



European Commission / FP7 Project 204999

The main goal of the Greek Interoperability Centre is to establish a new research centre targeting eGovernment and eBusiness Interoperability Research.

Based at the Decision Support Systems Lab of the National Technical University of Athens - the leading technological research institute in Greece - the Centre promotes interoperability in administrations and enterprises.

The Greek Interoperability Centre aims at becoming a premium research centre in the field of Interoperability, forming a strong regional pole of research and technology in Europe.

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A Research Project with the funding and supervision of the European Commission within the FP7 Research Programme.



Title

Federated e-Participation Systems for Cross-Societal Deliberation on Environmental and Energy Issues

Web Site

<http://www.feed-project.eu>

Supervisor Organisation

European Commission DG INFSO
Directorate ICT addressing Societal Challenges
Unit H2 (ICT for Governments and Public Services)

Participants

- National Technical University of Athens – Decision Support Systems Laboratory (Coordinator)
- ZENC BV
- Public-I Group Limited
- Athens Technology Center S.A.
- Masaryk University
- University of the Aegean

Description

The main objective FEED is to apply a new concept in e-Participation by allowing users to have seamless access to existing federated content that matches their needs for information on the several aspects of a debated issue as well as to informative material about the specificities of the deliberation procedure in the scope of which an issue is considered. This way the level of knowledge for FEED users is enhanced both around the essence of issue at hand as well as of the procedural aspects of the deliberation process it is engaged, thus their participatory ability to contribute to the procedure through opinions that can create an impact is significantly augmented. Through FEED, simple federated content is contextually annotated according to the debated issue and legislative process specifics allowing the platform users to perceive it as a coherent body of information to be used in the various stages of a deliberation procedure.

Objectives

The aforementioned main objective of the FEED project will be achieved through the realisation of the following individual objectives:

Establishing the FEED Network, that consists of the members of the FEED consortium (environmentalists and experts on the energy deliberation process as well as scientists and researchers on e-Participation) along with an associated four-country Cluster of End-User Cities that represent a vast pool of individual end-users (citizens, businesses, governmental organisations, NGOs, etc)..

Bringing together the 'actual players' by providing means for the actual participation of decision makers, officials, citizens, businesses, non-governmental organizations and government agencies in all phases of the deliberation procedure.

Applying already developed tools for managing content and complex legislative frameworks, with the intention of persuading decision makers that adopting and sustaining such an e-participation tool will streamline their processes.

Contextually annotating legal information and explanatory material, to enhance the comprehensibility and participation capabilities of the public.

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Modelling of the exact cross-country deliberation process, followed during the preparatory legislative phases (legislation preparation, debate, draft legislation formation), with the use of workflow management technologies

Increasing awareness, by organising events and communication channels in order to strengthen and further explore the FEED network to a wider audience in the EU27 and in a pan-European level.

Promoting actions for the establishment of a commonly accepted European Energy and Environmental Policy, by providing citizens the chance to participate in the decision-making and deliberation processes.

Results

The most important results achieved according to work performed over the first twelve months of the implementation of the FEED project are as follows:

- Clarification of the different categories of end-users of the platform, as well as of their requirements.
- Analysis and requirements of the legal formation process and the debate of a legal drafting process
- Analysis and Requirements Specification of the System Operation Context
- Customization of a pre-defined workflow model, so as to include every internal step of each stage in the deliberation process along with the roles and responsibilities of the engaged parties.
- Creation of a formal deliberation model based on the model created in the case of the Dutch Pilot (Flevoland).
- Creation of the legal interrelations model that defines the documents used and the participants in the deliberation process
- Definition of the according deliberation and interrelations ontologies.
- Definition of custom-made argumentation and federation support services for each user group
- Definition of a detailed architectural design of the FEED system.
- Definition of the specific software components and subsystems that will be integrated for the development of the FEED platform.
- Definition of the specific technologies and standards that the FEED platform development is going to be based on.
- Creation of the FEED semantic annotation engine that gives the opportunity to the users to search, catalog, classify, secure, retain, comply, activate, update and delete content.
- Integration of software components and subsystems and development of the initial and final version of the FEED platform.
- Identification of the FEED project dissemination strategy and plan.

Reusable Components

The overall idea of the FEED project is to create a web-based platform for enhancing public participation in the legislative and decision-making process. The platform and the general approach of the FEED architecture that is based on the integration of different components, makes the platform fully reusable. This means that if minor customizations are made, according to the needs of the potential user of the platform, it can be used for establishing and strengthening e-participation not only for energy and environmental issues but for hot issues that are of interest of the potential user, as well.

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Impact

According to the Cyber-democracy: the eParticipation manifesto, "the future of democracy lies on the net with the Government's duties being inform, consult, respond, while the Citizens' duty engage".

To this direction, FEED promotes a shift toward greater direct public involvement, having impact on all the involving parties that constitute the FEED targeted chain (from citizens, businesses and NGOs to public authorities), with the long term objective of strengthening representative democracy to issues of crucial importance at pan-European, cross-country and local level, such as energy sustainability, energy supply through the creation of new energy corridors and the exploitation of renewable energy sources and safe nuclear power utilization.

The FEED European Added Value is explicit, at an institutional, communicative and technological level, and spins around the following axes:

- **Producing better quality policy** with content federation capabilities.
- **Building trust and gain acceptance of policy** by giving NGOs, citizens and businesses the means to supervise government and policy implementation and balancing the power of lobby organizations as far as energy and environmental issues are concerned.
- **Sharing responsibility for policy-making** which is accomplished by fostering active citizenship.

With the intent of strengthening their relations with citizens, through FEED local authorities ensure that:

- Information is complete, objective, reliable, relevant, and easy to find and to understand.
- Consultation has clear goals and rules defining the limits of the exercise and government's obligation to account for its use of citizens' input.
- Participation provides sufficient time and flexibility to allow for the emergence of new ideas and proposals by citizens, as well as mechanisms for their integration into government policy-making processes.