Flemish government for the first time. Thus, there were projects submitted by, among others, the UZ Gent and the VRT.

In collaboration and consultation with the competent cabinets and administrations, the following 10 VIP projects will receive financial and technical support in 2007 - 2008.

Implementation projects

- **Digital request for a building permit** - the construction of an interactive application to easily guide users through the request for a building permit.
- **E-office land parcel registration** - after the administrative office for the one-off land parcel registration - that both VKBP and VKBO made use of - we have now developed the geographic office - based on geGIS, through which agriculturalists can interactively map out their land parcels.
- **Environmental permits** - the construction of web services for exchanging data with the Environmental Permits Databank, linked to MAGDA services, through which the costs of the current specific databank no longer apply.
- **Diversity plans online** - this project supports the online creation and tracking of enterprise diversity plans. Full digital processing greatly simplifies the whole approach and lowers the thresholds for writing up a diversity plan. By querying the VKBO, it is no longer necessary to ask the enterprise for a large amount of information about itself.
- **UZ Ghent e-cash register consultations** - a project to bring the payment system for Ghent hospitals online. This will use the VKBP to automatically update patient address information.

Analysis projects

- **Flemish learning results databank** - analysis of the technical requirements for the creation of a training and qualifications databank, which will serve to enrich the VKBP.
- **Malvin** - technical analysis of the possibility of merging the various databanks of the Flemish Institute for Immovable Heritage with decentralised data input and linking this with images and documents and web access, and making it available to the citizen too.
- **Student portfolio** - study on making the new regulations workable, involving study data and loans for every student: learning loans, results, exemptions, etc.
- **Farming identification data** - research into the possibility of merging the various farming identification data in a unified client databank for the various services in the agricultural policy domain.
- **E-right of first refusal office** - analysis of the possible construction of web services on top of the existing geographical information system for the 2006 VIP project “e-office right of first refusal” to simplify its administration.

MAGDA plays an ever-increasing role in the submitted VIP projects. What is striking here is that these projects are calling on several authentic sources more frequently, or that authentic data are being used in multiple government processes. As a result of all this, the VIP projects are starting to play an ever more important “innovative role” within Flemish government institutions. This innovative character is also highlighted by the fact that 2 of the 3 Flemish “SPITS” innovation prizes in 2006 went to VIP projects.

3.2.3 E-forms

Now that we know the technology behind the construction of the Flemish e-form facility, I would like to see that the forms listed on the forms website are offered using this facility as soon as possible. By late 2007, the first fifty forms carrying the quality label should be available electronically, for use by citizens and businesses. In close consultation and cooperation with the relevant policy domains, the remaining forms will be digitalised in 2008 (insofar as the policy domains have not already digitalised them), and we will look at how we can cross over to optimum integration with the underlying administrative processes. The forms in question are simple and/or less complex. Complex forms are considered legitimate e-government projects, to be undertaken by CORVE, and therefore, not as a part of this plan.

3.2.4 New initiatives

3.2.4.1 Electronic identity management for e-government

It is my ambition to make possible a government service provision capable of running completely electronically. Additionally, the electronic identity card (eID) is being used more and more frequently as a means of authenticating and identifying the citizen. When an official wishes to use the eID in the context of an electronic government process, for example, when approving an application or lawfully requesting a document, there must be sufficient certainty that this official is acting in his appropriate capacity or has the necessary authorisation. To ensure this, we need to check the officials’ identities electronically and keep a record of the roles in which an official is acting, his powers, to whom he has temporarily or permanently delegated his powers, etc.

3.2.4.2 Closer integration with geographic data

In addition to data on enterprises and people (in the VKBO and VKBP, respectively) we must focus on *geographical* data. We can link to geographical data in the most authentic data sources. The ability to open data on the addresses, the location of buildings, land parcels, etc., is certainly essential to all kinds of processes in a variety of authorities. Consider the one-off land parcel registration, the register of undeveloped land parcels, or even further, electronic building and environmental permits.

In the geGIS project, CORVE has developed an open source GIS platform with which geographical information can be opened, processed and displayed. This platform allows us to develop GIS e-offices in a cost-effective manner and to open geographic data. In 2008, I plan to focus on the opening up of geographic data and on the continued development of the geGIS, in consultation with the AGIV and as part of a joint venture with GIS Flanders.

3.2.4.3 E-government at the service of local authorities

Without a solid local component, the Flemish e-government is like a house built on sand. After all, a large part of the government service provision takes place through the local authorities. Furthermore, the local authorities are the governmental tier that has the closest contact with the people. The inter-administrative e-government study has shown that the local authorities have great expectations when it comes to support from the Flemish government.

Obviously, it is necessary to involve the right partners to get this support on the right footing. To date, CORVE has been in close contact with the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG), the Association of Flemish Provinces (VVP), and the V-ICT-OR Knowledge Centre. Every one of these partners has a great deal of experience in this area. It is my intention to keep involving these partners in the process of determining the strategy for local e-government, extending it to individual local authorities, and, wherever possible, extending it even further to other relevant partners.

A number of concrete strategic projects came to the fore in the inter-administrative e-government study. These will be needed if we are to create a successful local e-government (see appendix 3).

In 2008, I will complete a number of these strategic projects, following further consultations with the Minister of Internal Administration to decide which of them should take priority.

4 Motions and resolutions by the Flemish Parliament

Motion with good grounds by Mrs. Joke Schauvliege, Messrs. Dirk De Cock, Sven Gatz and Kris Van Dijck and Mrs. Cathy Berx - concluding the question addressed in the commission of 16 January 2007 by Mrs. Joke Schauvliege to Mr. Geert Bourgeois, Flemish Minister of Administrative Affairs, Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism, on the evaluation and adjustment of the regulatory impact analysis (RIA), accepted by the plenary meeting of 31.01.2007

The Flemish Parliament asks the Flemish Government:

1° to see to it that the RIA selectivity that has been introduced does not lead to a weakening of the RIA system, but to a higher quality RIA;

2° to pay particular attention to a system of impact analysis for European regulations. This will make it possible to better recognise the impact of said European regulations on Flanders in a timely fashion;

3° to take due care in ensuring the uniformity of the RIAs by making use of the RIA template developed by the Regulatory Management unit;

4° to ensure the transparency of the RIA quality by communicating the results of the RIA controls to the Flemish Parliament every six months;

5° to quickly introduce the regulatory agenda so that the RIA can be started early in the policy process;

6° to strengthen the regulatory capacity of the Flemish administration.

In the meantime, I have introduced the two stated structural initiatives, i.e., the regulatory agenda and the regulatory quality cells.

I will also continue to ensure the quality, uniformity and transparency of the RIAs.

5 Summary of 2008 policy initiatives

5.1 REGULATORY MANAGEMENT

- Transparency of the RIA
- Measuring administrative burdens - zero measurements and action plans
- Evaluation of the regulatory quality cells
- Benchmark analyses of licences and accreditations
- Permanent online contact points
- Form decree and further steps in the forms project
- Conclusion of an Inter-institutional Accord

5.2 EGOV

- Bringing MAGDA up to cruising speed
- VIP projects 2007 - 2008
- New initiatives: electronic identity management, integration of geographic data, e-government to local authorities in cooperation with the AGIV.

Geert Bourgeois

Flemish Minister of Administrative Affairs,
Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism

APPENDIX 1

Completed projects, July - September 2007

1. E-economy II (Economy - ALV)

The economy project creates a portal site for companies, which is set to be the online office for high-speed information and efficient services for the entrepreneur.

Phase 1: input of the electronic signature for opening up information and applications. This dramatically increases security and reduces administrative costs.

Phase 2: creation of a enterprise photo or personalisation, i.e., the client (a) is given a summary of the status of the dossiers in progress (for the time being, the dossiers run by the Economy Agency) and (b) the client can open up information via his personal preferences.

2. Ecology (Economy - ALV)

The BVR of 1 September 2006 changes the current ecology regulations from an open support system to a closed competition formula parallel with the existing, traditional system of investment support via a growth subsidy. The application is launched together with the Economy II application.

3. Social benefits (Education - ALV)

The social benefit regulations pre-date the School Agreement Act and have, therefore, been updated. This means that the forms and procedures have been eliminated. More room has been made for municipalities to implement an education policy, through, among other things, social benefits.

4. Harmonisation of social seniority (Education - JTV)

The regulations on social seniority and the entitlement to sick leave have been simplified. Permanent staff, temporary staff, combined assignments and secondary occupations now each have a separate calculation for sick leave. Clarity has been significantly increased for educational clients. This also implies a simplification of internal procedures for the administration. Previously disparate federal legal texts have now been brought together in a BVR. There is now uniformity between the compulsory education systems, the student counselling centres (CLB) and adult education systems. There are also immediate possibilities for a series of automations in the electronic personnel dossier.

5. Career break form (Education - ALV)

The partial career break form has been abolished. The form is a double containing electronic information and information retrieved by the RVA. This involves educational staff filling in 4,000 forms annually (Agodi and Agoho).

6. Bottom-up measurement of administrative costs for agriculturalists and horticulturists (Agriculture- ALV)

The final report on bottom-up Quick Scan Administrative Costs for Agriculture identifies and measures administrative costs. It also formulates general bottlenecks and bottlenecks per information requirement, and provides solutions for both. In the future, there will be an investigation into the extent to which Bottom-up measurement might be a tool in setting up the Regulation Management Action Plan.

7. Simple reporting by the municipalities (Environment, OVAM-ALV)

Municipality reports were often duplicated for AMINAL and OVAM. The reporting process has been simplified as part of a partnership agreement with the municipalities.

Completed projects, April - June 2007

8. Regulations for mergers in primary education (Education - JTV)

The regulations in regard to merging, restructuring, combining and/or splitting schools, locations and study levels were fairly complicated. This was thoroughly altered for primary schools.

9. Abolition of salary scale negotiation (Education - ALV)

An increase in a particular salary scale must be reported via forms. Due to an adaptation of the regulations, this duty to report no longer applies. The personnel in question are automatically given a higher salary scale and follow the salary scale system.

10. Energy performance certificate in schools (Education - ALV)

The administrative burdens involved in the drawing up an energy performance certificate (EPC) by the schools have been reduced. The regulations of the Flemish Energy Agency have been adapted so that the monthly measurements have been replaced by an annual measurement. Originally, the only provision was an external expert, but an internal expert has now been included. The certificate is applicable for 10 years now, instead of only 5 years: this implies a savings of EUR 8 million for schools in 2012. The certificate no longer applies per building, but instead, it is applicable per site. This administrative burden relief also applies to other sectors with public buildings (welfare, culture).

11. Administration of Child Allowances for Employees (RKW) Forms (Education - ALV)

Schools have had to draw up all kinds of certificates for the child allowance proving that the children are still in school. This project comes into effect on 1 September 2007: this means that approximately 225,000 forms (150,000 in higher education and 75,000 in secondary education) no longer have to be filled in by schools and parents.

12. Primary level Summer School (Education - JTV)

The regulations on summer schooling were simplified based on a decision by the Flemish Government, which comes into effect on 1 September 2007. Management and personnel can now decide on the additional teaching periods for summer schooling using a much simpler form. The additional teaching periods correspond with the number of new pupils. Reliable prognoses can be made, which will make the school's planning more reliable and reduce the workload. Parents will also be given a better picture of the provided care.

13. Simplification of the sports regulations (BLOSO - JTV)

The decisions made by the Flemish Government on 31 May 2002 establishing the conditions for entitlement to grants for sports camps organised by the sports federations on the one hand, and for youth sports on the other, have been evaluated with a view to simplification. This evaluation resulted in suggestions regarding simplification.

14. Study of the effects of subsidising the training centres for the self-employed and SMEs (Flemish Employer Training Agency - Syntra Flanders - JTV)

With the study on the effects of subsidising the training centres for the self-employed and SMEs (SYNTRA), the Flemish Government aims, before concluding a management agreement with SYNTRA Flanders, to gain a clear picture of SYNTRA activities and the possible future effects related to financing SYNTRA. In fact, these effects have never been mapped out and must be known before future commitments can be made, on which the management agreement will be based, by both the government and the centres. This research could lead to a simplification of the regulations with regard to SYNTRA's financing.

15. Review of the Decree on Soil Remediation (Environment - ALV)

This change makes it possible to set up sectoral soil remediation organisations. It is the purpose of these organisations to prevent soil contamination and manage, supervise and stimulate soil remediation in the event of contamination. An important tool in achieving this is the introduction of a soil prevention and management plan (BPBP). To fulfil their joint objective, the regulations provide that the soil remediation organisations must carry out a number of tasks for their members:

set up of a sectoral soil prevention and soil management plan;
stimulate and optimise the investigation and remediation concepts;
giving individual advice on all matters relating to soil contamination resulting from the activity for which they were set up.

16. Abolishment of the requirement for battery importers to affix a sticker to the packaging (OVAM - ALV)

The requirement for the importers of batteries to affix a sticker to the packaging has been abolished, thereby removing the administrative burdens associated with this. This requirement is not imposed by the regulations, but is a contractual obligation imposed on the members of Bebat. A transitional period follows from mid 2007 through September 2008.

17. Simplified application procedure for IWT specialisation trade fairs (JTV)

The application procedure for an IWT (Institute for the Encouragement of Innovation through Science and Technology) specialisation trade fair has been further simplified as part of a global analysis under which the regulations were adapted.

18. Change in the environmental policy planning provisions for municipalities and provinces (ALV)

The set up of an annual environmental programme has been dispensed with. Environmental policy planning is voluntary and ties in with the legislature period.

19. Linking the environmental policy planning cycle, policy statement and annual environmental programme (ALV)

The planning cycle has been harmonised with the government cycle. In the future, the environmental policy plan will be drawn up after the swearing in of a new government, delegation or bench for the municipalities, provinces and the region. The content of the plan can then be adjusted to suit the policy memoranda. We are also looking into a continued harmonisation of the policy statement with the regional annual environmental programme as well as into an adjustment of local annual environmental programmes.

Completed projects, January - March 2007

20. Knowledge Tree (JTV)

The electronically accessible "Knowledge Tree" (KT) will be used after April 2007 as the successor to the electronic reference library in the Economy, Science and Innovation policy domain. The KT will contain a legal section. The KT contains all the relevant documents/decisions/VR reports/management contracts/etc. for the Economy, Science and Innovation policy domain and will continue to be enlarged.

21. Relief of planning burdens for local youth work (ALV)

This project resulted in a simpler youth policy plan with fewer administrative obligations for the players involved.

22. Administrative burden measurement for rural youth work (ALV)

The administrative burdens facing youth clubs have been brought into focus. Based on this exercise, we have identified potential for administrative simplification.

23. E-office for agriculture (ALV)

The company data available with the government are made permanently available to businesses via this office and can be used to help them run their business. This enables business managers to have quick access to inexpensive and permanent information.

<https://www.landbouwvlaanderen.be>

24. One-off land parcel registration (ALV)

Every year, the majority of agriculturalists and horticulturalists are required to report the land parcels they have used to satisfy the GLB (Communal agricultural policy), the manure laws and management agreements. Furthermore, agriculturalists and horticulturalists also seem to be identified in other ways. The EPR project involves a unique identification of all agriculturalists and horticulturalists and links them to a unique identification source (KBO or RR). This has laid the basis for even further simplification.

On the other hand, the land parcels are still only registered once per annum via the Agriculture and Fisheries Agency, and can be retrieved from this databank to satisfy the MTR, manure laws and management agreements.

25. Simplification of milk quota regulations (ALV)

Due to changes to the milk quota regulation as from April 2005 whereby the move from a land-based quota assignment transferred to a land-based sustainability, the administrative burden related to quota mobility was reduced by $\frac{3}{4}$.

26. Move from daily catch limit to sea trip catch limit in the fisheries (ALV)

To continue to satisfy European restrictions on fish catches, maximum quantities for allotted species of fish that could be caught per day were established. This required very close monitoring of the fishermen, and created a great deal of tension and stress. It also led to a situation in which considerable quantities were being discarded overboard. The move to a catch limit per trip out to sea allows for much more flexibility, and lowers administrative costs.

27. Creation of a new manure decree (ALV)

A decree proposed by Mrs. Tinne Rombouts and Messrs. Patrick Lachaert, Bart Martens, Erik Matthijs, Karlos Callens and André Van Nieuwkerke on the protection of water against nitrate contamination from agricultural sources was ratified on 22 December 2006, promulgated by the Flemish Parliament and published in the Official Belgian Gazette on 29 December 2006.

Completed projects, October - December 2006

28. Selection forms (Education - ALV)

An end has been made, as regards the appointment of educational staff, to the dual circuit of data sending. On one hand, there were the paper PERS 13 and PERS 14 forms, and on the other, there were also electronic versions containing the same data. The forms were dispensed with on 1.1.2006 and only the electronic circuit was retained.

29. Plus-3 pass (CJSM - ALV)

People over the age of 55 are entitled to discounts on a number of cultural activities. As part of the drive for administrative simplification, no new Plus-3 passes will be made or issued. The discount still applies. It is sufficient to produce an identity card as proof of age.

30. Incorporation of sufficient guarantees in environmental policy agreements (MBO) to ensure transparency with regard to the free market (OVAM Environment - ALV)

The environmental policy agreements contain the necessary provisions on transparency and market-conformant allocation. Systems of collection and processing are being introduced to help guarantee the proper operation of the free market. Detailed attention was paid to this in

both the acceptance requirements evaluation study and the negotiation of MBOs. This is an ongoing action will continue to be monitored.

31. Broadening of exemptions from the urban development licence (Town and Country Planning - ALV)

On 1 September 2006, the Flemish Government made changes to the regulations governing requests for urban development regulations for the construction of swimming pools, terraces and/or fences. These works are exempt from urban development licensing, provided the relevant conditions are fulfilled.

32. Simplification of the regulations in sectors affecting town and country planning (Town and Country Planning - RIA)

We are looking into the possibility of simplifying the regulations in sectors affecting town and country planning. A final report should provide a good overview of all sectoral regulation that impacts the town and country planning and the issuance of licenses. Based on this final report, we will map out a trajectory for starting up concrete simplification projects.

33. Relief of administrative burdens for ESF promoters (Work - ALV)

A complex picture had grown around the European Social Funds (ESF) in Flanders due to the host of cumbersome financial and administrative rules and the burdens associated with them. This threatened to discourage promoters and initiators in Flanders to develop or continue initiatives to strengthen Flemish and European employment initiatives. The obstacles in the way of this easing of the information requirements and other administrative burdens for ESF promoters were listed and analysed with a view to identifying points for improvement. This was done on the basis of critical incidents relating to financial and administrative processes signalled to the ESF Agency by promoters and their own staff. With its Critical Incident Map (or KIK) the ESF Agency aims to promote the reduction of administrative costs among Flemish ESF promoters.

APPENDIX 2

Additional proposals for a benchmark analysis listed in the Memorandum to the Flemish Government van 14 September 2007.

The Flemish minister for Institutional Reform, Ports, Agriculture, Sea Fisheries and Rural Policy will carry out a benchmark analysis of:

- sand extraction licences;
- pipeline and local installation licences;
- fishing permits.

The Flemish minister for Work, Education and Training will carry out a benchmark analysis of the:

- recognition of foreign diplomas;
- recognition of training and coaching providers in the context of training and coaching cheques for employees;
- recognition of free-of-charge employment agencies;
- work permits and labour cards for foreign employees (federal regulations).

The Flemish minister for Culture, Youth, Sport and Brussels will carry out a benchmark analysis of the:

- recognition of socio-cultural associations, movements and training institutions;
- recognition of amateur arts organisations;
- recognition of local youth clubs and rural youth clubs;
- licence to export cultural goods outside the European Union;
- permission to take high-value items outside the Flemish Community.

The Flemish minister for Welfare, Public Health and Family will carry out a benchmark analysis of the:

- recognition of child day care centres;
- licences and accreditations with regard to residential facilities and ambulant services.

The Flemish minister for Mobility, Social Economy and Equal Opportunity will carry out an additional benchmark analysis of the:

- accreditations and licences for sheltered and social workplaces

APPENDIX 3

Strategic projects in the “integrated e-government” study

Joint products and services catalogue: most of the service provisioning in Flemish municipalities runs along similar lines. It should be possible, via a joint electronic products and services catalogue put together by the Flemish government and the local authorities, to ensure the collection and exchange of information on these products and services, both between municipalities and with the Flemish government. In this way, citizens and businesses will receive accurate information, everyone will have a clear view of the full service provisioning, and time and money will be saved in the setting up of new services thanks to cooperation between the authorities.

Flemish e-government competences centre: gather best practices and case studies, promote e-government and organise initiatives in this area, create a forum for ideas and discussion. A competences centre with these tasks could be a source of information and a stimulus for more and better local e-government.

Authentic data sources: expansion of the system of authentic data sources in central government by including data sources available from local authorities. In order to identify and manage these local authentic data sources, we need a decision-making body to officially recognise them and regulate the necessary funds.

Expansion of the MAGDA platform: local authorities must be able to quickly open authentic data from the Flemish and federal authentic data sources. To this end, the MAGDA platform should be expanded so as to make one-off data querying possible at a local level. This project satisfies the demand from local authorities to not set up new channels of data exchange for every Flemish administration. The MAGDA platform should ensure that data is exchanged via a single channel and allow for two-way traffic.

Authentication, identification and authorisation: if we aim to open up data in a secure manner, we need to control who sees what. Indeed, a huge amount of data is private. Therefore, there is a need for an e-government identity management system that also makes it easy for local authorities to authenticate, identify and authorise users of and participants in electronic government processes.

Standards and norms: data cannot be exchanged without an agreement on standards and norms. Existing standards must also be screened, and, wherever necessary, new standards must be defined. This makes data and applications more easily connectable, thereby lowering the cost of integration and avoiding “vendor lock-in”.

VIP local programme: inter-administrative data sharing is not possible without close cooperation. The intrinsic and financial input from the central government is needed to achieve generic, workable components, but in order to decide which should be constructed first, the input of the local authorities is needed. This can be realised via an annual VIP project call, aimed specifically at the local authorities. The development of reusable generic components and the reuse of data are important criteria in this. Therefore, this latest project is the crowning piece atop the six other strategic projects.

APPENDIX 4

REGULATORY AGENDA

See regulatory agenda under Policy Statement Administrative Affairs.