Provincial Government of the Western Cape
Cape Gateway Project Evaluation
29 May 2003

This report is also available at http://www.bridges.org/CapeGateway/.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cape Gateway project is the first step in the staged introduction of e-government in the Western Cape. The establishment of Cape Gateway and its information portal are central to the Provincial Government of the Western Cape's (PGWC) efforts to introduce e-government to the Province. The term "e-government" focuses on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) by governments when applied to the full range of government functions. In particular, the networking effect offered by the Internet and related technologies has the potential to transform the structures and operation of government. The impact of this transformation is felt in improved levels of service delivery, increased efficiency, reduced costs and greater government/citizen interaction. It is generally accepted that a staged introduction of "e-government" practices is the best way to achieve success and overcome resistance to change in what has hitherto been a bureaucratic and cumbersome process. The Western Cape Government has begun a process that will eventually give citizens better access to information by means of a portal , contact (call) centre and walk-in centre where people will be able to access information anywhere and anytime. It established the Cape Online Programme in December 2001 as a vehicle for achieving this.

A key focus of the Cape Online Programme of projects is the delivery of information and services through a networked environment. These are crucial to the establishment of the information society in the Western Cape. Numerous e-government and portal initiatives are at varying stages of formulation and implementation at national, provincial and local government level in South Africa. The PGWC undertook an e-government e-readiness assessment to ascertain how existing national e-government initiatives would interrelate with provincial government attempts to coordinate e-government service. The overall vision of Cape Gateway is to provide access to government services within a clearly defined and executed e-government strategy. It does so via Cape Gateway Operations (which comprises a walk-in centre and a contact centre operational during office hours) and Cape Gateway Development (comprising the portal, operational 24/7/365). E-government is not just about service delivery through another channel, it is about improved service delivery. Also, it is about more than just the introduction of technology to the process, it is about an underpinning approach to the way(s) in which people have access to information. These are attempts to improve the efficacy of public administration service delivery, however these changes all take place within broader attempts at public sector reform which include steps to improve internal efficiencies, processes and begin adjusting processes and perspectives to take into account the manner in which information technology is changing the way the public administration is being run.

The overall objective for the bridges.org evaluation was to gauge the effectiveness of the project to provide information to citizens, business and government customers with Cape Gateway as a single point of access via the following channels, a portal, walk-in centre and contact (call) centre. This evaluation looked at two main questions:

⇒ **Best practice.** Did the Cape Online Programme implement accepted best practice principles in the Cape Gateway portal? If not, what is needed to put the portal in line with international best practice?

⇒ **Real access.** Will the Cape Gateway portal give the citizens of the Western Cape Province *Real Access* to online government information?

The evaluation found that the Knowledge Economy & E-Government (KEEG) Branch of the PGWC has consistently tried to adopt best practice in their work, and to take full cognizance of the needs of the citizens of the Western Cape. Their methodology has been externally focused and driven by customer demand. They have met all of the *Real Access* criteria set by the evaluators, and are committed to passing

on the fruits of their work to others engaged in this kind of work, and at little or no cost. They have encountered a number of obstacles, the majority from external bodies and out of their control. Wherever possible they have overcome these obstacles and the lessons learned will be invaluable for the later stages of this project and others that KEEG and the PGWC will undertake in the future. Principally, the need for more flexible and informal structures in the Provincial Government, the removal of bureaucratic hurdles, and increased awareness of the benefits that ICT and e-government can bring for all citizens and members of government are all issues that need to be addressed.

The main findings of this evaluation are that the Cape Gateway Portal project will achieve its objective of delivering government information to the public and that the project adopted best practice wherever possible. There were a number of valuable lessons learned from the project that can be applied to further deployment of government portals in developing countries. A number of obstacles to technology use have also been identified which will need to be overcome in order to promote the efficient implementation and widespread adoption of the portal.

Even with a short timeframe and despite several setbacks, largely outside the control of the implementing team, the project has achieved a number of key deliverables. The walk-in centre and contact (call) centre will be launched in June 2003. The portal itself is expected to go live in December 2003. The project has been an overall success in that it accomplished its goals to provide the citizens of the Western Cape with better access to accurate, up to date information about government. The government has also gained the benefit of experience, which has been documented through this report. It is important that the project now complete its final stages by building on the lessons learned. In addition, the valuable lessons learned from this experience should be disseminated outside the Western Cape so that others can benefit from the KEEG Team's experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all of the staff at Cape Gateway Project and members of the Knowledge Economy & E-Government Branch of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape who gave up time in their busy schedules to be interviewed and provide us with documentary information about the project for this evaluation. In particular we would like to thank Dr. Harold Wesso, Head of the Knowledge Economy & E-Government Branch, for allowing us free access to his Branch and staff, and for giving us the opportunity to evaluate this innovative project. Throughout the evaluation Dr. Wesso's strong direction has been evident, and we applaud his leadership as a local champion for technology use in a way that will ultimately benefit all citizens of the Western Cape Province. We would also like to thank Petro van Rhyn and Nikki Fielies for organising the on-site visits and interviews.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

In May 2001 the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) of South Africa published a White Paper entitled "Preparing the Western Cape for the Knowledge Economy of the 21st Century"[1] in order to align its strategies and projects to take best advantage of an ever more pervasive information society. The importance of such a long-term vision for countries and regions that have identified these trends and begun to equip themselves to take advantage of these developments cannot be underestimated. However, for countries and regions that have not taken such a long-term view, and are ill-equipped to take advantage of these developments, the potential exists to dramatically increase existing poverty, inequality and marginalisation. The Provincial Government has taken the long-term view and identified the potential that the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) offers and developed the Cape Online Programme of projects. The programme consists of a number of discrete yet related projects spearheaded by the Knowledge Economy & E-Government (KEEG) Branch within the Department of Economic Development and Tourism of the PGWC. The overall focus of the programme includes improving internal efficiencies in service delivery, enhancing the overall competitiveness of the region, and improving the lives of the Western Cape citizens through improved access to government content and services. It does so via Cape Gateway Operations (which comprises a walk-in centre and a contact centre operational during office hours) and Cape Gateway Development (comprising the portal, operational 24/7/365). The overarching Cape Online programme and the Cape Gateway Development project were launched in December 2001.

The Cape Gateway project is the first step in the staged introduction of e-government in the Western Cape. The project centers on developing an information resource which will be accessible to the public through an online portal, a telephone contact centre and a centrally located walk-in resource centre in Cape Town. The establishment of the Cape Gateway information portal is central to the PGWC's efforts to introduce e-government to the Western Cape Province. The term "e-government" focuses on the use of ICT by governments when applied to the full range of government functions. In particular, the networking capability offered by the Internet and related technologies has the potential to transform the structures and operation of government. The impact of this transformation is felt in improved levels of service delivery, increased efficiency, reduced costs and greater government/citizen interaction. It is generally accepted that a staged introduction of "e-government" practices is the best way to achieve success and overcome resistance to change in what has hitherto been a bureaucratic and cumbersome process.

Bridges.org was engaged to conduct an independent evaluation of the Cape Gateway Development project and more specifically, bridges.org was tasked with evaluating the strategies and actions that have been implemented to develop the portal element. Information was collected during site visits and interviews during February and March 2003 after careful consideration of the relevant strategy documents and progress reports compiled to date, and which were made available to the evaluators. Bridges.org did not assess the project management methodology of the portal project, but rather evaluated the approach taken to date, especially in relation to whether the project delivered what is called *Real Access* to online government information to citizens.

This evaluation report presents the lessons learned in this project so far, provides feedback on implementation, and is intended as a resource for planning and implementing future steps in the Cape

---

[1] For full details see list of documents reviewed in Section 8.

Online Programme and related initiatives. The intended audience for this evaluation includes members of the PGWC and KEEG, and others engaged in similar initiatives.

2 ABOUT THE CAPE GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

2.1 Cape Gateway Project overview within the Cape Online Programme of projects

A key focus of the Cape Online Programme of projects is the delivery of information and services through a networked environment. Numerous e-government and portal initiatives are at varying stages of formulation and implementation at national, provincial and local government level in South Africa. The PGWC undertook an e-government e-readiness assessment to ascertain how existing national e-government initiatives would interrelate with provincial government attempts to coordinate e-government service delivery. The overall vision of Cape Gateway is to provide access to government services within a clearly defined and executed e-government strategy. A diagram showing the elements of the Cape Online Strategy is below. E-government is not just about service delivery through another channel, it is about improved service delivery. Also, it is about more than just the introduction of technology to the process, it is about an underpinning approach to the way(s) in which people have access to information. These are attempts to improve the efficacy of public administration service delivery, however these changes all take place within broader attempts at public sector reform which include steps to improve internal efficiencies, processes and begin adjusting processes and perspectives to take into account the manner in which information technology is changing the way the public administration is being run.

Cape Online Strategy

Online Core Initiatives – Cape Gateway, Cape Change, Cape Net, Cape View, others

Online Communities – Khanya, Elsenburg, Wesgro, Nature Conservation, Tourism, Cities

New electronic **access** technologies for all communities

ICT tertiary **skills** development and global industry participation

ICT Sector Development

KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY & E-GOVERNMENT
Provincial Government of the Western Cape

If successful, the programme could transform the nature of interaction between government and recipients of services in the Western Cape. By creating a mechanism through which citizens and business can experience seamless integrated government, the initiative could also have a profound effect on the current structures and processes of government, pushing existing institutions towards greater economies of scale, efficiency and service delivery improvement. The internal information and communications environment within government could also be transformed, enabling internal users to benefit equally from the system. In addition, by streamlining and modernising government, Cape Gateway could enhance the role that the Western Cape, and perhaps South Africa, can play within the global community, possibly increasing foreign direct investment and strengthening our global competitive edge. It could stimulate citizen confidence in the e-environment and therefore grow the local ICT sector and e-commerce industry.

On the 25th of July 2001 the Provincial Cabinet approved the establishment of the Knowledge Economy & E-Government (KEEG) Branch of the PGWC. Its vision is: "To provide a vision, leadership, policy, strategy and operational direction in order to promote E-Government and to get the Western Cape online, to ensure that the Province, its citizens and its businesses derive maximum benefit from the Knowledge Economy".

As part of its strategy, KEEG developed the Cape Online Programme. Its vision is: "To develop an innovative e-environment, which facilitates a competitive knowledge-based economy that promotes economic growth and enhances the quality of life of all our people". Its mission is:
- o To enable government,
- o To harness the capabilities of the Internet,
- o To develop knowledge capacity and promote the appropriate use of ICT,
- o To increase internal efficiencies, and
- o To provide a better service to its citizens.

The Cape Gateway project was designed to:

- Provide easy access to quality Government information, resources and services, enabling Government to improve service delivery and to create an enabling environment for economic growth to the benefit of all in the Western Cape. Its mission is:
  - o To provide, manage and maintain easy access to Government information, resources and services.

Cape Gateway is a means of accessing information about government and its services, focused primarily (but not exclusively) on the Western Cape Province. It will have three channels of access:

- A telephone (contact centre) 0860 142 142
- A physical walk-in centre (142 Long Street, Cape Town)
- A web portal (www.capegateway.gov.za)

Facilitated access will also be provided through other agents, including other government offices and authorised NGOs who are:

- Trained to use the web portal
- Trained in government structures, processes and requirements
- Trained in facilitation
- Provided with support in the form of a contact centre

The service can be accessed directly by members of the public or access can be facilitated by Knowledge Officers. The portal will provide multi-lingual content in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. Content and services described are provided and maintained directly by the government departments responsible for them, and are compliant with standards for quality, reliability, breadth and depth. Follow-up with users by Cape Gateway staff will be part of standard operating procedures to ensure fulfillment of user needs and to monitor product effectiveness. The Cape Gateway design is centred around citizen needs through identified life events and life stages. The Cape Gateway is not a citizens' advice centre or a complaints department.

The envisaged benefits of the Cape Gateway are:

- It will be convenient. Each channel provides a single point of access to government information in the Western Cape. It will be available 24/7 online, available geographically anywhere via telephone, and available at no cost via the walk-in centre.

- It will be simple to use. It will be staffed by friendly, knowledgeable, trained facilitators. The information will be provided in normal language, organised from a user's perspective (i.e. not from a government perspective).

- It will be empowering. It will enable anyone to access and use government services more efficiently with the least amount of effort. It will help users articulate their needs and link them to information and services that fulfill those needs. It will target the most frequently requested and used information and services (i.e. it is not designed for government specialists or experts).

2.2 The institutions involved

The Cape Gateway Portal Task Team has representatives from every Department and Ministry of the PGWC as follows:

- Provincial Administration of the Western Cape/ The Premier's Office
    - IT Services
    - Communications
    - Legal Services
    - Human Resource Management
- Community Safety
- Cultural Affairs and Sport
- Development Planning
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Education
- Environmental Affairs and Planning
- Health
- Local Government
- Housing
- Social Services and Poverty Alleviation
- Transport and Public works
- Agriculture

In addition, the team has worked closely with local government, specifically the City of Cape Town, and they have developed a Memorandum of Understanding. They have consulted with the (national) Department of Public Service and Administration and other Provincial Governments, and wherever possible have developed relationships designed to encourage other departments to participate fully in the programme, including the establishment of a Portal Task Team representatives and content custodians and web authors. Most importantly the team have developed a close relationship with the State IT Agency (SITA), who will manage the Oracle server on which the portal runs. The Portal Task Team currently numbers around 30 people representing all of the Provincial Departments. At the national level, the Cape Gateway Project fits well with South African Government objectives. In his State of the Nation Address in February 2003, President Thabo Mbeki stressed the need to expedite the use of modern communication and information technology in the fields of education, health, commerce and e-government. President Mbeki said, *"The effective delivery of the expanded services to the people requires that we improve the efficiency of the public service. Without an efficient and effective public service, it will be impossible for us to register the advances that we are capable of. Again, this will require that we make a number of determined interventions......... The process to set up a government-wide call centre will be speeded up. In addition, we will start this year to phase in an electronic system, an e-government gateway, in which the directory of government services will be available, according to citizens' needs rather than the silos of the state bureaucracy, an electronic version of the Multi-Purpose Community Centres".*

Whilst the national government has embarked on a portal programme and is reviewing best practice in e-government, the evaluators are not aware that the national programme, and its related initiatives, is at as advanced a stage of development as the PGWC programme.

2.3 The target audience for the portal

The target audience for the portal is the population of the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The population of the Province is assessed at 4.5 million, 9.7% of the country's total. The three principal languages in the Province are Afrikaans 59.2%, English 20%, and Xhosa 19.1%. The Western Cape comprises 10.6 % of South Africa's land area, and the majority of its population, some 2.7 million people, live in the City of Cape Town. The rest are dispersed across 129,370 square kilometers of land in predominantly rural locations. The population of the Western Cape, for the portal's purposes, includes all citizens and residents of the Western Cape, all businesses and organisations in the province or active in the province, members of the Provincial Cabinet, employees of the PGWC and other government entities active in the province, parties and individuals interested in the Western Cape, potential traders, investors, tourists, researchers and others seeking government information or services about the province.

2.4 The technology used

The portal runs from an Oracle database that is managed by and located within SITA. Some local in-house technical support is provided from within the team, and from the PGWC IT Department. The first version of the system will provide information to people. Later versions will become progressively transactional.

The data system for the contact centre will be able to be modified to take account of the questions asked, and will also record the questions asked to enable feedback and manipulation of data. Management of the contact centre is being outsourced. There will be five agents initially, but the plan is that it could eventually be staffed by up to 30 agents, depending on demand.

2.5 The content materials used

The portal will be used to disseminate information about all government departments and services in the Western Cape, and will also include some information relating to National, Municipal and the City of Cape Town Government. Very little of this information was available in electronic form at the start of the project, and considerable resources have been allocated to creating electronic text and ensuring that the content is of a uniform standard and style. Minimum content standards have been created and circulated to all PGWC Departments, and each department has its own web author and information custodian who works closely with the KEEG team. Much of the content gathering has now been outsourced, with the work taking place within the relevant government departments, but this role is expected to revert to the parent departments in the future. Departmental web custodians have been appointed and are receiving extensive training.

In addition, the team assessed the language requirements for the content - content would have to be available in all three of the predominant local languages - and it undertook a needs assessment market research project at the Klein Karoo Kunstefees (an arts and culture festival attended by a wide cross-section of the Western Cape population) in 2002 and 2003. It also supported market research undertaken by the City of Cape Town about information needs in the metropolitan area so that the results could be fed in to the overall framework and extended into the province, thereby benefiting from the research and avoiding duplication of effort.

2.6 Deliverables

A number of key project deliverables have already been produced, notably:
- A communications strategy has been drawn up that details priorities and actions and guides all further communications and marketing activities;
- IN February and March 2003 the team undertook a high-level road-show within the PGWC to actively canvass support and ensure buy-in from top level management;
- The Knowledge Centre was launched internally on 31 January 2003. It is also serving the general public despite not being launched publicly yet;
- The Contact (Call) Centre is scheduled to be launched in June/July 2003. The tender has been awarded and staff are currently under training;
- Initial preparations for the portal launch are underway. The team is aiming to go live at the end of 2003;
- The Provincial Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Ebrahim Rasool, is an active champion of the project.
- The team has completed an overall project definition and product identity documentation. The document describes what the look and feel of all three access channels will be.
- The first e-newsletter about KEEG and the portal was published in January 2003, and is now published bi-monthly.
- A KEEG information package has been produced.
- Work has commenced on the portal content outline and sub-sections.
- The first set of monthly Project Management reports was produced in January 2003.
- The Design & Usability Project is running on schedule and work has started on the design of the portal architecture.
- The Content Project is proceeding in spite of difficulties getting good content from all 13 Provincial Government Departments.

- A content management system, Bee (www.bee.gov.za), that enables government content-publishing teams to publish on the web. Its functionality covers content input, workflow and reporting. The software is freely licensed to all government organisations in South Africa and internationally.

3 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The overall objective for the bridges.org evaluation was to gauge the effectiveness of the KEEG initiative to provide information to citizens, business and government customers via a portal which will provide information via online, walk-in and contact (call) centre access. This evaluation looked at two main questions:

⇒ **Best practice.** Did the Cape Online Programme implement accepted best practice principles in the Cape Gateway portal? If not, what is needed to put the portal in line with international best practice?

⇒ **Real access.** Will the Cape Gateway portal give the citizens of the Western Cape Province *Real Access* to online government information?

3.1 Best practice evaluation

Bridges.org began the evaluation by reviewing what we already knew about best practice in the field, and then conducted research on the Cape Gateway project itself through a series of interviews and a review of all the available project documentation. We concluded that a project of this kind needs to be evaluated against both best practice criteria, as outlined below, and *Real Access* criteria, as outlined in the following section. The best practice evaluation looked at six key criteria, and asked the following questions. Did the KEEG Team:

- Do some homework and learn from best practice in the field;
- Build a solid foundation;
- Set concrete goals and outline a plan with achievable steps;
- Appoint effective leadership;
- Followed the implementation plan; and
- Critically evaluate efforts and adapt as needed

3.2 Real Access evaluation

It is impossible to gauge the usefulness of a government information portal by merely looking at the strictly technical performance of the equipment and content; it is important to also consider how people use the technology and the content, and what affects their use. It is not really about the technology, it is about the people – the technology and information users. Bridges.org evaluated this project by using a concept it has coined as "Real Access = Real Impact". The idea is that, despite the potential benefits offered by ICT, computers and connections will mean nothing to people in developing countries if they do not *use* it effectively. People may have physical access to very useful technology, but they will not use it if it is not appropriate to their needs, if they cannot afford to use it, if technical support is unavailable, if it adds too much burden to their already busy day (or even if they just perceive that it will), or if there are laws that limit its use. So in order for ICT to have a Real Impact on ground level development, people in developing countries need to have more than just physical access to technology, they need to have Real

Access. Even though the evaluation focused on the technology, it also took into consideration how the project itself was implemented on the ground to the extent that project implementation had an effect on the technology use.

This evaluation considered the following 16 criteria to determine whether the Cape Gateway portal gives the citizens of the Western Cape Province Real Access to online government information:

(1) Physical access to technology.
(2) Availability and use of relevant content.
(3) Appropriateness and use of the portal for information collection from citizens.
(4) Appropriateness of portal to local conditions.
(5) Affordability of access to the portal for citizens.
(6) Sustainability of portal by government.
(7) Skills required by citizens in order to use the portal effectively.
(8) Reliability of the portal.
(9) Integration of the portal and online government information into customers and citizens daily routines.
(10) Socio-cultural factors that affect technology use.
(11) Confidence in technology use in terms of privacy, security, or cybercrime.
(12) Public enthusiasm for technology use.
(13) The effects of the national legal and regulatory framework on technology use.
(14) Public support of government activities and political will in government to enable widespread technology use throughout society.
(15) Relevance to the citizens of the Western Cape.
(16) Impact of the portal on the community and larger society.

The evaluation involved information collection from background documents and reports, site visits, and unstructured interviews with members of the KEEG team. A detailed list of the documents reviewed and partners and participants interviewed is at Section 8.

⇒ *Background documents*: The Western Cape Government provided extensive background documents on the project that explained the history and mechanics of implementation. Key source materials are listed in Section 8.

⇒ *Site visits.* Bridges.org staff visited the offices of KEEG on four occasions to observe and interview the partners and participants in their work environments. These visits helped to put the project into context and gave the evaluators a true representation of the levels of commitment and professionalism within the KEEG team.

⇒ *Unstructured interviews.* In-depth interviews were conducted using an unstructured approach. The evaluator used initial guiding questions and core concepts initially, but the questions were mainly open and the conversation was allowed to move freely toward any direction of interest that came up. This method was used to explore broad topics and allow the participants to focus on the issues that mattered the most to them.

3.3 Limitations of this evaluation

There were four limitations to this evaluation, as follows:

- Not all of the phases of the project have been completed, making it difficult to assess the eventual impact of some of the decisions that have already been taken;
- The portal has not gone live yet and we cannot comment on its *actual* impact and fitness for purpose;
- There has not been sufficient time to consult stakeholders in the Portal Task Team; and
- This evaluation does not consider the Project Management techniques used by the team and focuses solely on the *Real Access* and Best Practice evaluation. However, a review of the Project Documentation showed that the team used advanced Project Management techniques and that they had adhered closely to best practice in this particular area.

4   RESULTS OF THE BEST PRACTICE EVALUATION

4.1 Do some homework and learn from best practice in the field

Measure	Comments
Start by examining what has already been done and draw on best practice in the area.	At all levels, the KEEG team attempted to follow best practice and learn from lessons learned in similar initiatives, including but not limited to UK Online, India, Australia, Singapore and Germany. They did this by conducting research on the web and other sources, meeting with users and developers of portals and call centers, and at the most senior level, participating in e-government workshops and conferences. Senior team members visited practitioners in Bavaria, Australia, Malaysia and Singapore. They looked at and adapted generic best practice in project management and systems development. In terms of lessons learned from others and practice adopted, the team recognized that e-government programmes are not static, and that at this stage of the project they should be adopting best practice in portal development rather than e-government, which would be more relevant in later stages. They also looked at what was happening in national, provincial and city level initiatives with similar objectives, and from the outset tried to identify potential partners to increase the chance of success and avoid duplication. All members of the project interviewed highlighted the extensive research and analysis carried out and the attention paid to planning, design and project management. All of this influenced the way the project was shaped, and resulted in the creation of a system based on user needs that is driven by usability not technology. Research suggests that this project is the only one of its kind in South Africa, and the team is committed to making the lessons that they have learned available to others.

4.2 Build a solid foundation

Measure	Comments
Conduct a needs assessment.	The KEEG team undertook a market research project at the Klein Karoo Kunstefees in 2002[2] and 2003, and supported market research undertaken by the City of Cape Town on user needs so that the results could be fed into the work at provincial level. The team also conducted extensive consultation and needs assessment with government users. Citizens are the portal's primary target, government and the private sector are secondary, but to date there have been more requests for information from government employees than anyone else.
Canvass support	The KEEG team, from Chief Director level down, has canvassed support for the portal at all levels in the Provincial and

[2] See reference to report in Section 8. The results of the 2003 research are not yet available.

to gain widespread participation and buy-in.	City of Cape Town Governments. It has also championed the project and sought and was given approval from the Provincial Minister. They have appointed champions in each Provincial Government Department, and these champions attend the Portal Task Team meetings. This is used to facilitate two-way communication.
Build partnerships with like-minded efforts and avoid duplication.	There is no other work of this kind going on in South Africa at provincial level. With the co-operation of other Provincial Government Departments, KEEG has helped to identify e-government champions in each department. But these people do not always attend each meeting, and do not always get involved. The Department of Education is a strong supporter, and the Department of Local Government and Housing has used the content guidelines created by KEEG to update its website to good effect. The Health Department is behind in content development, but sees involvement in the portal as an opportunity to catch up technologically. Other Departments are slowly warming to the process. The team is also looking at ways of providing access to the portal from other ICT related initiatives in the region, such as the Smart Cape access points, the Libraries project, and others.
Conduct an exploratory case study or pilot.	The team has not conducted an explanatory case study or pilot. They have conducted extensive research on relevant subjects and have engaged with those at the leading edge of e-government and portal practice. They also developed a conceptual model of democratic government and ensured that the information flows in the portal reflected what should happen in a truly democratic process.

4.3 Set concrete goals and outline a plan with achievable steps

Measure	Comments
Develop clear guidelines for the portal.	The concept of an information portal is not a new one. In addition to extensive research the Cape Gateway Development Team devoted considerable resources to getting the specification of the portal right. They have based all their work on the premise that the focus must be on usability, and ensuring that the portal can provide information relating to government to all citizens of the Western Cape. The team also recognised that the portal's content policy would need to change and develop over time, and this has been factored into the programme. The clear message from all the Project Definition Documentation is that the project is usability not technology led, is externally focussed, and that at all times the user has priority over functionality. The process involved consultation with all stakeholders, including other government departments, who will ultimately be responsible for the management of their own content. The portal will either provide information that is contained on other sites, notably National and Local Government information, or point to them, but does not see itself as replacing these other sites. The Portal Task Team liases with other site managers and encourages sharing and transfer of information. All stakeholders have been involved throughout the process in an attempt to foster buy-in and create a team dynamic. The intention is for the portal to provide information about provincial-level government initially and to slowly add information relating to municipality level.

Write a clear project brief.	The Cape Gateway Development team have followed best practice in project management and have produced clear Project Definition Requirements for each phase and aspect of the project. Again, these documents have been made available to all members of the Portal Task Team and the evaluators.
Define the role of all stakeholders	The team has devoted considerable resources to ensuring that roles within the team are clearly defined and that there is no duplication of effort. Similarly, external stakeholders from other departments have been given clear briefs and requirements.
Develop selection criteria for choosing suitable content for the portal /understand the audience targeted	The portal is targeted at all citizens of the Western Cape. Three distinct types of user have been identified. Government users, ordinary citizens, and informed citizens, by which they mean NGOs or Civil Society Organisations. The intention is to serve those who already have access to information but more importantly those who do not, especially those in rural and outlying areas. The portal team are already collecting data relating to the types and numbers of questions asked at the walk-in centre in order to ensure that content is always relevant. Similar tools will provide data from the contact centre and portal itself so that the portal will constantly reflect user needs.
Develop critical success factors for the overall project.	Throughout the life of the project the task team have met regularly and reviewed progress against objectives. Clear deliverables and milestones have been set in all of the documentation. The current target date for the portal to go live is the end of 2003, but this will be preceded by live testing in the contact centre to gain additional feedback and ensure that the service delivered accurately reflects peoples needs. A detailed project planning process with milestones has also contributed to the success of the project thus far.

4.4 Appoint effective leadership

Measure	Comments
Appoint a good project management team	The project has been managed effectively from the outset, following best practice in project management. All members of the team have clearly defined roles and outputs. Observations gained in conducting the research for this evaluation revealed a highly motivated team that is proactive, process oriented, has a good team spirit and an understanding of team methodology.
Empower a champion	The head of the Knowledge Economy and e-Government Branch, Dr. Wesso, has personally championed the project, and is conducting a series of road shows with other department heads to foster buy-in and support. He has also encouraged the project team and fostered belief in the strategy. The Provincial Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Ebrahim Rasool, has also championed the cause. The effect of this is felt throughout the team, who all believe in the project and want to make a real difference to the way in which citizens access information. Dr Wesso has also been given a clear mandate and is empowered to deliver the project.

Appoint tailor-made teams	Members of the KEEG Team were all recruited specifically for the project, and particular care was taken to ensure that the right mix of skills, seniority, direct access to top management and experience was obtained to maximize impact.

4.5 Follow the implementation plan

Measure	Comments
Draw up an action plan.	Detailed Project Definition Requirement documents were prepared, and the team has followed a well-documented path. The planning process involved all stakeholders wherever possible. The whole process is project management-driven with clear deliverables. Much of the work found its genesis in the Cape Online Strategy Document published in August 2001.
Make realistic commitments.	The implementation plan has suffered delays and setbacks, largely as a result of external influences, mostly related to deliverables from other government departments. Internal commitments have been met or pushed back to take account of third party influence. The initial commitments made were all realistic and achievable. However the Content Manger and Project Manager joined the project relatively late due to a combination of recruitment constraints and scarce skills.
Set clear deliverables at the outset.	The deliverables are very clear. To provide access to Provincial Government information to all citizens of the Western Cape in a way that is easy for people, is independent of levels of access to ICT and other socio-economic factors, is customer focused and inclusive. The portal should make government more transparent and accountable. The initial phase of the portal provides a one-way flow on information to citizens. Later phases will be transactional, and will begin with electronic tendering and the issuing of permits and licenses. Again, this is in line with best practice.
Draw up a timeline and stick to it.	The timeline for the project has been clearly set, but not always adhered to, largely because of external constraints. Some team members felt that the overall timescale for the project, three years, should not have been reduced to 18 months, and that this has caused some of the parallel processes, such as data collection, to be rushed, adding pressure to (some) already reluctant data providers in other departments.

4.6 Critically evaluate efforts and adapt as needed

Measure	Comments
Monitor the project continuously.	As part of the project planning process the project has been subject to regular review. Monthly meetings of the Portal Task Team have been held and have helped to ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed of progress and delays. These meetings have also provided a fora for discussion of problems and a way of seeking consensus for changes to the plan.

Critically evaluate efforts at regular intervals	The monthly Portal Task Team meetings have provided an opportunity for peer evaluation, as have the weekly project meetings between the KEEG team and the IT Department, but no external evaluation of the process has been conducted until now. The majority of team members interviewed welcomed this evaluation as a means of taking stock and addressing issues that had remained hidden. Internally, the team is constantly looking at ways of improving the project. Agreed milestones are reviewed at every monthly meeting. Many of those interviewed felt that there had not been enough testing - again due to resource constraints, primarily a lack of time, and that they were constantly learning lessons.
Report back to clients and supporters	The monthly Portal Task Team meetings have provided a means of reporting back to all stakeholders. In addition, high-level briefings have been undertaken to brief senior government leaders about the project and progress, including the Provincial Cabinet and the Standing Committee.
Adapt as needed	The team is currently looking at the value of the monthly reporting process. They have also had to adapt timescales and requirements to take account of what has been described as the inflexible approach of other government departments, notably IT and Personnel. The team is still short of one IT specialist - none can be found within government - and they cannot offer a competitive salary level to attract an external candidate. They have also run into problems with a difference of opinion between themselves and the IT Department about the management of IT competencies, but not the competencies themselves, and the traditional IT view that system development and design should go hand-in-hand, whereas in the portal they are treated separately. Also comments were made about the IT Department being "in crisis", and that this had in turn affected the team's work. The team has adopted a flexible approach to all of these problems with notable success, apart for the unfilled IT post.

5 RESULTS OF THE REAL ACCESS EVALUATION

5.1 *Physical access to technology*

Measure	Comments
ICT access in South Africa	Compared to other countries, South Africa is in the middle tier of ICT development with a relatively large and growing population that has access to ICT, but many issues hinder further growth and the beneficial impact of ICT. Like most other countries, South Africa has a large internal digital divide, which limits access to ICT and its impact on people's lives.[3] The level of access to ICT in South Africa is varied, and is generally poor. Access to telecommunications is improving (11.35 fixed lines per 100 people compared to 2.62 for all of Africa), but access to the Internet remains low (8.8% Internet access for the population compared to 18% in Europe and 40% in the United Kingdom). Access to telecommunications and the Internet is highest in urban centers such as Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town, but the situation is markedly worse in rural areas, where lack of infrastructure and high costs (between R 70 and R130 per month for unlimited dial-up access, excluding basic phone charges) are the real barriers to ICT use.
ICT access and use in the Western Cape Province	While there is a portion of the Western Cape population that is highly literate and financially stable, the majority of people below the poverty line do not have a fixed or mobile telephone, nor have access to computer, email, or the Internet (Vlachos 2001). Since the majority of low-income inhabitants in the Western Cape cannot afford to pay for basic services such as water, electricity, and sanitation, it follows that ICT services are out of reach as well (Palmer Development Group 1999). Similar to the national statistics, there are large divides in the Western Cape's ICT Industry. Only 20% of ICT workers are women (Van der Merwe and Stander 2002). The Western Cape and Gauteng Provinces host more than 80% of South Africa's ICT companies, although, only 11% of the ICT sector is in the Western Cape, versus 70% in Gauteng (ISETT 2001a).
ICT access within the Western Cape Government	There are a number of initiatives under way to improve access to ICT within the Western Cape, but they are largely targeted at access for citizens. The Cape Access programme, the libraries programme, kiosks and the Khanya programme, specifically targeted at schools, are all increasing access to ICT, and by implication are improving access to ICT within

---

[3] The legacy of Apartheid is well known, and need not be recounted here. Yet, while South Africa is striving to move beyond the old divisions of class and race, these issues continue to shape current economic, social, and political realities. It is important to consider how historically significant socio-economic inequities in South Africa still affect, though do not determine, the impact of ICT and the digital divide. South Africa's history of inequality shapes and exacerbates the digital divide in four main areas: economic inequality and poverty, inequality of public infrastructure, inequality of education, and geographic isolation.

environment	government. Of the 68,000 PGWC employees, an estimated 8,000 have workstations. The majority of these have access to email and approximately 10% have Internet access. The rest have shared access via internal Internet access points. Wherever possible the PGWC has encouraged the use of existing facilities with ICT to improve access and avoid duplication of effort and resources.

5.2 Availability and use of relevant content

Measure	**Comments**
Current availability of locally relevant government content	Locally relevant government content is available, but it varies in quality and quantity from department to department, and is usually targeted at more informed customers in the form of legislation, reports and strategies. Some of the content is available online but most of it in hard copy, about what individual departments visions and missions are, but little about what they actually do and how that impacts on society. Many PGWC Departments could not describe what their role really was. What content there is currently on departmental home pages is not user-friendly. The majority of information is paper-based, and only a small percentage is available in all three local languages. Of the 68,000 Provincial Government staff there are only three to translate all documents into three languages. The KEEG project requested the outsourcing of this work in an attempt to speed up the process. Provincial and National documentation is currently in two languages, Afrikaans and English, but all portal documentation will be in three, to include Xhosa. This is in line with PGWC language policy. Information on the portal will cover external-facing issues only, and only information directly relevant to citizens will be put up initially, with other documentation taking a lower priority. The site will also include information about government-funded NGOs.
Current use of online government content	There is little current use of online content at the provincial level, but use is already being made, in a limited way, of disseminating contract information at Provincial and City level. There is expected to be a high demand for online content as access to documents - and eventually transactions - online will reduce the time taken and expense incurred by rural inhabitants who will no longer have to travel to the City to complete forms, collect documents, get licences, pay taxes etc..
Additional content that will be available through the portal	In addition to increasingly detailed information relating to Provincial Government, the portal will also contain information about national and local government. It will either duplicate information or link to other sites. Where the current content on other sites is poor the portal team will rework it. For "bulky" information like legislation the portal will either incorporate it or point to it. The portal will include information about local and provincial initiatives, like the Unicity and Wesgro, as well as government funded NGOs. Another addition is the inclusion of material in Xhosa, a language spoken by 19% of the Western cape's population. The portal will eventually provide information about all three tiers of government.

Potential impact of the portal for disseminating government information to citizens electronically	The potential impact of the portal is enormous. The challenge is how to make the information available and understanding what people want to do with it. The KEEG team has spent considerable time getting the answers to these questions. For this reason, they decided that the portal should be a general portal aimed at the widest possible audience. For the first time people will know where to go to get the information they need. In its first phase as a provider of information the portal will eventually provide access to every piece of information about the Provincial Government, and this will bring enormous benefits to the community in terms of time and money saved. Citizens will not have to make long journeys to get information, will not have to wait in long queues, and the information they get will be accurate and up to date. It provides three types of customer access - phone, walk-in, and portal, and is aimed at all types of citizens, whether private, business, government employees and members of civil society organisations. The portal will also raise awareness about the Promotion of Access to Information Act. The Act was introduced in February 2000 to give effect to the provisions of section 32 of the Constitution of South Africa which provides for the right of access to "any information held by the state" and "to any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any right". Current figures show that the portal is used by government (60%), business (30%), and private citizens (10%) to access government information.

5.3 Appropriateness and use of the portal for information collection from citizens

Measure	Comments
Plans for using the portal for data collection	There are no plans to use the portal for information collection at this time. Data will be collected about the questions asked by users for content management purposes. The next phase of the portal will be transactive, and it is conceivable that later phases could and will be used for data collection.
Potential impact of the portal for data collection	As the portal develops, and moves into a transactional phase, the potential impact increases further because of the ability of the portal to *collect* information which can then be used by government to distribute resources more accurately and effectively and improve service to customers.

5.4 Appropriateness of portal to local conditions

Measure	Comments
Is the necessary infrastructure in place to support the hardware and software	The portal will be managed by SITA and it is planned to be in operation on a 24/7/365 basis. All of the necessary infrastructure is in place to support this, and the Cape Gateway Development team has included SITA and the PGWC IT Department in the planning process.

operation of the portal on a 24/7/365 basis	
Security	This is not an issue for public users in the first phase, but will become an issue when the portal allows transactional processes.

5.5 Affordability of access to the portal for citizens

Measure	Comments
Local economic realities	Information can be freely accessed via the walk-in centre and at the cost of a local call to an 0860 share number. Calls made during standard time (Monday through Friday, 07:00 to 19:00) over a local distance (0-50kms) involve a minimum charge of 55 cents and are charged at 0.618 cents per second (incl. VAT). Charges accrued for calling over 50km distances will apply to the contact centre minus the 0-50km minimum changes. During callmore times, the minimum cost remains the same, but the cost per second decreases to 0.233 cents per seconf (incl. VAT). The cost of Internet access to the portal remains disproportionately high and this is likely to inhibit access to the portal by those with less disposable income.

5.6 Sustainability of portal by government

Metric	Comments
Steps to ensure continuity	The PGWC are committed to the portal and its continued existence as part of their overall strategy for the integration of ICT in the Province.
Cost to government of running the portal	The capital and running costs of the Cape Gateway (including the portal, contact centre and walk-in centre) are estimated to be ZA Rand 6 Million per annum, and maintenance costs will be distributed between a number of PGWC Departments. The evaluators have been told that budget provisions have been made to cover the annual maintenance and infrastructure costs.
Economic sustainability	Depends on continued funding from PGWC. The evaluators understand that provisions will be made in future budgets.

5.7 Skills required by citizens in order to use the portal effectively

Measure	Comments
Skills required for	Minimal skills will be required to access information. Access will be by telephone, electronically and by walking in to a

citizens using the portal	centre. At its most basic level, only spoken communication is required, and content - and help - will be available in all three of the predominant local languages - Afrikaans, Xhosa and English.
How portal will help to build local ICT skills more broadly	By encouraging people to use ICT to access information this initiative will undoubtedly foster ICT use in the region. As more information becomes available and is accessed, as the portal moves to its second phase where people will be able to conduct transactions, and as awareness of the facility increases, the process itself will encourage more ICT use, and help to build ICT skills and awareness locally. For many people transacting with government will be their first use of ICT, and as such it must demonstrate the versatility and facility that it offers. People will soon realise that interacting with government in this way is easier, quicker and cheaper, and this in turn will foster more ICT use.
Training available	No training will be given to members of the public, but none is needed to access the portal via the contact centre or walk-in centre.

5.8 Reliability of the portal

Measure	Comments
Reliability of portal and back-end technology	The portal will be hosted by the State Information and Technology Agency (SITA) on an Oracle database. At no time in the evaluation did we hear doubt about the reliability of the hardware, software or SITA's ability to manage and operate the system. When the system becomes transactional, high reliability levels and back-up facilities will need to be maintained to ensure that there is no loss of confidential and financial information belonging to citizens.
Technical support available within government	SITA and the Western Cape Government's IT Department will provide technical support.

5.9 Integration of the portal and online government information into customers and citizens daily routines

Measure	Comments
Usefulness of portal for citizens to get government information	Citizens will be able to access the portal in three ways. There is a walk-in centre where knowledge officers provide the answers to questions (and also respond to telephone and email enquires at this time), a call or contact centre which will handle telephone enquiries (management of the centre is being out-sourced, staff are currently undergoing training) and the portal itself to deal with electronic enquiries. Information will be available in all three of the predominant local languages,

Measure	Comments
and/or interact with government	Afrikaans, Xhosa and English.

5.10   Socio-cultural factors that affect technology use

Measure	Comments
Limitations in technology use because of gender, race, religion, age or other factors	It is unlikely that socio-cultural factors will limit use of the portal. The information provided is intended for all citizens and will be available in all three of the predominant local languages. The only limiting factors will be physical or electronic access - getting to somewhere with a telephone or Internet connection, or being able to get to the walk-in centre, or the cost of making a telephone call or of Internet access. Nearer the portal's go live date an extensive marketing campaign will tell citizens about the facilities and how to make enquiries. Details will also be provided in centers where there is currently access to ICT and government information. As the portal is targeted at all citizens of the Western Cape, there are no special programmes envisaged for the elderly, previously disadvantaged individuals etc.

5.11   Confidence in technology use in terms of privacy, security, or cybercrime

Measure	Comments
Protecting citizens, and concerns about what happens "behind the screen"	The first phase of the portal is not transactional, and measures to ensure the protection of personal data, and protection against cybercrime and fraud are not necessary. These issues will need to be addressed when transactional processes begin. Not only will the necessary measures have to be in place to protect information and data, citizens will need to be made aware of the issues and of the measures taken to protect them if they are to have confidence in the system and use it to its full potential.

5.12   Public enthusiasm for technology use

Measure	Comments
Technology culture	The launch of the portal will be supported by an extensive marketing campaigns aimed at government users and private citizens. The team has conducted extensive research into the media and language to be used in order to maximize interest in and use of the portal. Particular care has been take to ensure that the language is "user friendly" and devoid of technical terms wherever possible.
Using the	There are a number of related projects underway in the Western Cape designed to improve and encourage use of and access

technology outside of the government	to ICT under the overall Cape Online initiative. These include Cape Access, Cape Skills, Cape Procure, Cape Net and Cape Change, which have not yet been publicly launched.
Local champion	The programme is being championed within the Provincial Government at Departmental Head, Director General and Ministerial levels, but there are no external or community champions. Dr. Wesso is the Provincial custodian of the portal.

5.13   The effects of the national legal and regulatory framework on technology use

Measure	**Comments**
National ICT policy	National ICT policy has had and will have little or no impact on the use of the portal, except in so far as National ICT policy in relation to telecommunications affects the price of access via telephone and the Internet. Internet costs are comparatively high (between R70 and R130 per month for unlimited dial-up access, excluding basic phone charges). Lower access costs would encourage more use of the portal. Enabling legislation such as the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, which promotes the use of electronic transactions, will also have a positive effect on the portal when transactional processes such as tendering and licensing begin.

5.14   Public support of government activities and political will in government to enable widespread technology use throughout society

Measure	**Comments**
Government support for technology use	The Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town Government both recognise the impact that ICT can have on socio-economic development and are ardent supporters of technology use. Cape Town has 65% of the Western Cape's population and 75% of its economy, and has a growing ICT sector, which also benefits from Government support in terms of development grants and other support. Support for the initiative from other government departments is being sought through involvement in the Portal Task Team and at Departmental Head level through a series of road shows and presentations. An information pack " Cutting through the red tape" has also been produced.
Public support for the portal	The portal has not been launched publicly yet. The walk-in centre opened in November 2000 and the Knowledge Officers there have been responding to questions from citizens since then - either by telephone or walk-in. All three aspects of the portal will be launched publicly in September 2003, and a communications and marketing strategy has been devised, but there is already evidence to show that the public support and want access to government information in this way.

Community feeling of investment in project	This is difficult to judge before the portal goes live.

5.15   Relevance to the citizens of the Western Cape

Metric	Comments
Assessment and targeting of community needs	As part of their initial and ongoing research the KEEG team conducted research into community needs. An example of this was the survey conducted at the Klein Karoo National Arts Festival in 2002. Details are provided in Section 8. As part of an ongoing programme, questions asked will be monitored to ensure that the type of information people want is made available. It will be a demand driven process, based on community needs, and the content will alter based on those needs. The Knowledge Centre is already dealing with a diverse range of requests, including lists of schools; job vacancies; contact details for government departments or employees, requests for organograms, service requests (eg. where can I get a fishing permit), and international requests for information on issues such as culture and gender in the Province. The requests received are roughly 10% in Afrikaans, 1% in Xhosa and the rest in English.
Appropriateness and relevance of services provided	Initially the portal will only provide information to citizens. Accurate up-to-date information on government service is hard to come by, and the portal will save citizens time and money by providing a single point of access that is accessible by telephone, by walk-in and electronically. Demand for the service is growing, indicating that the level can only increase when the portal is launched publicly and goes live. By sending email and other requests to government, it removes the onus of responsibility from the citizen to *find* an answer and places the onus of responsibility to *deliver* the answer on the government. This emphasizes improved service delivery.

5.16   Impact of the portal on the community and larger society

Measure	Comments
Expected impact on Western Cape society	The first phase of the portal will improve access to government information and will benefit citizens directly through cost and time savings as they access information remotely. More efficient information dissemination will result in details of posts advertised within government being available in rural areas before the closing date for applications, and the rural poor being empowered by knowing what grants they actually have access to, making use of them, and knowing what their rights are. As the portal moves to its transactional phase and begins to collect information, benefits will be felt through more accurate town planning, provision of services and infrastructure, and online services such as the issuing of licences and

	collection of taxes. All of these will bring benefits and cost savings, which will impact on government and citizens alike. If it is used on a "life events " basis i.e. to record births, deaths, issuing of identity and social security numbers etc., it will also serve as an accurate adjunct for census purposes.
Fostering catalytic change and bridging the digital divide	For many citizens of the Western Cape the portal will be their first encounter with ICT. For example, people who use the portal are expected to become familiar with the technology, which will make them conduits to drive change to bring about the spread of technology throughout their society by disseminating knowledge about the portal and describing it to their colleagues. Overall, there is significant potential for this project to have a catalytic affect to promote the widespread use of ICT in the Western Cape. This will build on the desire of the Provincial and City administrations to narrow the digital divide in the area and foster further growth in demand for ICT and related services in an area which already has a thriving ICT sector but which also has a large percentage of its population with no access to ICT.

6 MAIN FINDINGS, LESSONS LEARNED, CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The main findings of this evaluation are that the Cape Gateway Project will achieve its objective of delivering government information to the public and that the project adopted best practice wherever possible. There were a number of valuable lessons learned from the project that can be applied to further deployment of government portals in developing countries. A number of obstacles to technology use have also been identified which will need to be overcome in order to promote the efficient implementation and widespread adoption of the portal.

6.1 Key findings of the evaluation

⇒ *The broader Cape Online Programme (including the Cape Gateway Project) has received support from the highest political levels.* The political support of Minister Ebrahim Rasool, Provincial Minister of Finance and Economic Development, has given the project significant credibility and contributed to its success. Currently, discussions are underway on whether the entire Cape Online Programme should be administered directly from the Premier's office. If this decision is taken, it will highlight further the importance of the initiative to all heads of department within the PGWC. Dr. Wesso has been carrying the mantle of local champion within the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, as Chief Director for the Knowledge Economy and E-Government Branch.

⇒ *The Cape Online Programme has identified discrete projects that will build towards delivering services to all citizens of the Western Cape.* The Cape Gateway Project is highlighted as the flagship project, and is the only project within the Programme that has been funded to date. The Cape Gateway Project has rightfully focused on internal data collection and on the effective implementation of knowledge and content management systems before attempting full e-government online interactivity and transactionality.

⇒ *The Cape Gateway Project has brought together a team of dedicated and motivated individuals to deliver the project.* The team comprises members brought in from other Provincial Government departments as well as from the private sector. A wide range of skills are represented including managerial, creative, communications, marketing and strategic direction.

⇒ *The Cape Gateway Project has developed commendable and innovative approaches to working within a traditionally slower bureaucracy and fast-moving electronic world.* Notably, the development of the Pre-qualified Service Providers database from which tender respondents can be sourced, and the speedy manner with which issues formally raised are addressed by all parties concerned, is commendable.

⇒ *Cape Online broadly, and Cape Gateway more specifically, have recognised the importance of stakeholder involvement.* The Cape Online Forum includes representatives from all spheres and departments of government, civil society organisations and the local business community. This is important as the local population of Cape Town represents 65% of the provincial population and generates roughly 75% of the provincial economy. Within Government, the Cape Gateway Development has formed a Portal Task Team to engage all internal government stakeholders in the process. This is supported by a detailed communications strategy that includes a road-show to

generate awareness and visibility and ensure that government employees understand the importance of this programme of work.

⇒ *The portal content collection process ensures that Departments are the final custodians of the informational services generated.* Content issues are considered by the Portal Task Team members who represent all PGWC departments. The decision to identify web authors (who will contribute content) and web custodians (who will have the overseeing responsibility of what goes live on the portal) within each department, will ensure that departments are custodians of "their" knowledge and carry the responsibility to regulate its quality and accuracy.

⇒ *The Cape Gateway Development has displayed flexibility, and devised effective methods to addresses challenges that arise.* The Team has recently instituted a process whereby an issue can be brought to the immediate attention of senior management. It documents the urgency of the situation and explains the need for immediate action. The document is signed, dated and an urgent meeting called that determines the immediate next steps to ensure that the progress of the project remains as close to schedule as possible. One such success was the raising of SITA's declared position that the content management system developed by VIZ, a technology development company based in Cape Town, would be incompatible with the existing technical infrastructure and could not be deployed. This was overcome and the system is now in its alpha testing stage. Flexibility was also displayed when it was decided that it would be best to outsource the running of the contact centre, and not have it run by Government as originally envisaged. The ability to alter the course of actions based on continual review and consideration of new information is to be encouraged.

⇒ *The Cape Gateway Development, and preparations for the portal, have adopted a strong usability approach.* This is notable in that it focuses on the citizens that the portal seeks to serve, and the varying technical skills levels that the potential users of the portal will have (both internal and external to government). The Cape Gateway Development team drive projects along the core competencies of usability, accessibility and interface design.

⇒ *There are currently no formalised ongoing internal evaluation procedures built into the Cape Gateway Development, however there are some feedback mechanisms.* These include undertaking an external evaluation of the project by bridges.org, as well as the beta and alpha testing of the content management system.

6.2 Unforeseen constraints and challenges arising that need to be addressed

The Cape Gateway Development project attempted to identify foreseeable challenges and to account for them in the planning of the project. However this did not preclude unforeseen constraints and external challenges arising over which the project team had little or no influence. This called for some innovative problem solving, careful diplomacy and creative working within existing government structures and processes.

⇒ *The Cape Gateway Development was faced with unexpected levels of resistance to both the structural and technological elements of the project.* The separate departments within government are accustomed to structuring their operations within vertical department structures and not transversally across all departments. To date, no provincial level transversal system has been successfully

developed and doing so requires significant high-level institutional buy-in and senior strategic direction to drive such initiatives. Even where national cross-departmental initiatives are in operation (such as the national systems for finance, and personnel management), these are still operated on outdated legacy systems and are not technologically progressive or innovative.

⇒ *Despite broad consultation and the formation of a representative Portal Task Team, decisions within the team do not get implemented effectively within the departments.* This can partially be attributed to the fact that the representatives attending the meetings do not have the support to bring the information back to departments that are receptive to the ideas and prepared to adjust their internal goals to achieve cross-departmental service delivery. This has been addressed in part through the internal road-show (pamphlets, CD-ROMs and presentations), but requires further strategic support at senior management level. This would involve a formalised and parallel change management programme that would inform management (who, more often than not, do not have a technical background) of the importance of such developments. Attendance at the Task Team meetings would then be enforced at a policy level and ensure that the time spent on the project would be followed with concrete deliverables. It is also anticipated that once there is a concrete deliverable, then support, commitment and solid participation will be more forthcoming from the departments.

⇒ *The PGWC is characterised by a lack of uniformity of key communications terminology and readily available content for the portal.* The portal content team believed that they would only need to collect, collate, apply final touches and publish the content, as per the initial project plan. As the project developed it became clear that there was a lack of clarity within departments as to *what* the services were that were offered to the citizens, let alone having that information available. Where text did exist, there was a lack of communications standards across departments to communicate key provincial government concepts, and what content there was was only available in one or two of the official languages. The creation of uniform communications standards is also being addressed by the Joint Marketing Strategy, and the Provincial Cabinet will need to advise on the measures to incorporate the new promotional logo with the Cape Gateway brand identity at an early date. Lastly, most of the available content for inclusion on the portal is only available on paper and needs to be converted into electronic format.

⇒ *The efficient implementation of the Cape Gateway is hampered by the current cumbersome tendering process.* The process is cumbersome both due to the amount of time required to complete the tender process, and from the perspective of compiling the tender advertisement. For example, projects over R30,000 are required to be on public tender for a minimum of 28 days, and then still need to be reviewed, considered, and awarded. The specific requirements for the wording of tender advertisements to be inclusive and non-discriminatory results in the paradoxical situation where far too many applications are received which then take time to process. This could have been averted through the setting of clearer parameters and more specific requirements to ensure that only the most suited applications are received.

⇒ *The Cape Gateway Portal is under severe constraints due to the fact that the Technology Team Leader position is still vacant.* Recruitment specifications for the position were disseminated in December 2002. The preferred applicant turned down the position in favour of a more competitive salary in the private sector and by this time, the second possible candidate had accepted a job offer elsewhere. The entire process to fill this post has had to be restarted, with the Work Study Group required to do another evaluation of the post and determine what is needed before advertising. Unfortunately, as the Work Study Group is concerned with detailing the more traditional requirements of a government post, it means that insufficient emphasis is placed on ICT and technical

skill considerations resulting in the position being allocated an inadequate remuneration package for the value of the skill-set required.

In the interim, attempts are being made with existing resources to draw up the portal's technical specifications. The launch of the Cape Gateway Portal is dependent on the technology arm of the project. However, without a team leader dedicated to driving the technology developments, there is a likelihood that the portal will not be ready for launching during 2003.

⇒ *Appropriate consideration needs to be given to the available resources and skills within government that can be allocated to the Cape Gateway project.* The Communications Services Directorate, which undertakes content translations for all provincial departments, has three employees dedicated to this task. This is completely inadequate, and the staff will not be able to generate all of the content for the portal. Contrary to statements of intent given at the beginning of the project, the IT Services Department were unable to fulfil the technical aspects of the project and external expertise had to be sought, further delaying the project. There was also a lack of clarity as to who would determine the technical specifications required for the development of the content management system, which almost resulted in the entire software package being redeveloped.

⇒ *Realistic and achievable timelines need to include an element of flexibility.* Bearing in mind the resistance that is to be expected, and the number of concurrent initiatives that have to be undertaken to ensure the success of a portal initiative, an element of flexibility needs to be included in the project planning. This will help ensure managed expectations, as continually shifting the deadline undermines the importance of the project being undertaken. There is a need to adopt a demand driven approach and to be flexible enough to respond.

6.3 Key lessons learned in this project and opportunities for the future

LESSONS DRAWN FROM CURRENT SUCCESSES

⇒ *Ground-breaking projects need to be steered by a champion(s) at the highest political and administrative levels.* This ensures the required political buy-in and overarching leadership, as well as the prioritisation and coordinated implementation necessary to ensure the success of transversal government initiatives.

⇒ *A series of related projects that address the various considerations of e-government, need to be implemented in a prioritised and timely manner to ensure a smooth transition towards e-enabled government service delivery.* These range from the need to have concurrent change management programmes for senior government officials, the need to undertake internal awareness creation programmes, and to support longer-term provincial infrastructure and telecentre access initiatives to ensure that the benefits of e-governance ultimately reach the people on the ground. Any portal initiative needs to be part of a broader solution targeted at the reform of the public sector and improved service delivery. Careful planning is required to prioritise and identify which projects need to be implemented concurrently.

⇒ *Forward thinking and technologically innovative projects require a strong team displaying a range of core competencies.* The unique and challenging environment that emerges within a team that possesses the work ethics of both the public and private sectors needs to be considered and harnessed

in a manner that adds to the strength of the team. Also, sensitivity needs to be exercised in approaching more traditionally bureaucratic departments who are likely to resist reforms to government working practices.

⇒ *Innovative and technical teams driving e-government related projects should seek creative ways to operate within a traditionally bureaucratic environment.* The reality remains that any e-government initiatives operate within broader government legacies. While pushing new frontiers and improved efficiency is to be supported, government cannot be administered like a private sector business overnight, nor should it seek to be. Rather, typical private sector efficiencies and foresight are sought with the traditional oversight measures in place to ensure accountability and transparency.

⇒ *Stakeholder consultation is necessary to ensure participation and buy-in to the process.* Planning to get the message across to all the stakeholders is an integral part of the process. It would be unwise to consider the communications function as something that can be outsourced at the end of the project to a communications service agency. Rather it should be a key element that is integrated into every step of the programme.

⇒ *Departments should be the final custodians of the content and services generated on the Portal.* Outsourcing the creation of usable content and allowing the relevant departments to review it perpetuates the misperception that content generation is an isolated task that lies over and above the department's existing priorities. Rather, content generation should be seen as an integral element of government service delivery, and departments should have a vested interest in the process and a responsibility to the citizen to maintain the relevance and accuracy of the information presented.

⇒ *Accepted methods to approach unforeseen challenges and a degree of flexibility are essential in addressing problems that may arise.* In ground-breaking e-government initiatives, no amount of planning (albeit essential) will cover every eventuality and an ability to think quick and smart will ensure that the project remains on course and as close to schedule as possible. There needs to be room for manoeuvre (this is likely to happen in a ground-breaking project, and there need to be mechanisms in place to deal with unforeseen challenges).

⇒ *Technologically heavy projects must be usability led.* Irrespective of the specific short and long term aims of any e-government initiatives, and in particular portal initiatives, it is important that the end-users of the technology are born in mind and that emphasis is placed on creating a technological environment that invites use and interaction, as opposed to alienating and discouraging use.

⇒ *Evaluation measures built into the project help ensure that the project remains on target and that it adapts, if necessary, to best serve the information needs of the citizen.* Internal evaluations should take place on an ongoing basis as part of the project-tracking processes, and external evaluations should take place at key milestones in the project.

LESSONS DRAWN FROM UNFORSEEN CHALLENGES

⇒ *Implementing innovative technologies and approaches to e-government will often be met with organisational inertia and resistance.* Government departments are heavily involved in meeting their own internal goals and objectives, and unless an e-government programme is driven from the highest levels, such projects will not receive the prioritisation required (for example in the realm of generating usable content for the portal). The value of running parallel change management programmes in such situations cannot be underestimated, as well as conducting provincial awareness

campaigns. The sooner there is a concrete deliverable the more likely it is that government departments will be willing to participate in and support the process.

⇒ *Content generation and communications standards need to be agreed at the start of the project if they are not already in existence.* The availability of relevant pre-existing content, in electronic format, should not be assumed under any circumstances. Only with strategic direction from top management will the generation of appropriate, relevant and accessible content be prioritised. Most of the content that is available provides detailed information on government vision and strategy, but there is little on what departments actually do and the services they offer.

⇒ *Creatively working with existing government processes whilst longer-term and more effective legislative changes are in the pipeline.* The Pre-qualified Service Providers database has helped speed up the process, and now such projects can be on tender for only one week before tenders are considered and awarded, and it is advertised to a closed email list that was drawn from a public process.

⇒ *Never underestimate the specialised skill set that will be required in undertaking e-government projects, and the high cost of these skills.* Ensure that posts are clearly defined and that the more technical skill-sets are accurately described and valued in order to carry out projects of this magnitude. The people required for such posts will normally be in employment, and there needs to be a quick turn around time to ensure that they are integrated into the project before accepting other offers in a faster moving private sector.

⇒ *Identify internal capacity and technical responsibilities at the outset of the programme.* This will ensure that adequate resources are assigned to the project and that additional skill-sets required can be recruited in good time.

⇒ *Timelines need to be realistically determined and adhered to as closely as possible.* This may necessitate instituting creative solutions when challenges to the project arise. It is important that promised deliverables are available as close to the scheduled dates as possible to ensure that government departments that have not yet fully bought into the process see the benefit of and commit to participating. Unnecessary delays will harm the credibility of the initiative.

⇒ *Project management.* A project coordinator needs to be hired at the outset to coordinate the project progress before each individual component gets too entrenched in its own work. Work breakdown structures must be presented at the beginning of the project, detailing who is accountable to who and what the processes for reporting are. A representative and broad project team needs to be in place when these structures are determined, to provide a range of different perspectives on possible challenges that may arise.

⇒ *Issues of privacy, data protection, and security will affect the widespread use of the portal, sooner or later.* With the increased migration of public records to electronic formats, existing legislation will need to be reformed and supplemented with more specific legislation to deal with the issues that will arise. This issue has yet to arise at this stage of the project, but needs to be born in mind for the future.

⇒ *Partnerships between different spheres of government are important.* This is best achieved in small steps, beginning with a formalised framework for collaboration, followed by tackling small joint projects that lead towards full political sign-up.

⇒ *Get people in place first.* This includes top management strategic support, to overarching project management and representatives from all government departments and stakeholders. Ultimately, despite it being a technology-based programme, it remains focused on the people who will conduct the work and on the people to whom these services will be delivered.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In May 2001 the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) set out a ten-year strategy for dealing with the challenges facing the province, in particular channeling the forces of globalisation for the elimination of poverty and the empowerment of people to lead fulfilling lives. The Provincial Government identified the potential that the effective use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) offered and developed the Cape Online Programme of projects. The Cape Gateway portal was one of these inter-related projects that were designed to improve internal efficiencies in service delivery, and enhance the overall competitiveness of the region, and improve the lives of the Western Cape's citizens through improved access to government content and services. The establishment of Cape Gateway and its information portal are central to the PGWC's efforts to introduce e-government to the Western Cape Province. The Cape Gateway project is the first step in the staged introduction of e-government in the Western Cape.

Bridges.org was engaged as an outside consultant to conduct an independent evaluation of the Cape Gateway Development project, and was tasked with evaluating the strategies and actions that have been implemented to develop the portal element. Bridges.org did not seek to assess the project management methodology of the portal project, but rather sought to comment on the approach taken to date, especially in relation to criteria designed to assess whether the project delivered what is called *Real Access* to technology.

This evaluation report presents the lessons learned in this project so far, provides feedback on implementation and lessons learned, and is intended to provide resource materials for planning and implementing future steps in the Cape Online Programme and related initiatives.

The evaluation found that the KEEG team has consistently tried to adopt best practice in their work, and to take full cognizance of the needs of the citizens of the Western Cape. Their methodology has been externally focused and driven by customer demand. They have met all of the *Real Access* criteria set by the evaluators, and are committed to passing on the fruits of their work to others engaged in this kind of work, and at little or no cost. They have encountered a number of obstacles, the majority from external bodies and outwith their control. Wherever possible they have overcome these obstacles and the lessons learned will be invaluable for the later stages of this project and others that KEEG and the PGWC will undertake in the future. Principally, the need for more flexible and informal structures in the Provincial Government, the removal of bureaucratic hurdles, and increased awareness of the benefits that ICT and e-government can bring for all citizens and members of government are all issues that need to be addressed.

We commend the efforts of the team, and of Dr. Wesso for providing the vision and leadership that is necessary for success in this kind of projects. We are confident that the portal will deliver the standard of service expected, and with relevant content, cheaply, easily and effectively to the citizens of the Western Cape, and hope that other administrations in South Africa and elsewhere will learn from their experience.

8 DOCUMENTATION REVIEWED AND PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED.

1. Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) of South Africa, Department of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Tourism. White Paper published in May 2001, entitled "Preparing the Western Cape for the Knowledge Economy of the 21st Century".
2. Cape Online Symposium, Summary Publication, August 2001.
3. Cape Online Summary 2002 and Forecast 2003.
4. Project Definition Report - Cape Gateway Development - Design and Usability (Portal), February 2003.
5. Project Definition Report - Cape Gateway Development - Content (Portal), February 2003.
6. Project Definition Report - Cape Gateway Contact Centre, December 2002.
7. Project Definition Report - KEEG Marketing and Communications Strategy, February 2003.
8. KEEG Communications Strategy, October 2002.
9. Cape Online E-Government Programme - E-Government Strategy, August 2001.
10. SITA E-Government Gateway - Concept Paper, April 2002.
11. Cape Gateway Business Plan and Implementation Plan, April 2001.
12. Cape Gateway Content Management Guidelines, February 2003.
13. Cape Gateway Monthly Reports, January and February 2003.
14. Cape Gateway Walk-In Centre Guest List, June 2002 and March 2003

The evaluators were also given access to a number of other working documents and concept papers in order to better understand why decisions were made and the thinking behind those decisions. These documents are not listed here.

KEEG STAFF INTERVIEWED

- Dr Harold Wesso, Head of Department

- Alan Levin, Manager, Cape Online Programme

- Alex Van Breda, Manager, Cape Gateway Operations

- Petro van Rhyn, Manager, Marketing and Communications

- Chris Higgo, Project Leader and Usability Team Leader: Cape Gateway Development (Portal)

- Katherine de Tolly, Content Manager

- Vernon Bowers, Assistant Content Manager

- Dolores Donovan, Project Manager

- Refilwe Tshabalala, Knowledge Centre Manager

- Gcobisa Mziba, Knowledge Officer

- Thys Hattingh, Web Manager