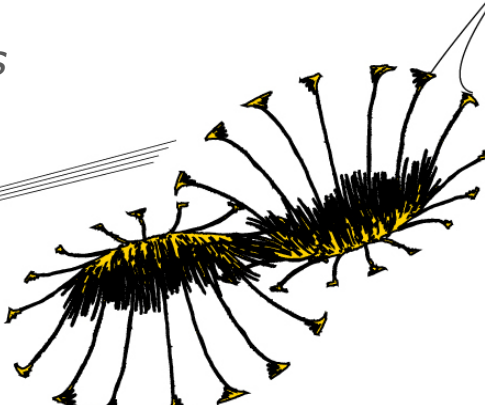



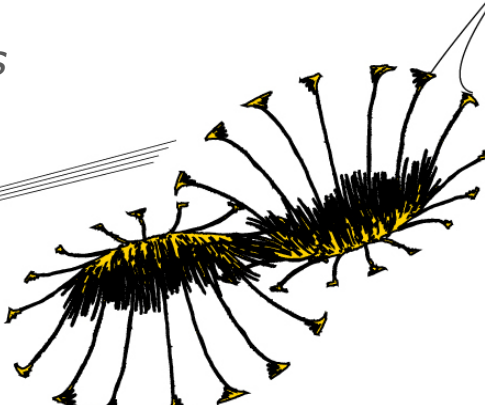
Embassy websites and international business support:

A comparative online services analysis



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Abstract

Electronic tools nowadays influence the services that the government provides. The growing experience across the world in the application of ICT has influence on government services. As the president of the United States of America states:

"I want us to ask ourselves every day, how are we using technology to make a real difference in people's lives."

– President Barack Obama

This research will focus on the influence of ICT in the field of commercial diplomatic services. Commercial diplomatic services are offered by the government to companies / entrepreneurs who aspire to do business in another country (host country).

Different authors identify "E-Government" as the vehicle through which most, if not all, federal government services will soon be offered, underlining the importance of E-Government to the future of government service delivery (Grönlund & Horan, 2005) (Morgeson & Mithas, 2009). E-Government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government.

Besides E-Government services, governments and politicians also use electronic tools as a medium to communicate diplomatic information, which is known as "Digital Diplomacy". The adoption of technology within diplomatic institutions and government is an important enabler for development of Digital Diplomacy (Ross, 2011) (Westcott, Digital diplomacy, 2008). Besides the evolution of the adoption of electronic tools within governments, businesses also work with electronic systems to communicate with customers and other organizations, this field of study is known as E-Business.

In order to understand the use of electronic tools for commercial diplomacy the aforementioned similar/related research streams (E-Business and E-Government) have been searched. Based on these research streams a framework – implementation settings – for this research has been developed that included four elements: Strategy, Goals, Type and Outcomes.

This research used a combination of methods to investigate the different elements of the framework for this study. Document analysis and structured website analysis have been used to research 10 countries (The Netherlands, UK, Denmark, United States, France, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Singapore, and Canada), which are ranked as the top 10 countries in E-Government. For the website analysis the biggest export partner of the ten selected countries is used as the host country.

The findings of this research show that E-CD is still in an 'embryonic' stage. The countries in this research developed strategies and goals for online presence, but the level of E-CD services is still at a presenting stage (albeit some more interactive services are spotted). Based on the findings in this research it can be concluded that implementation settings – strategy, goals – can explain the type of E-CD to a more significant extent than institutional settings. E-CD type (maturity) may well relate to the emphasis given to political orientation and not so much to institutional performance. Countries that show a more democratic orientation seem to show a higher score for E-CD type

In order to build on the findings of this research, the value of CD in a country can be taken in consideration in future research. A in depth study can help to understand relations between the variables in the framework of this study. Future research can focus on other countries, in for example emerging markets. These emerging economies can use technology from the start and integrate it in the government organization.

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1 Introduction

1.1 The increasing importance of commercial diplomacy

Commercial diplomacy is an important factor in today's global economy. Both companies and governments face enormous challenges arising from diminishing importance of: the traditional national boundaries due to globalization, technological change and developments in trading systems (Friedman, 2005). Companies in the current economy are turning global and economic power has shifted from developed economies to emerging economies. This in turn has caused governments of developed economies to support national business in the process of internationalizing and expanding across borders. Government have a major interest in supporting business abroad as it may lead to domestic job creation, tax revenue increase, and a more stable economy (Naray, Commercial Diplomats in the Context of International Business, 2011). In order to effectively support national business, governments of developed economies need to strengthen the instruments they use such as commercial diplomacy, while at the same time they will have to deal with budget cuts at their home country. That's one of the reasons why it is important to have a strategy to deal with support to globalization of national businesses. Commercial diplomacy has thereby become a policy priority for governments.

Commercial Diplomacy can be defined in different ways (Lee J. , 2010) (Naray, 2008), for this research is chosen¹ to use the definition for Commercial Diplomacy defined by Naray (2008). Naray (2008) defines commercial diplomacy as "an activity conducted by public actors with diplomatic status in view of business promotion between a home and a host country. It aims at encouraging business development through a series of business promotion and facilitation activities" (Naray, 2008). Zuidema and Ruël (2011) extent the definition of Naray (2008) by adding the actors without diplomatic status such as members of foreign diplomatic missions, their staff, and other related agencies perform these activities (Zuidema & Ruël, 2011). This will also be taken into account during this research.

Naray (2011) describes activities of commercial diplomacy as: searching for missing markets, business intelligence, country branding, networking and partner search, conflict handling and management of strategic concerns (trade policy). The development in technology can contribute to this set of activities, and to the development and deployment of tools for commercial diplomacy. As

¹ Discussion on definitions of Commercial Diplomacy can be found in chapter 2

seen in other fields of research in HRM (E-HRM), Governments (E-Government), and in business (E-Business) technology can contribute to the services provided by companies or government and make them even more efficient.

1.2 Commercial diplomacy in the digital age

The traditional boundaries of our geopolitical-economic world maps are being challenged (Simonin, 2008), a process referred to as globalization. Or as Friedman (2005) indicates: “The world is becoming flat”. Globalization may be defined as the broadening and deepening of linkages between national economies into a worldwide market for goods, services and especially capital (Cho, 2001). Commercial diplomacy can help governments to facilitate globalization to national businesses.

Electronic tools nowadays influence the services that the government provides. The growing experience across the world in the application of ICT has influence on government services (Gupta, Gupta, & Dasgupta, 2008). Governments over the world are expanding their services online, which are known as E-Government. Bill Gates – former CEO of Microsoft – claims that E-Government is one of the most exciting fields in electronic commerce in the near future. E-Government is a cost-effective solution that improves communication between government agencies and their constituents by providing access to information and services online.

This study will focus on the influence of electronic tools on commercial diplomacy, which is a combination of scientific research that is not yet combined and discussed in literature. It proved to be a challenge to find relevant sources of data for this study.

1.3 Research objective

Within E-Government the Internet serves as an interface between business and government, provide means for a more direct democracy (Kostechi & Naray, 2007). In current literature no scientific and academic publications are found on the combination of commercial diplomacy and electronic tools / online application. Therefore in this study a review of relevant literature covering similar research streams will be an important input. Based on this literature a research model will be developed and, guided by this model, a selected set of countries have been studied whom are already working on electronic tools in the form of “E-Government”.

To explore the combination of ICT and Commercial Diplomacy the objective of this research is based on the following three points:

- Obtain insight into the current use of electronic tools to support home country business that wants to go internationally and / or expand their international present
- Identify the types of electronic services

- Identify the level / development of online services in the field of Commercial Diplomacy.

1.4 Research question and method

To investigate the current level and development of Electronic tools in Commercial Diplomacy, leading countries in E-Government will be used as an indicator of the development in this (related) area. The following research question will be used in this investigation:

What are the types of electronic services of commercial diplomacy, and to what extent can this be explained by institutional and implementation settings?

This study will focus on ten selected “progressive countries” that are ahead with electronic tools. The ten progressive countries have been selected based on the effort in E-Government, which has been researched by UPAN (2012). UPAN (2012) distributed a list of top 20 countries in E-Government, and can be found in Appendix 1. The selected countries in alphabetic order are: Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States of America.

Relevant business dictionary definitions (Cambridge business dictionary, 2012):

- **Nations:** a country, especially when considered as a society with its own government, economy, etc.:
- **Diplomacy:** the management of relationships between countries
- **Institution:** Establishment, foundation, or organization created to pursue a particular type of endeavor, such as banking by a financial institution. In this research the institutional setting explain certain country characteristics, such as: economic growth, GDP, export numbers.
- **Implementation:** The activity performed according to a plan in order to achieve an overall goal. In this research the aspects: E-Government strategy, E-Government Goals, E-Commercial Diplomacy type and Outcomes are part of the implementation setting.

2 Review of literature

This chapter will theoretically frame Electronic Commercial Diplomacy (from now on the abbreviation E-CD will be used) guided by the research questions posed at the end of chapter 1. The goal of this chapter is to develop an E-CD model that can function as a framework of reference for this research. Before developing a research framework, first the definition of Commercial Diplomacy (CD) will be discussed in more detail and subsequently E-CD will be defined for this research.

2.1 Commercial diplomacy defined

Commercial diplomacy is often confused with economic diplomacy (Mercier, 2007). Economic diplomacy is concerned with general economic policy issues and trade agreements (Saner & Yiu, 2003). Even though both have an overarching economic objective, commercial diplomacy is much more specific. Mercier (2007) and Kostechi & Naray (2007) both recognize that the term commercial diplomacy is often used to cover two different types of activities: policy-making and business-support (Kostechi & Naray, 2007; Mercier, 2007). While many agree that the core of commercial diplomacy focuses on the specific business support (Kostechi & Naray, 2007; Mercier, 2007; Naray, 2011; Potter, 2004), this includes the promotion of inward and outward investment as well as trade. Important aspects of a commercial diplomat's work is the supplying of information about export and investment opportunities and organizing and helping to act as host to trade missions from home (Saner & Yiu, 2003). Scholars propose various definitions of Commercial diplomacy, which also differ. The three most cited and used definitions are provided in the following table:

Author	Definition
Potter (2004)	The application of tools of diplomacy to help bring out specific commercial gains through promoting exports, attracting inward investment, and preserving outward investment opportunities, and encouraging the benefits of technological transfer (Potter, 2004) .
Lee (2004)	The work of a network of public and private actors who manage commercial relations using diplomatic channels and processes". Saner & Yiu (2003) have noted that when commercial diplomacy is conducted by private actors, it is called corporate or business diplomacy (Saner & Yiu, 2003). Where in the definition of Lee (2004) both can conduct commercial diplomacy. As a consequence private actors should be excluded, in the definition (Lee J. , 2010).
Naray (2008)	An activity conducted by public actors with diplomatic status in view of business promotion between a home and a host country. It aims at encouraging business development through a series of business promotion and facilitation activities" (Naray, 2008)

Table 2.1 – Definitions commercial diplomacy

In the statement of Naray (2008) the public actors have diplomatic status, Zuidema and Ruël (2011) extent the definition of Naray (2008) by adding the actors without diplomatic status such as members of foreign diplomatic missions, their staff, and other related agencies. This recognizes that other staff without diplomatic status also perform (on behalf of actors with diplomatic status or independently) the activities conducted in Commercial Diplomacy (Zuidema & Ruël, 2011).

Since the development and maintenance of electronic tools is likely to be carried out not only by staff having diplomatic status, the more extensive definition as used by Zuidema and Ruël (2011) will apply to this research: it is assumed that the whole organization – including actors without diplomatic status – will work with and on electronic tools.

2.2 Introducing the concept E-CD

Current definitions of Commercial Diplomacy describe the activities conducted by Commercial Diplomats. The activities described in current definition miss the component “Electronic”. Electronic tools and ICT have had a substantial impact on the way local, state and national governments function (Gupta, Gupta, & Dasgupta, 2008). Cohen, Nelson, & Walsh (2002) found that government activities in public domain encourage businesses to adopt the same kind of activities. Greater usage of ICT by governments is said to have influence on citizens and businesses, encouraging them to adopt E-Business. The development of E-Business in a country is influenced by E-Government development i.e. the extent to which governments involve themselves in ICT enabled activities (Durbhakula, Kim, & Others, 2011). Electronic Commercial Diplomacy, consist of a partially new combination of scientific disciplines. In order to understand the use of electronic tools on commercial diplomacy similar/related research streams have been searched, which displayed the following three concepts:

- Digital diplomacy
- E-Government and
- E-Business.

At this moment ICT is already used by government to consumer on a large scale in many different countries, which is the reason many authors focus on improvement of services (Bertot & Jaeger, 2006) (Ke & Wei, 2004) (Tan, Pan, & Lim, 2005) (Verdegem & Verleye, 2009). This broad concept of using electronic tools by the government is defined as “E-Government”. Schubert & Hausler (2001) explain that electronic tools in the governments have a positive effect on the government through simplification of business processes. Besides this positive effect another effect of information technology is the impact on international relations. As Westcott (2008) explains that the use of technology enables traditional diplomatic services to be delivered faster and more cost-effective, both to ones’ own citizen and government, and to those of other countries.

Governments and politicians also use electronic tools as a medium to communicate diplomatic information, which is known as “digital diplomacy”. Digital Diplomacy’s objective according to Ross (2011) is to get more people involved in the dialogue. Ross (2011) searched the difference in electronic tools that were available 10 years ago and compared it with what is available today. The

tradition diplomacy dialogue has been government-to-government, government to citizen and citizen to government. Digital Diplomacy contributes to the involvement of more people, and is successfully used in case of crisis technology can contribute to the message delivered by diplomats.

The adoption of technology within diplomatic institutions and government (Ross, 2011; Wescott, 2008) is an important enabler for development of Digital Diplomacy and E-Government. Besides the evolution of the adoption of electronic tools within governments, businesses also work with electronic systems to communicate with customers and other organizations. Within business and commercial fields this is a commonly known concept and is called E-Business.

Related research activities into E-Government, E-Business and Digital diplomacy all focus on the use of new technologies. More generally can be said that they all look into the influence of electronic tools on a concept. These concepts do not have the same focus as the field of commercial diplomacy, which focuses on international business between a home and host country. However, the research results and literature are relevant for this work.

2.3 Definition Electronic Commercial Diplomacy

At the moment, there is no unambiguous definition of Electronic commercial diplomacy used in literature. For this reason, the definition of the concept, as adopted for this work, will be as follows:

Electronic Commercial Diplomacy (E-CD) refers to the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance the access to and delivery of activities conducted by public actors, with or without diplomatic status, for the purpose of business promotion between a home and a host country. E-CD aims to improve the approach and process of government services that facilitate commercial gains.

2.4 Online services of Commercial Diplomats

The concept of CD can best be described by its visible business promotion services. CD is, to a large extent, based on the export promotion services. In an online environment services are referred to as “e-Services”. E-Services can be defined as services provided over electronic networks (Rust & Kannan, 2002) and services, that are the software systems designed to support interoperable machine-to-machine interactions over a network (Palmonari, Viscusi, & Batini, 2008).

Busschers & Ruël (2011) carried out research on the value of Commercial Diplomacy, and thereby provided a structured overview of CD activities, which can be found in appendix 2. Starting with this overview provides a solid basis for the decision which services will best suit this research, and which activities of Commercial Diplomats can typically be deployed in an online environment. In the next paragraphs different views on commercial diplomatic services will be discussed.

Kotabe & Czinkota (1992) separated export promotion services into the categories of export service programs and market development programs. The former program is focused on export counseling and export advice questions (making companies ready for export) whereas the latter is focused on identifying opportunities within the host market and preparing market analysis in the host country, which also typically applies to the CD services of foreign posts. This is also acknowledged by Potter (2004) who makes the distinction in 'boarder in' and 'boarder out' services. Potter (2004) states that the responsibility in making companies 'export ready' is a 'boarder in' task constituting of domestic agencies and 'boarder out' is focused on market development. The activities of foreign posts are therefore more focused on promoting export by delivering valuable host country market/country information, establishing contacts and by organizations or support in organization trade fairs, seminars and trade missions.

Lee (2004) gives an overview of the 'boarder out' activities by separating them into three main categories. The first one is gathering and dissemination of host country market information. A second category concerns the development and introduction of host country business and governmental relations to the home country. The third and final category is the promotion of home country services into the host market by means of trade fairs, lobbying and the organization of seminars.

Another perspective comes from Kostecki and Naray (2007). Kostecki and Naray position CD as a value-creating activity and define value by Porter's (2004) definition as the 'combination of benefits delivered to the beneficiaries minus the cost of those benefits to business and government'. In broad terms the areas of CD can be defined according to the area-activity matrix² of Naray (2008), comprising of promotion of trade in goods and services, protection of intellectual property rights, co-operations in science and technology, promotion of made-in corporate image and the promotion of foreign direct investment. These activities are identified as the primary activities of CD in the value chain posed by Kostecki and Naray (2007). Activities in these areas can come in forms such as export advice, legal assistance and backstopping if needed. Such kinds of support include helping national firms to enter new markets or old markets with new products and to help foreign companies interested in investing in the home country (Saner & Yiu, 2003). The inputs to support the primary activities are identified as the support activities, constituting of intelligence, networking, contract negotiator implementation and problem solving. The supply of information and dealing with enquiries from home and host country, referred to by Kostecki and Naray (2007) as the support

² The area-activity matrix of Naray (2008) can be found in Appendix 3

activity 'intelligence', is identified as the main support activity of CD and include: call for tenders, development projects or the needs of leading industrial customers, information on regulations affecting exporters.

Kostecki and Naray (2007) provided a classification in form of more practical services provided by CD. These include: market information search, partner search, problem solving and trade disputes, trade fairs, and investment facilitation.

	Electronic CD services	(Lederman, Olarreaga, & Payton, 2009)	Kostecki and Naray (2007)	Kostecki and Naray (2007)	Kotabe and Czinkota (1992)
Type of service	Business Intelligence	Market research and publications	Intelligence	Market information search	Export service programs
	Trade fairs	Country image branding		Trade fairs	Market development
	Partner search	Export support services	Networking and public relations	Partner search	
	Problem solving and trade disputes	Marketing	Problem solving	Problem solving and trade disputes	
	Contract negotiation			Contract negotiation	
				Investment facilitation	

Table 2.2 – Overview CD Services

Following the aforementioned synopsis of CD activities (summarized in table 2.2), many of these activities can be conducted online. For this research Kostecki and Naray's (2007) distinction of CD activities will be used. The reason to choose for Kostecki and Naray (2007) is because these activities are practical and can be conducted online. The activities are on a more practical level, and are in line with other perspectives. In the classification of Kostecki and Naray (2007) is only missing some components that can be found in other models, public tenders and regulations. These are components that can be found on CD websites. Therefore a new cluster "Intelligence" is added which also includes market information. The complete overview of activities is now as follows:

- Business intelligence, which is a big research area will be divided in:
 - o Information about public tenders
 - o Regulations
 - o And Market information search
- Trade fairs
- Partner search
- Problem solving and trade disputes
- Contract negotiation

2.5 Towards an E-CD Model

On basis of the definition for E-CD provided in section 2.3, a model will be presented in the following sections. This model will theoretically frame E-CD, guided by the research question proposed at the end of chapter 1. The ultimate goal of this exercise is to develop an E-CD model that can be used as a framework of reference for this research. In these terms, the model aims to be a useful framework for studying countries that have already put great effort (best in class) in the use of Electronic Tools. Ruël, Bondarouk, & Looise (2004) used the elements strategy, goals, type and outcomes to describe E-HRM in companies. This is also suited in order to describe E-CD services and the way E-CD is implemented by different nations. These elements will be applied to this research, and form the basis of the framework.

2.5.1 E-Government strategy

In this section, E-Government strategy will be discussed/characterized as the basis for E-CD. The E-CD strategy will normally be derived from the Governmental E-Government strategy.

Based on the interactions of a government organization with other stakeholders, E-Government has been classified as interactions with internal clients and citizens (G2C), government-to-business (G2B), and government-to-other institutional government organizations (G2G) (Carter & Belanger, 2004; Tan et al., 2005). Carter & Belanger (2004) emphasized the use of ICT to improve efficiency and access to government services across all stakeholders in G2C, G2G and G2B services. The focus of this research is the interaction between government and business (G2B). For business users the purpose of using E-Government tools can be divided in three purposes (Thompson, Rust, & Rhoda, 2005):

- To access information
- To transact with government electronically; and
- To participate in government's decision making.

In order to be able to characterize different strategies this will provide a basis, the division between (1) G2B, providing information, (2) B2G, transaction and use of government services, and (3) G2B and B2G, participation in government's decision making.

Shambour & Lu (2011) found that the aim of G2B e-services is to provide effective and efficient access to information for business users. It focuses on the ability to reduce cost and gather better information and allows the government to purchase, pay invoices, and conduct business in a more cost-effective manner (Badri & Alshare, 2008). As mentioned by Layne & Lee (2001), government processes will be organized for citizens' and business convenience instead of the convenience of the

government. Governments have evolved from their first tentative steps publishing information online to developing sophisticated interactive and transactional capabilities across a broad range of services. Most state governments today have moved beyond the static informational and bulletin-type web sites to offer a wide range of interactive services. A majority of local governments have also established a web presence and are on their way to providing interactive service delivery capabilities (Norris, Fletcher, & Holden, 2001).

In the context of E-Government, several researchers have highlighted the importance of involving stakeholders (Evans & Yen, 2005) (Kamal, Weerakkody, & Irani, 2011). Therefore, involving the right stakeholders in the decision making process becomes imperative for government authorities if they are to enable fully integrated electronic services for business. This will explain the interaction between G2B and B2G, which will then focus on participation and mutual interest in improvement of services. Palmonari et al., 2008 agree that interaction based service providers and customers can improve their value. According to Normann & Ramirez (1998) a key issue in providing a service/product offering valuable for a customer consists in providing access to the knowledge enabling customers in “creating value in a better way, whatever better means for the customer”.

There is not a clear categorization of strategies available in literature, but based on the above-described interaction between government and business four categories can be distinguished, as will be included in the framework for this study.

- B2G strategy, focusing on transactions of business with government.
- G2B: Information strategy
- G2B and B2G
- No focus on business

2.5.2 E-Government Goals

Development of E-Services for Commercial Diplomacy (E-CD) is seen to be a logical activity following the E-Government Strategy. In this section, goals that drive governments when deciding about electronic tools and applications will be discussed.

In the review of scientific sources different goals exist when choosing to use electronic tools. Different authors identify E-Government as the channel through which most, if not all, federal government services will soon be offered, underlining the importance of E-Government to the future of government service delivery (Grönlund & Horan, 2005; Morgeson & Mithas, 2009). In the future it can be expected that this also count for commercial diplomatic services. The use of

electronic technologies (in E-Business, Digital Diplomacy and E-Government) can serve a variety of different goals:

Efficiency	(Amit & Zott, 2001) (Esteves & Joseph, 2008) (Gregorio, Kassicieh, & De Gouvea Neto, 2005) (Grönlund & Horan, 2005) (Morgeson & Mithas, 2009) (Wang & Liao, 2008)
Reducing cost	(Esteves & Joseph, 2008; Gregorio et al., 2005; Morgeson & Mithas, 2009)
Improving service delivery	(Morgeson & Mithas, 2009) (Grönlund & Horan, 2005) (Edmiston, 2003)
Increase transparency of government	(Hallams, 2010) (Ross, 2011) (Wang & Liao, 2008) (Westcott, Digital diplomacy, 2008)

Table 2.3 – E-CD goals

As can be seen in the above table (2.3), most authors found that the focus when deciding to use electronic tools is on efficiency, and the improvement of service delivery. This is in line with research by Sun and He (2011), who carried out research on the core values of E- government strategies in different nations. Their paper tries to generate some valuable suggestions on how to reinforce and improve the E-Government strategy and better its utilization in the context of globalization. Their findings suggest that Western countries stressed that the goal of E-Government is to improve public services better. The focus of Western countries have shifted from the improvement of effectiveness of public administration to the improvement of the full range of convenient services and service quality for the community, which became the original value of E-Government (Sun & He, 2011). These results are also in line with the research of Grönlund & Horan (2005), who reviewed governments across the globe in how they set up national strategies to achieve excellence based on use of Internet technology. Grönlund & Horan (2005) reviews these strategies and finds them similar and typically explicitly mentioning three goals (Grönlund & Horan, 2005):

- More efficient government
- Better services
- Improved democratic process

Morgeson and Mithas (2009) examined the success of the federal government's implementation of E-Government from a comparative perspective, focusing specifically on the delivery of high-quality services through federal agency websites as compared to private sector E-Business web sites. They found that governments are behind the private sector. The purpose of both initiatives is similar and aim at both improved customer service and cost- savings. E-Government achieves this through innovations borrowed from the private sector. The move toward E-Government can be recognized as part of a broader trend in public administration reform that emphasizes the ability of the public

sector to overcome many, if not most, of its perceived deficiencies through the adoption of private sector best practices (Morgeson & Mithas, 2009) .

Improving efficiency, Reducing cost, Improving service delivery, Improving democratic / transparency of government are the most returning goals when choosing for electronic tools. These four goals will be included in the framework for E-CD.

2.5.3 E-Commercial Diplomacy Type

Governments are investing a lot of effort to integrate electronic tools in their services. In different studies it is clear that electronic tools involve multiple stages or phases of development and cannot be developed in a one-step process (Al-Hashmi & Darem, 2008). These stages can be interpreted as types of E-CD (levels of maturity).

The proposed models were either developed by individual researchers, such as; Layne and Lee's model (2001), Siau and Long (2005), Netchaeva (2002) or proposed by institutions such as: UN (2007), Gartner Group's model (2000), IBM study (2003) or Deloitte and Touches' model (2001). Although these models have different ways to represent the developmental stages of E-Government, they share a common conclusion, the process of E-Government involves multiple stages or phases of development and is not a one-step process (Al-Hashmi & Darem, 2008).

The aim of Electronic Commercial Diplomacy is not only the transformation of traditional information into bits and bytes and making it accessible via the Internet and moving existing government functions to an electronic platform. But it also calls for rethinking ways the government functions are carried out today in order to improve processes and integration.

Al-Hashmi and Darem (2008) reviewed five stage models and suggested four stages: Access, Interact, Transaction and Integration. More models are added by (Lee, 2010) who carried out research into 10 years of E-Government stage models. In appendix 4 a representation of different models can be found, which is a combined representation of the work carried out by Al-Hashmi and Darem (2008) and Lee (2010).

Lee (2010) defined five stages of Government Services. The five stages combine two perspectives; service and technological perspectives. The service perspective reflects the service delivery and can be operationalized in order to investigate the online service delivery. The technical perspective identifies operational and organizational elements of services (ICT advancement). This model provides a road map and starting point to evaluate the progress governments make in online services. In table 2.4 a description of the five stages is given including their characteristics and typical functions. The description of Lee (2010) is extend with characteristics and typical functions. Janssen,

Kuk, & Wagenaar (2008) used these variables – in their research of 59 E-Government websites – to operationalize stages of E-Government.

E-Gov stages	Description, characteristics, and typical functions
Presenting	<p><i>Description:</i> The presenting stage refers to the simple presentation of information without much functionality. Presenting embraces the stage of information that includes cataloguing, publishing, scattered information, and billboard stage.</p> <p><i>Characteristics:</i> Online presence</p> <p><i>Typical functions:</i> Presenting information, hyperlinks to related websites, news, catalogue, published data</p>
Interaction	<p><i>Description:</i> Refers to the assimilation of basic electronic information ability (processes and services) with real world situations. From the perspective of client and service, assimilation means the emerging of interaction-based services while scattered information data and applications are being integrated. Interaction from a service perspective, services can be online, in for example online-forms, a working database and online interaction.</p> <p><i>Characteristics:</i> Two way communication</p> <p><i>Typical functions:</i> Searchable databases, Public response, Email, Contact information, Feedback forms, downloadable forms, FAQ (Frequently asked questions)</p>
Transaction	<p><i>Description:</i> In the transaction stage users can complete entire transaction online. Services are offered online, and governments enhance collaboration and reduce intermediaries in order to provide a unified and seamless service. During the reformation stage, the processes and services in the real world would begin to be reformed, thereby reflecting the characteristics of ‘information’ space that are distinguished from characteristics of real world situations. As a result, transact sites can enhance productivity by making processes that require government assistance or approval simpler, faster, and cheaper.</p> <p><i>Characteristics:</i> Direct link to government services online, one stop shop</p> <p><i>Typical functions:</i> Service catalogues, life-events, business-events, subscription and alerting options, feedback forms, shopping cart, tracking, and tracing, submitting bids for procurement contract.</p>
Participation	<p><i>Description:</i> Participation refers to the changes of the shape and scope of processes and services that take place both in information space and in the real world, fitting for effectiveness. As the reformation of real world processes and services progresses, ‘morphing’ of services and operations tend to follow as these two worlds are being intertwined resulting in a change of the ‘business’ model of government itself. In terms of the client and service side, this would mean more active participation beyond simple interaction and conduct of ordinary transactions. This stage is targeted towards effectiveness beyond efficiency of governing processes and services.</p> <p><i>Characteristics:</i> A community of interested centered around a certain topic and able to retain users.</p> <p><i>Typical functions:</i> Discussion forum, blogs, information searching, actual content, and information feeds</p>
Involvement	<p><i>Description:</i> Ideally, clients would be able to get more involved in political and administrative decision-makings while these decisions, technologically and operationally, would be implementable almost real-time with reconfigurable process management facilities. In this regard, involvement and process management goes hand in hand. Involvement on the clients’ side necessitates ad-hoc decision-making concerning services and operations, and in order to realize the results of ad-hoc decision-making on the client side would require the ad-hoc re-configurability of the service processes in terms of component technologies and operational components. This is an ideal stage, where the business processes of administrative and political services can be reconfigured almost real-time based on clients’ actual involvement in decision makings of the government, actually utilizing the full capability of advanced information and communication technologies.</p> <p><i>Characteristics:</i> Enabling electronic participation and discussion among citizens, business, and public administration.</p> <p><i>Typical functions:</i> Chat and discussion platforms, whiteboard, E-Voting, sharing documents, wiki's, and simulations to compare and evaluate alternatives.</p>

Table 2.4 - E-Government stages

2.5.4 E-Commercial Diplomacy Outcomes

E-CD will provide certain outcomes, for this part it is a danger of confusing these outcomes with E-Government goals, distinguished earlier. Outcomes and benefits from E-Government, E-Business and Digital Diplomacy programs are not (and cannot) always measured in financial terms. Indeed, a large number of E-Government programs focus on social outcomes. E-Government programs are often intended to improve access to service delivery and the quality of information, enhance the experience of interacting with government, reduce wait times, and assist consumers and business (Gupta, Gupta, & Dasgupta, 2008).

Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) reported that increased use of E-Government by citizens also lead to increased trust in local government and also in positive attitudes towards E-Government processes (Gupta et al., 2008). Thomas & Streib (2003) report that 64 percent of the respondents in their survey visited a government Website to seek for information (Morgeson & Mithas, 2009). According to Bitner et al. (1993), the service outcome is negatively influenced when a client participates less in the service process than what is required (Zuidema & Ruël, 2011). The implementation of electronic tools can be of important benefit in involvement, as Thomas and Streib (2003) research suggested with the visit of 64 percent of their respondents. The use of electronic tools can thereby result in increased involvement and participation.

Electronic tools can also significantly contribute to the activities of Commercial Diplomats. As found in the goals of E-Government it should be more efficient and cost effective. Therefore services that can be conducted online will be more effective, which possible outcomes of increase export and FDI.

The above discussion provided the following outcomes, which are added to the framework: increased participation by clients, increased trust, increased FDI, Effective commercial diplomatic services. The complete framework can be found in figure 2.2

2.6 Theoretical research model

As seems clear: electronic tools will influence the work of commercial diplomats. E-CD assists companies in doing business abroad. Electronic Commercial diplomacy will use information communication technologies to enhance the access to and delivery activities conducted by commercial diplomats, thereby this will influence the activities of commercial diplomats. Based on theory the framework is developed and shows how governments implement Electronic tools, and use it. The framework will be referred to as the *implementation settings* of the government.

Besides the implementation settings other settings will influence the whole system. For example the importance of export, GDP, economic growth and ease of doing business are expected to be able to

influence the development of E-CD. These so called *institutional settings* are also placed in the framework for this research.

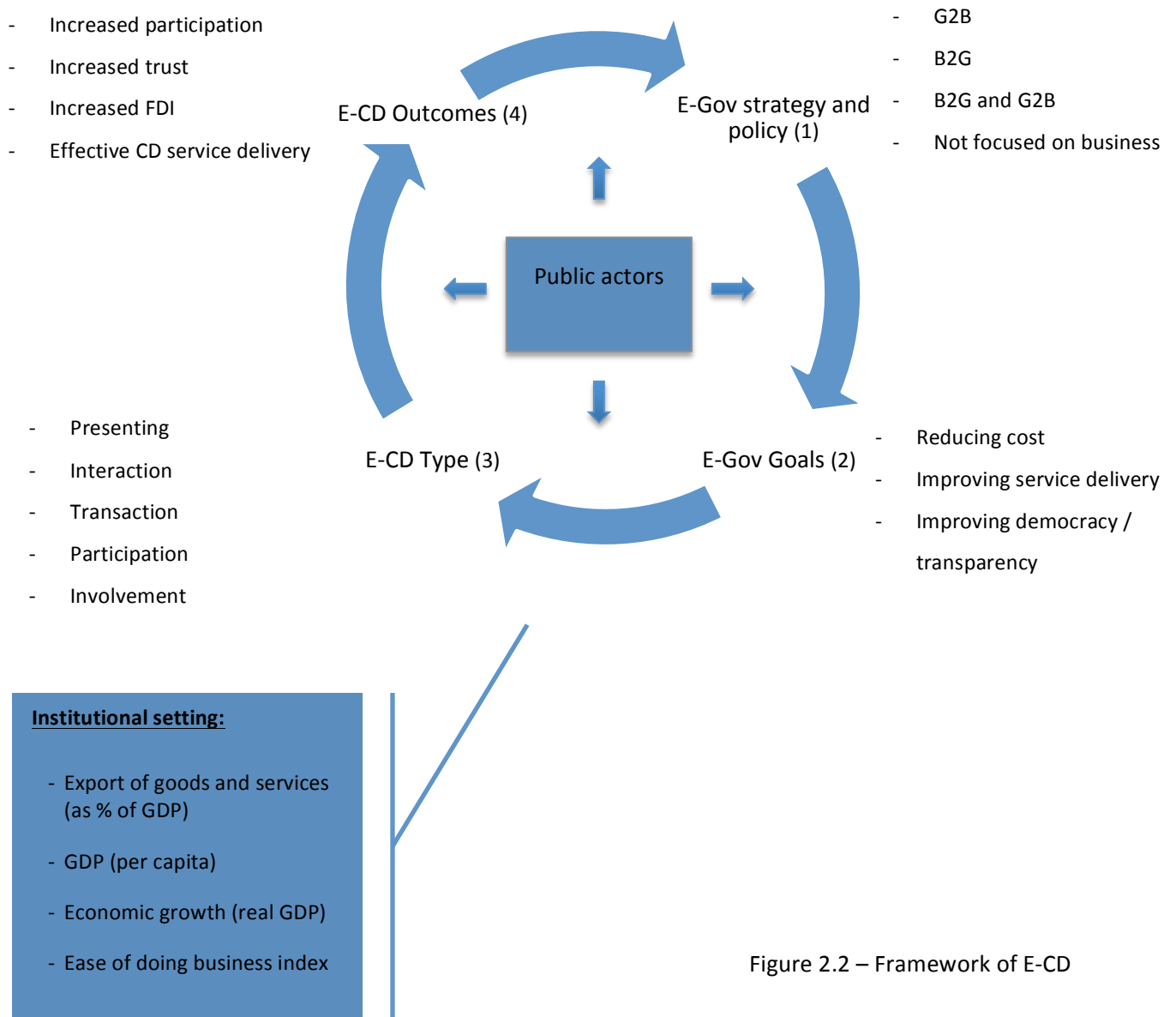


Figure 2.2 – Framework of E-CD

3 Methodology

This chapter discusses both the conceptual framework developed in chapter 2 and the practical elements of the research. It explores the research questions in more depth, and discusses what methods are the most appropriate, given the aims and nature of the research. Different methods of data collection are discussed, for each of the elements in the framework other methods will be used.

The first part of this chapter describes the objective of this research. The second part is about the sample, and which websites will be investigated. The third part explains how data will be collected for every part of the framework for this study.

3.1 Research strategy

The objective of this research (as discussed in section 1.3) is to get insight in the way electronic tools are used for commercial diplomatic purpose. In order to gain this understanding an inductive approach has been used, starting with a general theory in the framework of reference built in chapter 2. This framework will guide this descriptive research and helps to build understanding of the concept E-CD.

In order to research the large number of countries, a case study approach will be used. Yin (2009) defines the essence of a case study: “the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result” (Yin, 2009).

The aim of this research is to describe how electronic tools are used, how they are applied and what outcomes are measured. Therefore it is important to select countries that are already working with these tools, and are nations that are pioneers in this area. The ‘object’ chosen for this study is embassy websites with commercial purpose. A single embassy is considered as a one case study, which implies that the research design is a multiple-case design (Yin, 2009).

3.2 Sample

The selection of samples can be done by either probability or non-probability sampling methods (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). For this study is chosen for probability sampling, and the sample has been aligned with previous research (Appendix 1 - UPAN, 2010).

For this study a multiple case design will be used. Using a multiple case designs provides the following question: What number of cases deemed necessary or sufficient for this study?

The number of cases reflects the number of case replication – both literal and theoretical- that is needed or preferred in this study. This study is not yet a straightforward field to study, which demands a higher number (Yin, 2009). In order to be able to research the difference, similarities and

approaches of different countries with a high degree of certainty is chosen to select ten countries. It is assumed that this number will provide sufficient information on similarities and differences to be able to draw conclusion.

3.2.1 Countries

Countries to research are selected based on their effort to use electronic tools within their government processes. The United Nations Public Administration Network (UPAN) annually ranks countries based on their performance in Electronic Government. This investigation ranks E-Government based on a countries current systems and status in integrating electronic services in their processes. The selection of countries is based on the UPAN (2012) E-Government survey³. The top 10 countries –and selected countries for this study- are: (1) The Netherlands, (2) UK, (3) Denmark, (4) United States, (5) France, (6) Sweden, (7) Norway, (8) Finland, (9) Singapore, and (10) Canada. From this list Republic of Korea has been removed, since the website provided by Republic of Korea can only be accessed in Korean or Chinese language. Translation did not provide reliable results.

As Naray (2008) defines, commercial diplomacy takes place in view of business promotion between a home and a host country. The home country is the scope of this research, but a host country is required to research a specific area. The host country selected for each country is based on the biggest export partners. It can be expected that the biggest export partner will receive bigger attention and more information online. Therefore is chosen to select the biggest export partner for each country, and use that as a host country.

3.2.2 Websites

In order to narrow (and clearly define) the scope of this research is chosen to only focus on government websites. This implies that the websites are maintained, and owned by (or on behalf of) governments. The research starts on embassy websites, but can grow to external linked websites such as; foreign affair websites, dedicated business websites (such as trade centers, dedicated business support websites of governments). In Appendix 5 can be found an overview of websites for each selected country.

3.3 E-CD services

An important part during the analysis is the services that will be researched. As discussed in chapter two, this research chooses to use services as suggested by Kostecki and Naray's (2007). The reason

³ Appendix 1 shows the top 20 countries

to choose for Kostecki and Naray (2007) is because these activities are practical and can be conducted online. In the classification of Kostecki and Naray (2007) is only missing some components that can be found in other models, public tenders and regulations. These are components that can be found on CD websites. Regulations are not specific enough and on websites often divided in: import regulations, export regulations and tax regulations. Further establishing business is added, which shows how businesses can start in another country. Market information is the last component that provides important intelligence for companies. The method used is generally referred to as “direct content analysis”. Hsieh & Shannon (2005) suggest this approach, in which initial coding starts with a theory (Chapter 2) or relevant research findings. Coding is the process whereby raw data are transformed into standardized form, suitable for standardized or machine processing and analysis. During data exploration, the researchers immerse themselves in the data and allow themes to emerge from the data. Test websites are used to explore the data available online, and services are added and made more specific.

The complete overview of activities is now as follows:

- Market information
- Information about public tenders (public tender in host country)
- Regulations
 - o Import regulations
 - o Export regulations
 - o Tax regulations
- Establishing business
- Trade fairs / trade missions
- Partner search
- Problem solving and trade disputes
- Contract negotiation

3.4 Data collection

In general, measurement procedures and data collection methods should be standardized and made as similar as possible, across all comparisons. For each part of the framework different data is necessary, which will be collected with the help of different methods. The methods will be explained for each part of the framework (strategy, goals, type and outcomes) of this research.

3.4.1 E-Government strategy and goals

E-Government strategy can be described as the basis for E-Commercial Diplomacy. The E-CD strategy will normally be derived from the Governmental E-Government strategy. Therefore is chosen to

research E-Government strategies. The data collected for this part is based on published summaries. Some of these data, in particular government surveys and government policies, are widely available in published form as well as via the internet (Saunders et al., 2009). The data can be found on government websites and will include: government- policies, -strategies, research reports.

3.4.2 E-CD type

In order to research E-CD type government websites will be analyzed. The focus of this analysis will be the content on the websites. Sinha, Hearst , & Ivory (2001) researched 300 websites, and found that the content was by far the best predictor of the overall experience, which approves the focus of this research on the contents of websites. This research evaluates ten (10) E-CD services and decides in which stage the service is at the moment of research. The evaluations are conducted by three individual researchers, the procedure of website analysis is further discussed in section 3.3.2.2. The mentioned research method is called content analysis. Content analysis is the study of recorded human communication. This form is suitable for books, magazines, web pages, newspapers, laws, and protocols. This method fits the objective of this research and can be further standardized by coding the content analysis. Coding is the process whereby raw data are transformed into standardized form, suitable for standardized or machine processing and analysis. Qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

In order to be able to compare different country websites, a standardized questionnaire was developed. The coding is based on the theory in chapter two, this represent the stages / types of the researched online services. The coding scheme and guideline used during the analysis can be found in Appendix 6.

The second part of this analysis use variables to measure website experience. The variables are based on research of Selim (2009) who develop content evaluation criteria for general websites. This part includes statements and will be measured on a Likert scale. The questionnaire used during the evaluation can be found in Appendix 7. The variables and evaluation procedure will be further explained in the following sections.

3.4.2.1 Website analysis variables

In order to logically research website, the start of the analysis is searching for Commercial Diplomatic services. During this search the researcher experience the quality of the website, which will be evaluated in the second part of the evaluation.

The analysis consist two parts, the first part includes E-CD services (section 3.3) and evaluates in which stages the services are at the moment of research. The scale is based on the five stages / types of E-CD suggested in chapter 2. It is also possible that services are not available online, this can also be suggested in the questionnaire.

The second part provides statements about website quality; these statements are answered on a five point Likert scale. This is an often-used question format for assessing participant opinions. The statements used are all positive statements. The researchers' carrying out the studies are not biased, and have no interest in giving biased answers to the questions. Using only positive statements makes it easier to answer the questions. Neuman (2000) states, "The simplicity and ease of use of the Likert scale is its real strength", therefore is chosen to only use positive statements.

The variables used in the second are based on the research of Selim (2009), who researched content evaluation criterion for general website analysis and comparison. In his research he found thirteen evaluation criteria: Accessibility & visibility, accuracy & credibility, authority, coverage, currency, interactivity, metadata, navigability, orientation & objectivity, privacy, search ability, security, and services. Each criterion includes several evaluation and comparative key items called "indicators". Selim (2009) based the list of indicators on a wide selection (87 articles) of published studies. For this research not all criteria have been included, taking into account the purpose of this study. The criteria: accessibility & visibility, coverage, metadata, privacy, and security have not been used.

3.4.2.2 Website analysis procedure

The websites have been analyzed by three independent individuals (investigators). The investigators have been trained in using the research tools, and coding schemes. Before starting the analysis two test analyses have been conducted. The purpose of these test analyses is to have a common frame of mind with respect to the study and stages of services, and also to test the questionnaire and coding scheme. After the test analyses the results were discussed and differences were explained. Further feedback on the coding scheme has been discussed and changed. After test analysis, investigators have reviewed the websites independently, without any communication on the results. After reviewing all websites a final evaluation have taken place, where results are discussed. Remarkable results are discussed and changed in case of mistakes in filling in the results.

Websites that are using another languages then English are translated with the help of 'Google Translate', the reason to use the country website is because information is more rich than websites that were already translated.

The three researchers agreed on 52% of the cases (10 countries, 10 services per country). At first sight this seems a low number of agreements, but the agreement between researchers is on a

moderate to good agreement level. In table 3.1 the level of agreement between researchers can be found. Cohen's Kappa measures the agreement between two raters who each classify items into mutually exclusive categories. This measure is used to calculate the Inter-rater reliability of online services with the categories (presenting, interaction, transaction, interaction and involvement). Interpretation of Cohen kappa (table 3.2) shows a moderate agreement (0,475) between researcher 2 and 3 and between researcher 1 and 3 (0,681) and researcher 1 and 2 (0,630) a good agreement. A Fleiss Kappa is calculated to find the overall agreement between the three researchers. The Fleiss Kappa score (0,584) shows that the agreement is just on the edge between moderate and good agreement. A Cronbachs Alpha of 0,847 shows that the used scale is valid and data is reliable. Based on both Cronbachs Alpha and Fleiss Kappa scores is discussed that further analysis are possible, and shows that a throughout understanding of the measured used during the analysis.

		Researcher 1	Researcher 2	Researcher 3
Researcher 1	Level of agreement		72%	77%
	Cohen's kappa		0,630	0,681
Researcher 2	Level of agreement	72%		60%
	Cohen's kappa	0,630		0,475
Researcher 3	Level of agreement	77%	60%	
	Cohen's kappa	0,681	9,474	
Fleiss Kappa (agreement three researchers):		0,584		
Cronbach alpha of service variables:		0,847		

Table 3.1 – Level of agreement and Kappa score between researchers

Kappa scores	Interpretation
<0.20	Poor agreement
0.21 – 0.40	Fair agreement
0.41 – 0.60	Moderate agreement
0.61 – 0.80	Good agreement
0.81 – 1.0	Very good agreement

Table 3.2 – Kappa interpretation

3.4.3 Outcomes E-CD

E-CD outcomes are based on the measurement of goals. How are the goals measured, and are outcomes already available. Governments need to be transparent in which goals they have and how these are measured. This gives new input for new strategies. Just like strategy and goals, outcomes of E-CD will be researched based on published data. Some of these data, in particular government surveys and government policies, are widely available in published form as well as via the internet (Saunders et al., 2009). The data can be found on government websites and will include: government- policies, -strategies, research reports.

4 Findings

This chapter is primarily concerned with presenting the data derived from analysis. As discussed in chapter 3, the findings present data on: E-Government strategy and goals, E-CD type and E-CD outcomes. Section 4.1 will present the findings from the ten selected countries. In 4.2 this data will be combined in order to analyze similarities and differences. Combining this data will provide an overview of E-CD in the ten selected countries. In the last section (4.3) the findings in the selected countries will be compared.

4.1 Country analyses

Each of the ten selected countries for this study country is discussed separately and the countries are placed in alphabetical order. For each country the four elements – strategy, goals, type and outcome of E-CD - from the framework for this study will be discussed.

4.1.1 Canada

Canada's biggest export partner is the USA with 74,9% of the total export. The United States of America therefore served as a host country for this study. Canada ranks high in the ease of doing business in 2012, which makes it a good candidate for studying the activities of facilitating business and commercial diplomatic services online. The total population of Canada is about 34.3 million (July 2011). In table 4.1 institutional settings of Canada can be found.

Canada	
Export of goods and services (as % of GDP)	29% (2010)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$1.759 trillion (2011 est.), per capita: \$40,300 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	2.2% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business index	13

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.1 –Institutional setting Canada

4.1.1.1 E-Government Strategy and goals

Canada does not have one central E-Government strategy. On the other hand the Canadian Access to Information Act (1985) states that access should be available to the public, whereby the Internet is an important means. The actual strategies for E-Government are developed at a regional (State) level. Ontario is the most important state for business and economics and will be considered to represent Canada in this study. The local government of Ontario is proactively moving towards delivering different electronic services, and wants to remove barriers to Ontario's businesses participating in the increasingly global marketplace.

In Ontario E-Government has been designed based on user needs. Together with 59 groups the E-Government portal has been designed, to fulfill both businesses as citizen needs. Canada is aware that e-Government requires a complete re-design of the internal operations of the government and the operating systems of the broader public sector. The Canadian information management strategy guides these efforts.

The strategy of Ontario includes four focus areas: (1) policy and governments, (2) people and capacity, (3) enterprise info architecture and (4) Information management tools and Applications. In all four-focus area, alignment and reducing related tools is a strategic outcome. For Business users the support through tools and applications should provide them with information and tools that help them to do business. The goals for Ontario include to achieve better service quality, greater citizen trust, better value for the taxpayer, increased client satisfaction, increased economic growth, and meeting citizen needs.

4.1.1.2 E-CD Type

Commercial diplomatic services for Canada can mainly be found on two websites; Embassy website and Trade Commissioner website. Starting with the embassy website, this website provides a broad range of consular services, these services (e.g. passport, visa, immigration) are focused on citizen clients. The trade commissioner website provides more services focused on business users, which includes services in the field of Commercial Diplomacy.

The Trade Commissioner websites provides a “Virtual Trade Commissioner” section, which is a gateway to information online. This is a section that requires login, adds more interactive services and makes it possible to personalize the website. For this research it was only possible to research public available parts of the website (i.e. no login account was obtained).

E-CD services scored an average score 1,8, which is the second highest score of this research. E-CD in Canada can be typed as just below Interaction stage. Canada receives a high score for *market information* (3,0, s=0,0), as it is possible to research data and collect relevant information. Different markets and segments can be investigated. It is also possible to download a guide that helps to start exporting to these markets. This guide also provides information about *export regulations* (average score 3,0, s=0,0), and helps to set up an export company (establishing business average score: 3,0, s=0,0). This makes also both *export regulations* and *establishing business* a service that can be typed in the transaction stage.

An interesting part is that it is possible to join “webinars”, these can be followed online, and are upcoming but also on demand. This makes it possible to participate in this process and get specific help. The webinars are available through the virtual trade commissioner.

Trade fairs and missions are available in an event section. It is possible to select countries and find trade shows organized by Canadian diplomats. The average score for trade shows is 2,0 ($s=0,0$) because it is not possible to register online. Finally the governments also assist in partner search, this is not executed online, but information that can help to *solve problems* (average score: 1,3, $s=0,58$) and help in *contract negotiation* (average score: 0,7, $s=0,58$) can be found online (e.g. local lawyers or assistance in tax). A service that is not provided online is to search for public tenders in host country. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the type of E-CD services in Canada.

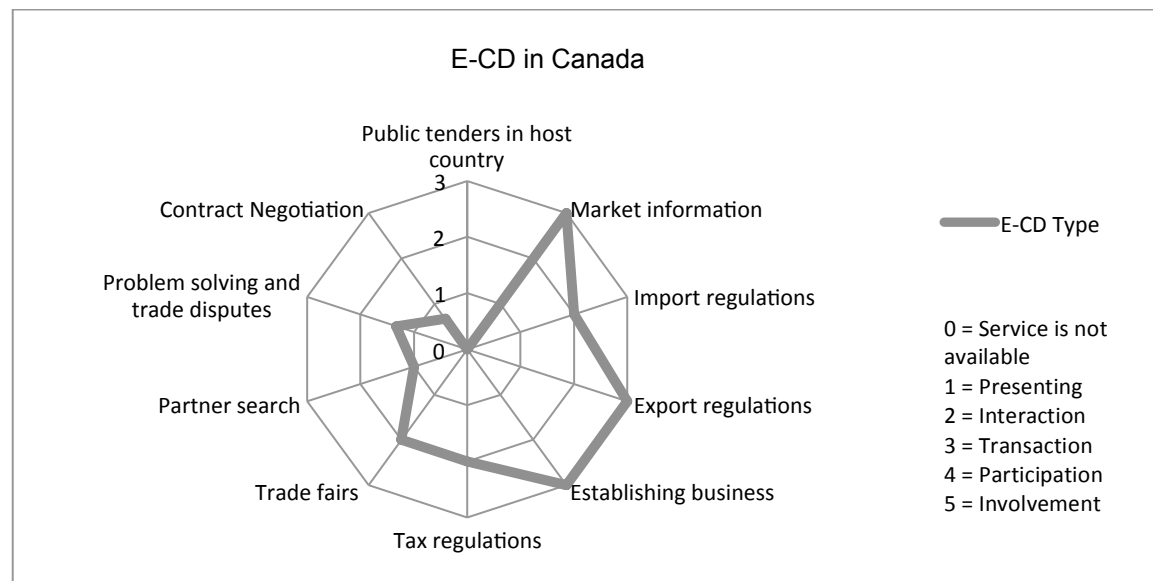


Figure 4.1 – E-CD type in Canada

Website quality assessment:

The websites researched score for navigation, 4,2 (on a five point scale). It is easy to navigate on the website and content is organized logically (4,7). The website provides references to secondary websites and content can be verified (accuracy 4,0). The overall rating of the Canadian websites is 3,7 on a five-point scale.

4.1.1.3 E-CD Outcomes

The strategy of Canada is based on the state strategy of Ontario, this is the most important state for the economy, and most businesses are working in Ontario. The state does not provide a strategy, and also no outcomes for E-CD. The strategy of Ontario does not provide any measures to measure the goals suggested in their strategy. Hereby it is not clear on what way the goals will be measured.

4.1.2 Denmark

Denmark has a total area of 43094 km² the total population of the country is 5.54 million in 2011. In Denmark the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for commercial diplomacy (Stadman, 2012). The online participation in Denmark is high, in 2011 98% of the enterprises have Internet access

(Epractice.EU, 2012). Enterprises in Denmark are used to interact online with the government. Research executed by Eurostat in 2011 shows that 85% of the enterprises obtain information via the internet Other services that are executed online are; download forms (85%) and to return forms by 66% of the enterprises.

The biggest export partner of Denmark is Germany taking 17.6% of the total export. Germany will be used as host country for Denmark. In table 4.2 institutional settings of Denmark can be found.

Denmark	
Export of good and services (as % of GDP)	5,543,453 (July 2011 est.)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$330.5 billion (2011 est.), per capita: \$40,200 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	1% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business rank	5

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.2 – Institutional setting Denmark

4.1.2.1 E-Government Strategy and Goals

In Denmark the economic situation has put the central government, municipalities and regions under pressure to find efficient and effective solutions that can make resources available for sustainable welfare. E-Government has a key role to play in public services, but only if the authorities can deliver the benefits. It is vital to follow up, make visible progress and maintain E-Government as a central theme on the political agenda – as it has been in relation to the negotiations on the finances of municipalities and regions in recent years. The current Danish E-Government strategy, published in August 2011, is entitled “The Digital Path to Future Welfare” (The eGovernment strategy 2011-2015, Denmark). A large part of this strategy is focused on citizen services, and how e-services are provided to them. For this study, the focus will be on the business component in the strategy. The strategy is divided into three main tracks, each of which covers different areas and target groups:

No more printed forms or letters: For companies, all relevant communications will be in digital form by the end of 2012. This means that companies will be making all their reports digitally to public authorities once the necessary legislation and solutions are in place and running smoothly. Companies will have easier access to a range of public data and E-Government solutions, opening up new business opportunities and contributing to growth in the private sector.

New digital welfare The adoption of E-Government solutions will have a positive impact on the Danish welfare system with initiatives for schools, the health service, and the care of children, the elderly and vulnerable groups

Digital solutions for closer collaboration The E-Government solutions developed up to now by the central government, regions and municipalities form a natural platform for the public sector's next phase of digitalization. Individual authorities or institutions must not develop their own systems in areas where good solutions already exist.

In these three focus areas Denmark will put great effort and has set itself ambitious goals. For each track milestones have been set. These milestones are focused on ICT related achievements (e.g. paper forms have been phased out, each company will have access to company information on the business portal, all companies will have a digital post box for letters from the public sector). The goals are focused on an IT related area. In the last focus area (12) Denmark explains that it is important that the ambitious goals must be realized and are essential for delivering robust, effective service. These goals are coordinated by a steering committee for joint-government-cooperation; this committee will carry on its work, implementing the E-Government strategy initiatives, and support authorities in the ambitious objectives. The progress and status of E-Government initiatives need to be transparent. The authorities need to be able to check that goals are being reached and benefits realized so that changes can be made if initiatives run into unexpected difficulties (The e-Government strategy 2011-2015 Denmark, 2011).

4.1.2.2 E-CD Type

The embassy website of Denmark to Germany is integrated in the Foreign affairs website, which makes it possible to link to information for the specific country of interest, in this case Germany. The website contains links to a dedicated website dealing with market information and export. On this website Denmark provides a guide which contains specific information about the German market. Access to this guide costs 1050 DKK (140 euro).

The overall picture of the services (figure 4.2) shows that most services can be typed between around interaction stage. The average score of Denmark is 1.3, which is close to interaction stage, but still on the presenting side.

Denmark provides almost all E-CD services, a missing service is contract negotiation. Public tenders in the host country and problem solving and trade disputes are also not clearly available for all visitors to the website(s). Denmark does show interactive stage services in establishing business and market information. These services score an average score of 2.3 ($s=0,58$). Trade fairs (events) are organized by the Danish government, are published online and it is possible to see detailed information (online). The trade events are available online with contact details, however an overview list of trade fairs and trade missions is not available online, and has to be ordered by email.

The average score for trade fairs is 2,0 (s=0,00). Figure 4.2 presents an overview of all services and E-CD types.

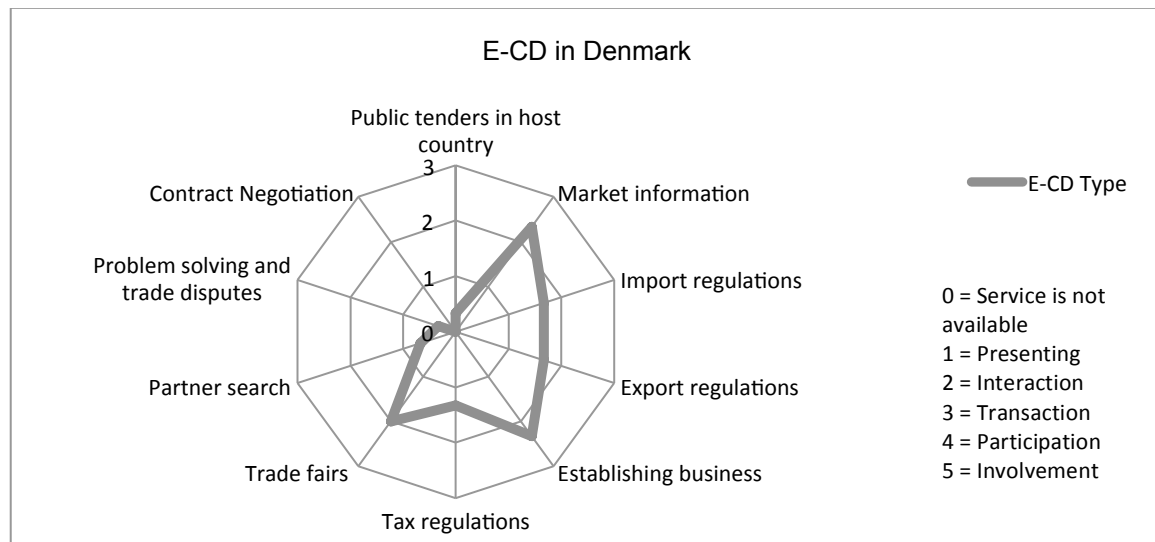


Figure 4.2 – E-CD type in Denmark

Website quality assessment:

The websites that have been subject to this research show clear ownership and accountability (scored 4,8 on a five point scale). The website provides an average orientation and navigation quality, both elements score 3,5 on a five point scale. Further interactivity on the website score 2,7 (on a five point scale), which shows that it is possible to add more interactive features online.

4.1.2.3 E-CD Outcome

“The new strategy (The Digital Path to Future Welfare, E-Government Denmark 2011-2015) sets clear and binding goals for E-Government by 2015. Achieving the objectives is less focused on developing major new IT solutions but more on ensuring more consistent implementation of the E-Government solutions established in recent years” (E-Government strategy Denmark 2011-2015).

In order to ensure the implementation of E-Government solutions Denmark coordinates initiatives in the selected areas by domain boards. New investments in IT need to be presented in well-documented business cases. According to the E-Government strategy, the management of E-Government should deliver the following benefits:

- Stronger coordination ensures that the various sections of the public sector work together seamlessly
- The benefits predicted for E-Government projects are realized in practice
- All progress made in the e-Government strategy initiatives and their benefits are clarified and documented.

In Denmark E-Government initiatives are measured and well documented. This makes it possible to complete a cycle as suggested in chapter 2, and makes it possible to receive input for new strategies.

4.1.3 Finland

Finland's total area is 33.800 km² and the total population is almost 5.3 million. In Finland the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the mainly responsible for diplomatic activities (Stadman, 2012). In Finland a remarkable score of 100% of the enterprises have Internet access (Eurostat). Enterprises use Internet to interact with government, and use it mainly to download forms (92%) with the remaining 8% primarily used to obtain information return forms. The biggest export partner of Finland is Sweden (with 11,6%), which will be used as host country during the website analysis. Table 4.3 shows the institutional settings of Finland.

Finland	
Export of goods and services	39% (2011)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$270.6 billion (2011 est.), per capita: \$38,300 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	2,7% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business rank	11

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.3 – Institutional settings Finland

4.1.3.1 E-Government Strategy and Goals

Finland's long-term strategic priorities for E-Government are outlined in the 'National Knowledge Society Strategy 2007-2015' which was adopted in September 2006 (A renewing, human-centric and competitive Finland, 2006). The new strategy has been drafted to support the emergence of a Finland phenomenon, in other words, the goal is the transformation of Finland into an internationally attractive, human-centric and competitive knowledge and service society by 2015.

This strategy document was drawn up in cooperation with decision-makers and actors from various sectors of society. Around 400 specialists from the Government, local authorities, higher education institutions, businesses and organizations participated in the draft process.

The vision of Finland is "Good Life in Information Society", which is the base of the strategy. In order to achieve this vision, and achieve the goals set for Finland focuses on four strategic components for 2015:

- Making Finland a human-centric and competitive service society
- Turning ideas into products and services, a reformed innovation system
- Competent and learning individuals and work communities
- An interoperable information society infrastructure, the foundation of an information society

4.1.3.1 E-CD Type Finland

To investigate E-CD in Finland three website have been studied. The first website is the Embassy website, this site does not provide CD services as such, but it provides contact information and shows where the embassy can be found in Sweden (host country). The second website is the foreign affairs website. This website provides some CD services, trade fairs can be found on this website and an overview of the services provides by Diplomats. The last website where diplomatic services can be found is a website of the ministry of employment and economy, this websites provide information about markets and barriers to trade and investment.

The E-CD stage of Finland is on average just something higher than the presenting phase (average score 1,3). The services that are offered by Finnish diplomats are explained on the Foreign Affairs website, where some are moving towards an interactive stage.

Trade fairs scored on a higher level, an interactive level. Trade fairs can be found online including detailed information about the event. Further establishing business is typed as an interactive service, with an average score of 2,0 (s=0,0). These interactive services can be found on the website of the Ministry of Employment and Economy. Contract negotiation is a service that could not be found online. All other E-CD services are available on a more presenting level (stage 1). In Figure 4.3 an overview of all services and their E-CD type can be found.

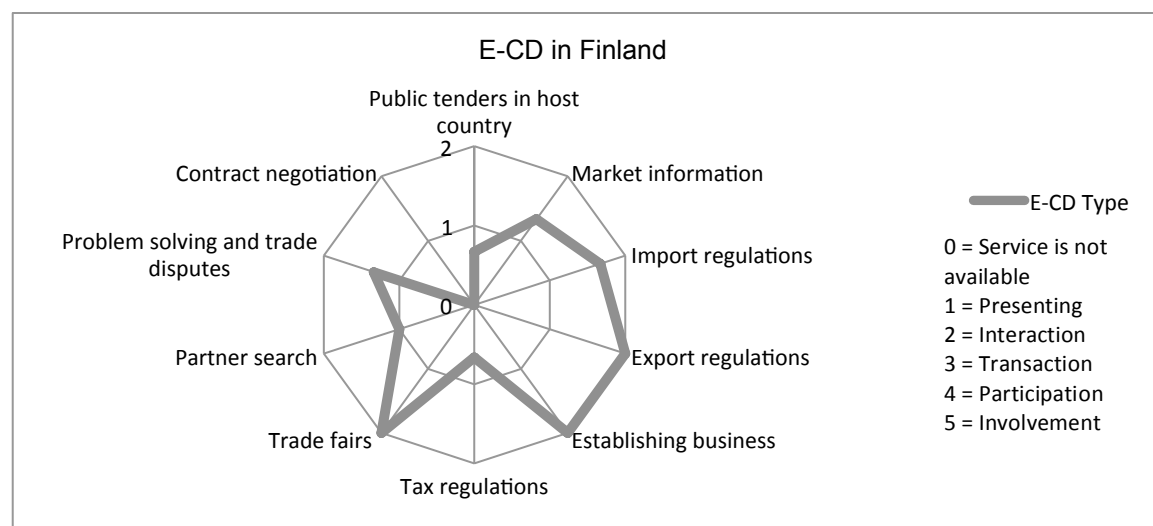


Figure 4.3 – E-CD type in Finland

Website quality assessment:

The websites researched show that they kept up to date, by an average score of 4,0 for Accuracy. The website content is organized logically (4,7 on a five-point scale), the average score for navigation on the website is 4,3 (on a five point scale). The websites demands for some part a password, to secure detailed information (this scored 1,3, which shows that data could not be accessed).

4.1.3.2 E-CD Outcome

In the strategic paper of Finland, Finland includes 72 proposals for measures, intended to ensure Finland's transformation from an industrial society to an internationally attractive, human centric and competitive knowledge and service society. In order to implement the goals and strategic views of Finland, an implementation plan has been made. This section contains "implementation, monitoring, assessment and updating". Finland indicates that the constantly changing environment makes it necessary to ensure strategic implementation, monitoring and assessment as well as updating. This implies the need for creation of structures and indicators. The section presents the preliminary measures that will be used to ensure the implementation, monitoring, assessment and updating of the National Knowledge Society Strategy (A renewing, human-centric and competitive Finland, 2006).

4.1.4 France

France total area is 55.000 km² and it has a total population of 65.6 million people. The Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry are responsible for commercial diplomacy, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in control of the embassies (Stadman, 2012).

In France 97% of the enterprises have Internet access and around 67% uses it to interact with public authorities for different activities (EPractice.EU, 2012). The biggest export partner of France is Germany (16,4% of total export). The ease of doing business rank is 29, and starting a business is ranked at 25. In table 4.4 can be found an overview the institutional settings of France.

France	
Export of goods and services (as % of GDP)	27% (2011)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$2.808 trillion (2011 est.), per capita: \$35,000 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	1.7% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business rank	29

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.4 – Institutional setting France

4.1.4.1 Strategy and goals of E-Government in France

The Development Plan for the Digital Economy by 2012 was published in October 2008 by the Secretary of State to the Prime Minister, with responsibility for: forward planning, the assessment of public policies, and the development of the digital economy (Plan de développement de l'économie numérique [France Government], 2008).

This Development Plan formulates over 150 actions that are structured around four core priorities:

- Enabling all citizens to access all digital networks and services

- Developing the production and supply of digital content
- Increasing and diversifying the use of digital services by companies, Public Administrations and citizens; and
- Modernizing the governance of the Digital Economy.

The plan also focuses on the development and availability of the infrastructure for everyone, over the entire territory, with a set target of 100% access to fixed broadband Internet in the near future. Moreover, the plan sets out actions aimed at deploying the relevant high-speed broadband infrastructure.

Another key element of the plan is digital content. The transition to digital TV allows for the sharing of quality frequencies through which new Internet services are made available, thus creating new opportunities for the businesses involved in the provision of such services. The Development Plan furthermore provides for actions intended to promote the use of digital content and services by all citizens and companies (*source: epractice.eu research France, Digital plan for the Digital Economy*). The goal of France is to achieve 100% access to Internet. Other goals are to reduce cost and increase the quality of the offered services.

4.1.4.2 E-CD Type France

Most web pages are only available in the French language, but can be made accessible for non-French speaking people through translation packages (such as Google Translator). E-CD services can be found on three different web pages, where most of the services can be found on the website of the Ministry of Economy. This website provides assistance for export and trade. The embassy website, provides little information for business users, and is more focused on citizen support. The last website which was subject to this research is the Diplomacy website, where all diplomatic missions can be found. This website provides some market information and shows which services are available.

The average E-CD service of France is just under the level of presenting (0,9). It is noticeable that three services are not available online: Contract negotiation, Problem solving and trade disputes and partner search. The website provides just basic information about the regulations abroad and which regulations are important for export. The regulations scored an average score of 1,0 (s=0,0) which shows that they are in a presenting stage. A notable service is trade fairs; the average score for trade fairs is 3,0 (s=0,0). Trade fairs (e.g. trade event, trade fairs and trade missions) can be found online, with detailed briefings and programs. It is possible to subscribe / apply for trade fairs online. This is a service that can be in a transaction stage.

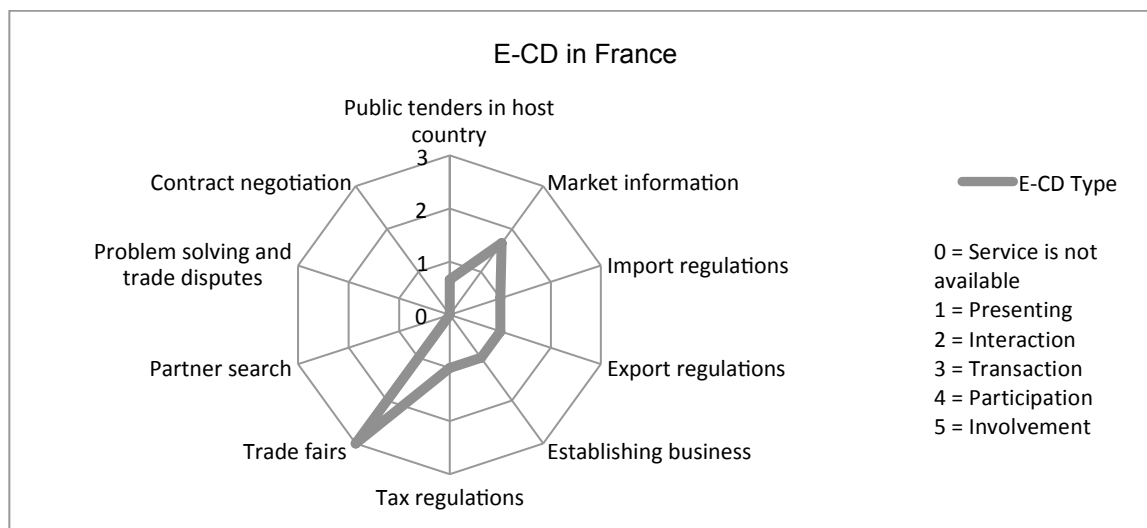


Figure 4.4 – E-CD type in France

Website quality assessment:

The websites researched are easy to navigate, the navigation options are distinct and spelled out (average 4,7 out of 5). What is notable is that during this research is seen that the website is not regularly updated, the statement: “this website is up dated recently (past 3 months)” the average score found is 2,0 (on a five point scale). It is important that the web site is up to date, and data can be checked. The website do scores 4,3 on accuracy, where the websites provide sufficient information to verify content (verify content average score 4,0 out of 5).

4.1.4.3 E-CD Outcome

In December 2007, the Council for the Modernization of Public Policies (CMPP) held its first session and approved hundreds of modernization measures to be implemented by the various Central Government ministries. At the Council’s second meeting in April 2008, a wider range of measures has been decided upon for the period 2008-2010. The third session of the CMPP took place in June 2008 with the aim to further widen the coverage of the State reform while analyzing and complementing the ongoing reforms (ePractice EU E-Government in France, 2011).

In the context of all the meetings of the CMPP five overviews of implementation of the measures planned have taken place in order to assess the percentage to which the measures set have been implemented. The Council has also decided the implementation until 2013, of 150 new measures. These measures are the result of close collaboration with each one of the Ministries during the past year. They will contribute to the improvement of the quality of the offered services but also to the effort of recovery of public accounts. The desired objective is to save € 10 million until the year 2013.

4.1.5 Norway

Norway has a total area of 385.155 km². The total population of Norway is estimated at 4.7 million people. In Norway the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for Diplomatic actions (Stadman, 2012). A high percentage of 97% of enterprises have Internet access in 2010, where the Internet is used to connect to public authorities in various ways. Most companies use it to download forms (78%) (EPractice.EU, 2012). The biggest export partner of Norway is the UK (26.7%), which will be used as host country. In table 4.5 can be found an overview of the institutional settings of Norway.

Norway	
Export of goods and services	42% (2011)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$479.3 billion (2011 est.), Per capita: \$53,300 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	1,7% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business rank	6

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.5 – Institutional settings Norway

4.1.5.1 Strategy and goals of E-Government in Norway

In Norway, E-Government is part of a wider ICT/Information Society policy (ICT Policy, 2012), with a focus on providing services to citizens and developing the required back-office infrastructure. The aim of ICT policy is to influence ICT development in order to achieve simplification and efficiency improvement in the public sector, further innovation and value creation in the business sector, and to secure a sustainable and inclusive development of society (EU E-Practice, 2011).

Efficient use of ICT is seen as key if Norway is to have a continued economic growth and a high employment rate. The ICT industry is in itself one of the largest industries in the country: more than one third of all jobs in the country are high tech.

Through goal-oriented use of ICT, public authorities deliver a steadily growing number of services to their users. Digital self-service solutions are contributing to improve quality, accessibility and flexibility. ICT also contributes to public sector overhaul and efficiency.

The main priority areas of that policy are:

- Securing an information society for all by arranging for the dissemination of high-speed broadband, increasing ICT knowledge in the population and securing ICT framing and design.
- Contributing to innovation and value creation in the business sector by arranging for development and use of services based on a digital content, making public data accessible for further use and distribution, and promoting smart, climate-friendly ICT solutions.

- Stimulating growth and development in the ICT industry by creating good framework conditions for electronic business and trade, service development and innovation.
- Seeking good public self-service solutions and striving for efficient public administration by coordinating public ICT projects, developing business standards to enable electronic interaction between public enterprises, and electronic ID enabling the exchange of sensitive information and the development of advanced services for citizens and businesses.

4.1.5.2 E-CD type Norway

The researched websites in Norway are two websites. The first website is the embassy website, this website provides information and services that are mainly focused on consular services for citizen (e.g. passport service, visas, and tourist information). The second website researched is the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This website shows what this ministry is doing and diplomatic relations with other countries.

E-CD services online are hard to find. The only available service that could be found by the three researchers is import regulations. These regulations are on an interactive level (average score 2,0, s=0,0). With only this service available, the average score for all services is 0,2. With this score Norway received the lowest score for E-CD type.

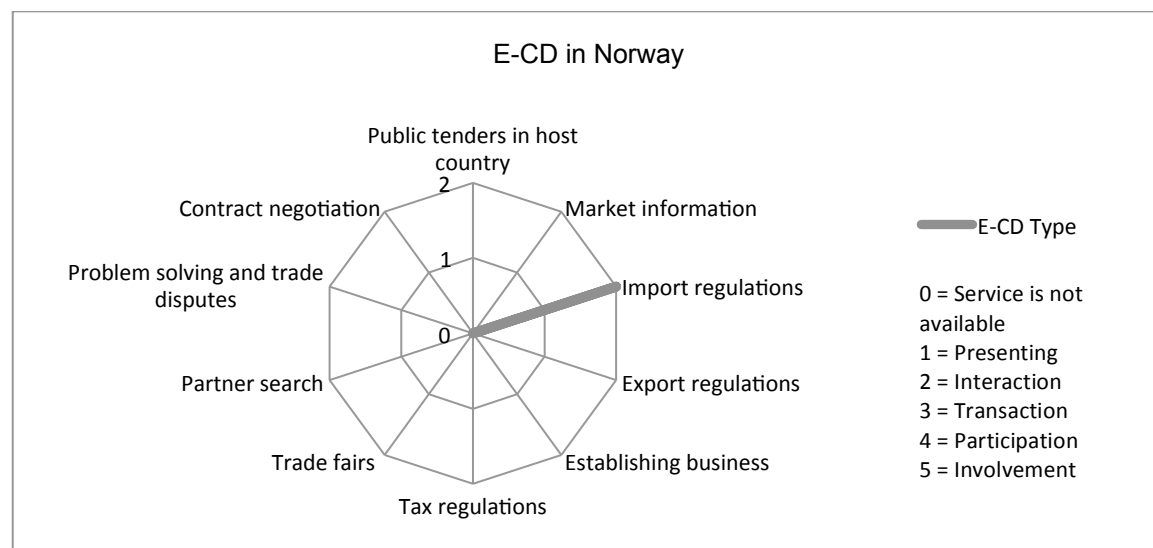


Figure 4.5 – E-CD type in Norway

Website quality assessment:

The websites also show a low average. On the statement, the website uses interactive features an average score of 2,3 (on a five-point scale) is scored. This shows that the websites can be improved, although the website are organized logically (4,0). The website quality also shows that the website should be held more up to date, on the questions; the website is up to date (updated in the last three months), it scored 2,0 (on a five point scale).

4.1.5.3 E-CD Outcome

For Norway increasing efficiency can be seen as the main goal. In the four area's ICT should contribute to development of the society, and increase the knowledge of ICT. In order to increase efficiency and focus on the four-policy areas as suggested, it is important to measure goals and targets. In case of Norway it is not clear on what way goals are measured, what targets should be achieved. The outcome of E-CD is not measured.

4.1.6 Singapore

Singapore is a small country in Asia, with a total area of 683 km². The total population of Singapore is something more than 5,3 million people (2011). Singapore received the highest rank in ease of doing business. The ease of starting a business is ranked 4th. The most important business partner of Singapore is Malaysia, with a 12,2% of the total export. The most important sector is the service sector (73,4% of GDP). Table 4.6 shows institutional settings of Singapore.

Singapore	
Export of goods and services (as % of GDP)	209% (2011)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$266.5 billion (2011 est.), per capita: \$59,900 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	4,9% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business rank	1

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.6 – Institutional settings Singapore

4.1.6.1 Strategy and goals of E-Government in Singapore

The strategy for Singapore can be found on their dedicated E-Government website. The current strategy of Singapore (eGov 2015 Masterplan, 2011) should make sure that people are connected and enrich their lives: Connecting People, Enriching lives. The eGov2015 build on the iGov2010 (iGov2010 Masterplan, 2006) effort, which was mainly on raising awareness and the eGov2015 will seek to explore new means of connecting with citizens. The goal of E-Government for Singapore is to create greater value for Singapore and customers (business and citizen).

The vision of Singapore is "To be a Collaborative Government that Co-creates and Connects with Our People". A focus of the Singapore government is to build an interactive environment where the government, the private sector and the people work together seamlessly, through the enabling power of communication technologies. In order to succeed this vision, the government focuses on three strategic areas:

- Co-creating for Greater Value

Recognizing the Internet as an important channel for the direct delivery of information and services to the public, the Government will continue to improve the information and services delivered through government websites. The Website Transformation Strategy seeks to provide customers with a seamless and integrated web experience across all government websites, while developing standards, common tools and capabilities to support government agencies in improving their websites.

- Connecting for Active participation
- Catalyzing Whole-of-Government transformation

To keep pace with new technological developments, the Singapore Government will design the next generation whole-of-government infrastructure to enhance cross-agency collaboration. This will harness Singapore's high-speed Next Generation Nationwide Broadband Network, and leverage cloud computing and energy-efficient technologies.

4.1.6.2 E-CD Type Singapore

For the analysis of E-CD four websites are researched. The first two websites provide an overall view of Singapore but does not provide E-CD services. The first website is the embassy website, this website mainly provide consular services and some information for travellers. The second website is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. This website shows the missions of Singapore and news about international issues. E-CD services where mainly found on the websites of Ministry of Trade and Industry and a dedicated website which focuses on the External Economy. This last website provides most E-CD services e.g. market information, trade fair information, exporting guide.

The E-CD services in Singapore are on a presenting level, the average score of E-CD Type is 0,8. This score shows a presenting type. Information can be found online, but the services are on a basic level.

Singapore received an average score of 2,3 ($s=0,58$) for trade fairs. This shows a more interactive type, and is a service that can be found on the external economy website. Three services could not be found online: Problem solving, contract negotiation and tax regulations. Remarkable is that public tenders and partner search could just be found by one of the researchers, which provided an average score of 0,3 ($s=0,58$). In figure 4.6 can be found an overview of the type of E-CD for each of the researched services.

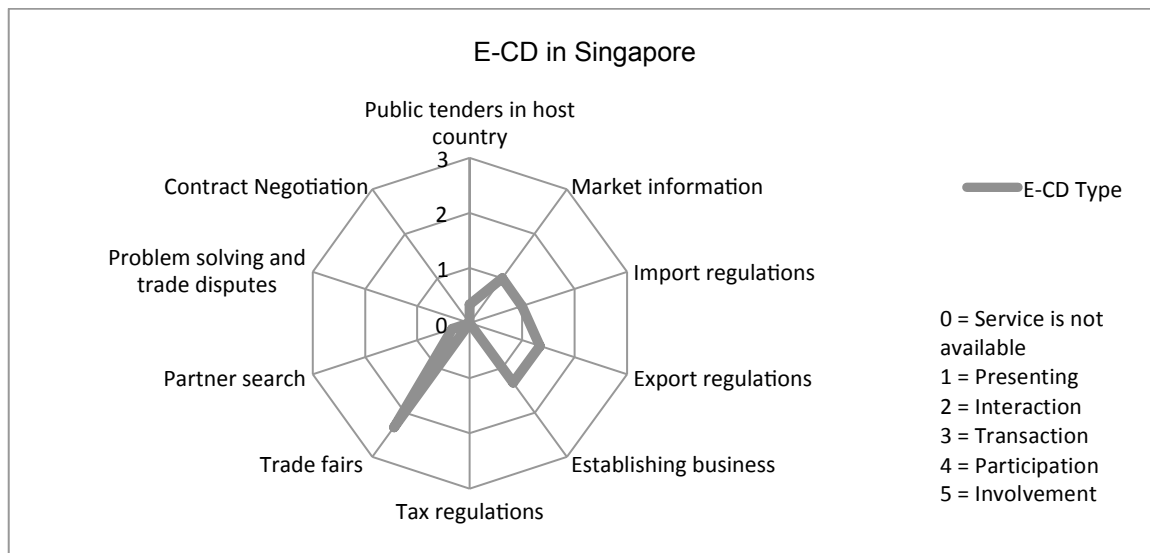


Figure 4.6 – E-CD type in Singapore

Website quality assessment:

The website evaluation showed that the website are easy to navigate and organized logically (average of 4,3 on a five-point scale). The content on the website is not always up to date, researchers partly disagree with the question content is updated recently (within the last 3 months), the average score is 2,3.

4.1.6.3 E-CD Outcome

The goal of Singapore is to increase the value of services, and create greater value for Singapore and the people in Singapore. It is not clear on what way this value is measured. The previous strategy (iGov201) showed a survey, which shows the satisfaction of customers, and how many people will recommend other to transact with the government through e-services. But in the current strategy it is not clear on how goals will be measured, and how this will provide input to future strategy.

4.1.7 Sweden

Sweden has a total area of 449.964 km² and a total population of 9.1 million inhabitants. The responsible Ministry for commercial diplomacy is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Trade Council (Sweden government, 2011). Sweden is ranked 14th in the ease of doing business ranking, and for starting a business 46th. In Sweden 96% of the enterprises have Internet access in 2011, a high percentage use Internet to interact with the public sector, 84% of the enterprises use Internet to obtain information (EPractice.EU, 2012). For Sweden the most important export partner is Germany with 10,5% of the total export. Table 4.7 provides an overview of institutional settings of Sweden.

Sweden	
Export of goods and services (as % of GDP)	50% (2011)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$571.6 billion (2011 est.), per capita: \$40,600 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	4,4% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business rank	14

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.7 – Institutional settings Sweden

4.1.7.1 Strategy and goals of E-Government in Sweden

The E-Government Delegation published their strategic report 'As simple as possible for as many as possible - Making progress' (SOU 2011: 27) in 2011. This strategy provides the future of E-Government in the country. The overall goal of E-Government is to develop an efficient and high quality service, in order to make it as easy as possible for as many as possible. The overarching aims of the broader Swedish E-Government program (E-Government website, Sweden), as presented through these documents, are to:

- Make it as simple as possible for as many people as possible to exercise their rights, fulfill their obligations and access public administration services;
- Strengthen the overall development capacity and innovative power of society
- Higher quality and efficiency in public sector; and
- Achieve flexible E-Government that is based on users' needs.

The 'E-Government Delegation' (E-Delegation) was established in March 2009 with the view to lead and coordinate the development of E-Government in the country. On 19 October 2009, the E-Government Delegation released a report entitled 'Strategy on the work of the Public Agencies in the field of E-Government'. It will thereafter coordinate the strategic E-Government projects until the end of 2014. The document proposes ways of *increasing the efficiency* of the Swedish Public Agencies and the innovation potential of society in general through E-Government. Several of the proposals require the adoption of a Government decision to become applicable. The strategy document is being referred to for consideration by agencies and other organizations (epractice.eu – E-Government Sweden, 2012).

4.1.7.2 E-CD Type Sweden

The websites in Sweden are available in Swedish only, therefore this part of the analysis used Google Translate to translate the whole website in English. Researching commercial diplomatic services online brought use to three websites. The first is the Swedish Embassy in Germany. This website brings one commercial part, which explains the trade relation with Germany. This links this website with other websites. The second researched is the Foreign Affairs website, this website concerns

policies and information about the organization of Sweden abroad. The last website provides most of the services researched during this study; The Trade Council. The Trade Council website is a dedicated export website, that provides knowledge and contact details to contact people that can assist.

The type of E-CD is on average 1,4. This score shows a stage between presenting and interaction stages. Some services (3 out of 10) are not conducted online, which lowers this score. Public tenders, Contract negotiation and the assistance in problem solving and trade disputes could not be found online. The other services show as score between the interactive and transaction stage. Sweden got an average score of 2,3 (s=0,58) on the services: Import regulations, Export regulations and establishing business. For import regulations this is the highest score in the sample. The export website provides a clear and practical overview of regulations, and provides basic information that can be used to do business abroad. Market information scores on average 2,0 (s=0,0). This score shows an interactive stage, and provides information on different markets and sectors in the host country. Figure 4.7 provides an overview of the average score of the E-CD services in Sweden.

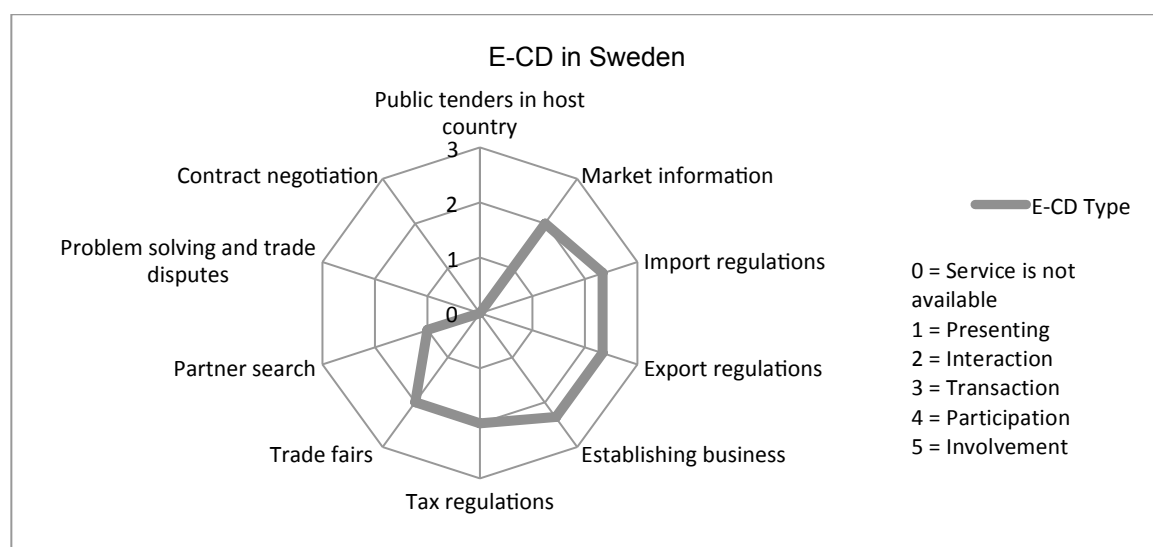


Figure 4.7 – E-CD type in Sweden

Website quality assessment:

The website analysis of Sweden showed that the websites are organized logically (average score 4,0), and the services that are provided online are described well (average score: 4,0). The currency of the website showed an average score of 2,7. The researched partly disagree with the statement; the content is updated recently (within the last 3 months), the average score on this statement is 2,3. The website do provides contact information, researchers fully agree with the statement; the website provides contact information (average score 5,0). The average score of the websites of Sweden is 3,6 (on a five point scale).

4.1.7.3 E-CD Outcome

The eDelegation is responsible for implementation of the Strategy's goals. In order to facilitate the realization of the Strategy's goals, the delegation covers the following aspects:

- E-Identification: the creation of a single and unified E-ID solution to access government services; this solution could be used within the framework of private sector services eventually. The Tax Board (Skatteverket), through a newly established committee, would coordinate the management of E-Identification, and issue regulations on E-ID cards and the electronic data exchange between the public authorities.
- Launch of an Internet forum where citizens and businesses would be given the opportunity to take part in the shaping of future E-Government.
- Several of the existing Public Agencies would be mandated to quickly and effectively develop specific E-Government services. The public authorities should interact among them and with the private stakeholders in the aim to jointly develop common E-Services.
- Better technical/legal rules and regulations to promote the use of E-Identification and E-Services.
- The Public Agencies should select open standards first and always consider open source software.
- Some Public Agencies would be in charge of systematically monitoring the development and the testing of IT, so as to create the conditions for informed technological choices across the public administration.
- Clearer management and funding mechanisms for E-Government projects. Specific funding should be earmarked for those strategic projects that could prove beneficial to third parties.
- Effective support service and shared service centers: the Tax Board and the National Police are currently participating in a pilot scheme aimed at developing the known as 'administrative support activities' applied to financial and human resources.

4.1.8 The Netherlands

The Netherlands has a total area of 41.526 km² and a total population of 16.7 million inhabitants. The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are responsible for commercial diplomacy. They have to make sure that Dutch companies can compete in international markets and create better international relations all over the world (The Netherlands government, 2010). In 2010 98% of the enterprises has Internet access. Around 75% of the enterprises use Internet for interaction with public authorities in 2009 (EPractice.EU, 2012). The Netherlands is ranked 31st on the ease of doing business ranking, and the ease of starting a business

on the 79th rank. The biggest export partner is their neighbor country Germany. Table 4.8 shows an the institutional setting of The Netherlands.

The Netherlands	
Export of goods and services (as % of GDP)	83% (2011)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$858.3 billion (2011 est.), per capita \$42,300 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	1,6% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business rank	31

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.8 – Institutional setting The Netherlands

4.1.8.1 Strategy and goals of E-Government in The Netherlands

According to 'Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report 2010', E-Government is part of the country's wider ICT strategy with a focus on delivering new services in a more efficient manner and reducing administrative burden by investing in shared facilitating services and infrastructure, rather than pursuing E-Government as an end in itself. Administrative burden reduction is a major political priority for the Netherlands and an important justification for E-Government development.

The E-Government strategy is given shape through the 'I-NUP⁴ government-wide implementation agenda for E-Government services until 2015' (Een digital overheid: Betere service, meer gemak, I-NUP) which sets forth the government's ambitions for E-Government development up to 2015. It was presented to the House of Representatives on 27 May 2011. It builds on the 'National Implementation Program' (NUP). Each individual government body (municipal and provincial authorities, water boards and central government) is responsible for implementing the agenda; municipalities receive additional implementation support.

The strategic area till 2015 is on the implementation of basis electronic services:

- Provide widely available, comprehensive basic electronic services for access, information and communication;
- Stimulate e-business opportunities for enterprises;
- Basic registration, the information should be right, because it is the basis of all other systems
- Implementation assistance to municipalities

⁴ I-NUP – Is the national execution service of e-government (Nationaal uitvoeringsprogramma)

The goals for E-Government are to create a compact and efficient government. The government wants to be connected its citizen and businesses. It is important to be seen as one government, and have an integrated system.

4.1.8.2 E-CD Type

The Netherlands provides different websites that serve diplomatic services. The most important website is “AgenschapNL”, this is a website of the Ministry of Economic, Agriculture and Innovation. This website provides data on different countries, and provides a guide to export to specific countries. The average score of the E-CD types of the services is 1,7 ($s=0,58$), this score is close to the interactive type of services. Two services are not available online (contract negotiation and problem solving and trade disputes), this lowers the score, because the other services provide types between interactive and transaction.

A remarkable score is the average score of Trade Fairs 3,0 ($s=0,0$). This score is the highest average score in the sample of this research. Trade fairs in The Netherlands can be found in the event calendar, and it is possible to apply / participate in these trade fairs. It is possible to subscribe online, and receive more (detailed) information of different events. The service market information also scores high in this sample, 2,3 ($s=0,58$). This score shows that the Netherlands provide detailed information on the market in the host country, and makes it possible to search on different markets and sectors in the host country.

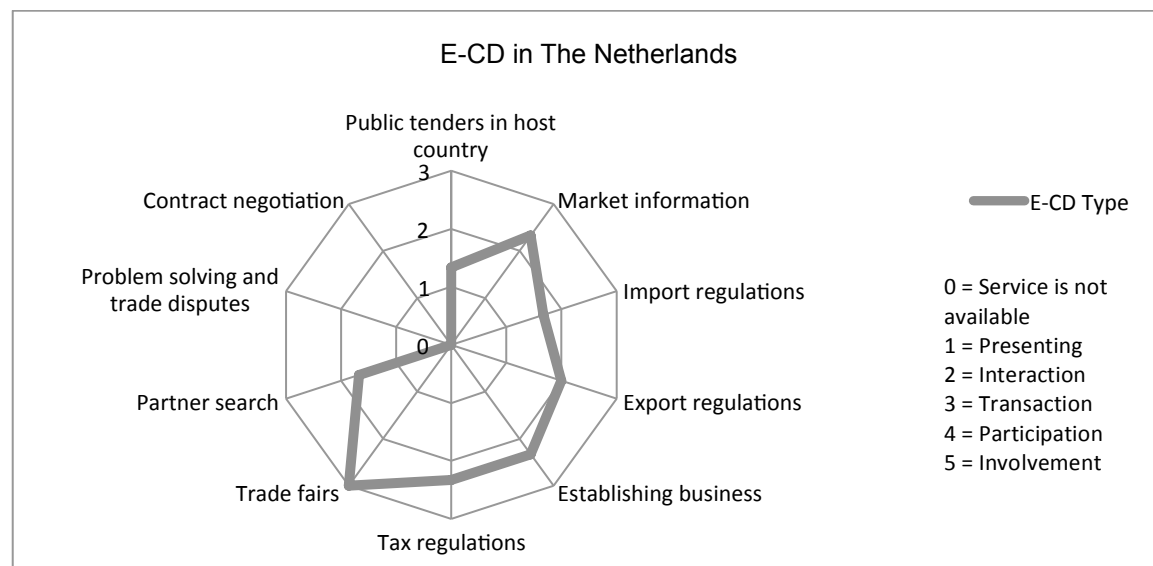


Figure 4.8 – E-CD type in The Netherlands

Website quality assessment:

The Netherlands provides websites that are organized logically. The web analysis showed that responded partly agreed with the statement; website is organized logically (average score 4,3). The currency on the website showed a score of 4,0 (on a five=point scale). This shows that content is up

to date (average score 4,3). Interactivity on the website scored 2,7 which shows that respondents expect more interactive features on the website. On average the websites score a 4,2 on a five-point scale.

4.1.8.3 E-CD Outcome

In order to reach the goals and strategic focus, the Netherlands will monitor and manage E-Government. A dedicated group “Operation NUP” will audit on effectively at two moments, the first one, at the end of 2012, and the second one at the end of the program (2015). Besides these formal audits, E-Government will be monitored at all times, a transparent system will be in place, that makes it possible for citizen and companies to see the progress of the government.

4.1.9 United Kingdom (UK)

The United Kingdom has a total area of 244.820 km² and a total population of more then 63 million inhabitants. The government of the UK has made changes in the last 10 years to their commercial diplomacy system. Commercial diplomacy falls under the new Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also known as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) (Hocking and Spence, 2005), and works together with the department for Business Innovation and Skills. The government has decentralized the planning of commercial diplomacy and the system has been more integrated. The government wants to increase the export and inward investment activities (Lee, 2004; Mercier, 2007).

In the UK 95% of enterprises have Internet access and around 60% of the companies use it to interact with public authorities (EPractice.EU, 2012). The biggest export partner of the UK is The United States of America, with 11,4% of the total export. The UK is ranked 7th in the ease of doing business ranking, and 19th in starting a business. In the table 4.9 can be found an overview of the institutional setting of The UK.

United Kingdom	
Export of goods and services (as % of GDP)	32% (2011)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$2.481 trillion (2011 est.), per capita: \$35.900 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	1,1% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business rank	7

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.9 – Institutional setting United Kingdom

4.1.9.1 E-Government Strategy and Goals

The coalition government, appointed in office in May 2010, proclaimed its intentions to revamp the public sector, to upgrade the role of ICT and, in general, move away from vendor lock-in and large-scale single supplier proprietary software solutions. Immediately following assumption of power, the

government founded the Efficiency and Reform Group under the Cabinet Office, with the mission to undertake a coordinated approach to tackling waste and improving *efficiency* and *accountability* across all government departments, including ICT.

Less than a year later, in March 2011, the Cabinet Office published the new 'Government ICT Strategy', which set out to improve the record of government ICT, especially in delivering large-scale projects and programs. This was followed by the publication of four focused strategies on 27 October 2011, titled: 'Government Cloud'; 'Greening Government: ICT'; 'Government ICT Capability'; and 'Government End User Device'.

The main targets of the strategy are, through reuse and sharing of ICT assets, to improve *productivity* and *efficiency*, reduce waste and the likelihood of project failure. Key elements include the application of agile project management methods to ICT procurement and delivery so as to respond to changing requirements and ensure that solutions meet business requirements. The importance of interoperability, through the use of common and open standards, is emphasized with the creation of cross-government standards on application program interfaces and the development of a quality assurance mark (epractice.eu E-Government in the UK, 2011). The focus of the strategy is hereby divided in four parts:

- Part 1 – Reducing waste and project failure, and stimulating economic growth

The Government is committed to improving the way it delivers ICT-enabled business change so that investments in ICT support business needs and deliver expected benefits. The government will focus on sharing and reusing solutions, in order to reduce waste.

- Part 2 – Creating a common ICT infrastructure

To carry out its day-to-day operations, government relies on complex and large-scale ICT infrastructure components.

- Part 3 – Using ICT to enable and deliver change

By standardising processes and creating transparent commercial models, the Government will build a common, flexible ICT infrastructure. This ICT platform will enable the delivery of open, diverse and responsive public services for all.

- Part 4 – Strengthen governance

The strategy will be delivered through lead departments accepting responsibility for actions and parts of the ICT infrastructure model where delivery activities are already aligned with their work. This form of devolved delivery will require new and robust governance.

4.1.9.2 E-CD Type

The Trade and Investment (UKTI) website provides most E-CD services in the UK. This website works with UK based businesses to ensure their success in international markets, and encourage the best overseas companies to look to the UK as their global partner of choice. The embassy website provide a link to this website, so that this website is well integrated, and gives an overview of the services provided by diplomats.

The UK scores an average score of 1,9 for E-CD type for their services. This is the highest score in the sample of countries for this research. The researched services that are not provided are assistance with problem solving and trade disputes and contract negotiation. The rest of the services are on a higher level and four out of ten services (Trade fairs, partner search, export regulations and public tenders in host country) score the highest average score of the ten researched countries. Interesting is that public tenders in host country scores high (2,3 with $s=0,58$), this is a service that is not seen often online, but is provided by the UK government. The service trade fairs / missions can be typed in the stage “transaction”. The average score for trade fairs / mission is 3,0 ($s=0,0$).

Tax regulations is the only service that is provided online, but does not score above the level of interaction, the average score for tax regulations is 1,7 ($s=0,58$). In figure 4.9 can be found an overview of services and the E-CD type for these services.

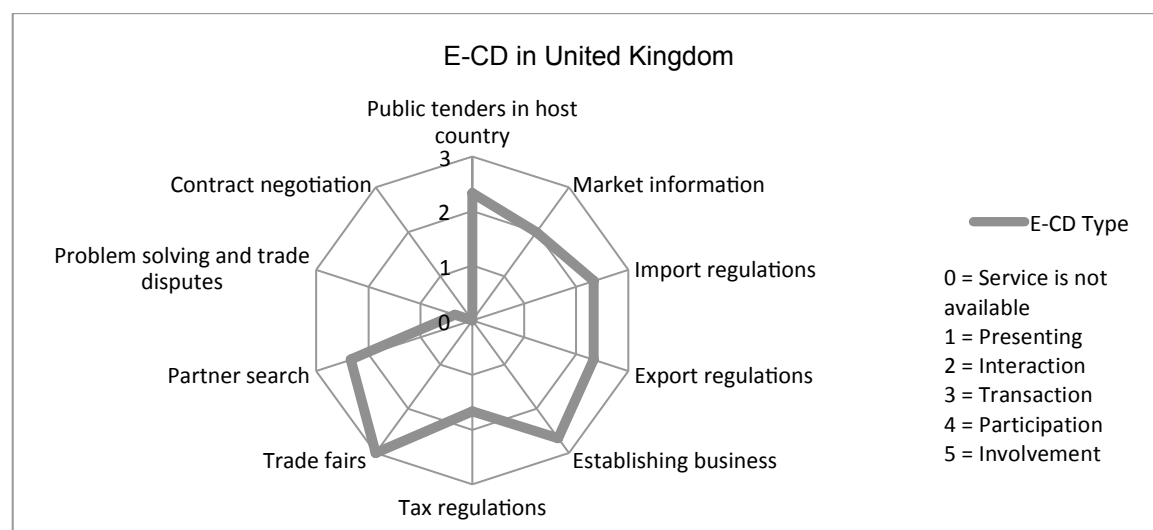


Figure 4.9 – E-CD type in United Kingdom

Website quality assessment:

The UK provides an interactive website (website provides interactive features, partly agree, 4,0), with an easy to navigate a logically organized content (average score navigability 4,3). It is clear who is responsible for the website and for the content online (average score 4,7, fully agree). The average score for the website is 4,0 on a five-point scale.

4.1.9.3 E-CD Outcome

Governance measures of the strategy document include plans to form a new body, the Chief Information Officer's (CIO) Delivery Board, which comprises CIOs from the large delivery departments and which is to sit above the CIO Council and advise the ministerial committee (called the 'Public Expenditure Committee (Efficiency and Reform)') on progress. The CIO Delivery Board was created in spring 2011 and took ownership of the delivery and implementation of the ICT strategy, supported by action from all departments. The Board published the accompanying Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP), to translate the vision of the 'Government ICT Strategy' into real outcomes. The SIP provides an overview of how the strategy will be implemented and a summary of the individual plans for each delivery area. The initiatives will be funded via existing spending plans. These plans imply spending money better, rather than spending more, and will be used as exemplars of the government's major projects methodology (epractice.eu E-Government in the UK, 2011).

4.1.10 United States of America (USA)

The United States of America got a total area of 9.826.675 km². America is the world leading trading nation. US Commercial Diplomacy is pursued through 19 agencies (International trade organization, 2006), and it is a public type organization. The Department of Commerce is the principal agency dealing with Commercial Diplomacy, but the leading agency varies depending on the type of transaction (Mercier, 2007). The biggest export partner of America is Canada, with a 19,4% of all export. The United States of America has a 4th rank in ease of doing business. The ease of starting a business America received a 13th place. Table 4.10 presents an overview of the institutional setting.

United States of America (USA)	
Export of goods and services (as % of GDP)	13% (2010)
GDP and GDP per capita	\$15.06 trillion (2011 est.), per capita: \$48,100 (2011 est.)
Economic growth (real GDP)	1,5% (2011 est.)
Ease of doing business rank	4

Sources can be found in Appendix 10

Table 4.10 – Institutional setting United States of America

4.1.10.1 E-Government Strategy and Goals

The Digital Government Strategy complements several initiatives aimed at building a 21st century government that works better for the American people. The fast change in technology requires a continuous improvement of services according to the American government. The digital government strategy sets out to accomplish three things, their main goals:

- Enable the American people and an increasingly mobile workforce to access high-quality digital government information and services anywhere, anytime, on any device.
- Ensure that as the government adjusts to this new digital world, we seize the opportunity to procure and manage devices, applications, and data in smart, secure and affordable ways.
- Unlock the power of government data to spur innovation across our Nation and improve the quality of services for the American people.

In order to achieve these goals, the strategy is built upon four overarching principles:

An “Information-Centric” approach – Moves the government from managing “documents” to managing discrete pieces of open data and content which can be tagged, shared, secured, mashed up and presented in the way that is most useful for the consumer of that information.

A “Shared Platform” approach – Helps the government work together, both within and across agencies, to reduce costs, streamline development, apply consistent standards, and ensure consistency in how we create and deliver information.

A “Customer-Centric” approach – Influences how the government create, manage, and present data through websites, mobile applications, raw data sets, and other modes of delivery, and allows customers to shape, share and consume information, whenever and however they want it.

A platform of “Security and Privacy” – Ensures this innovation happens in a way that ensures the safe and secure delivery and use of digital services to protect information and privacy.

4.1.10.2 E-CD Type

In the United States two websites are researched. The first website is the embassy website, this website shows which services are available for businesses. It explains which trade services are available and links to Canadian websites for more information. The second website is the Foreign Affairs website, which shows “diplomacy in Action”. This website provides a wide range of services with focused on diplomacy.

The United States is the only country where all services are available online. The average score for E-CD Type is 1,5. The average score shows that the United States services are between presenting and

interaction stage. The websites provide services that can be seen as interaction, client can interact with the government and receive more detailed information.

The service establishing business received the highest average score of 2,7 (s=0,58). The website helps in establishing business in the host country. It is possible to search for distributors or regulations on how to establish a business can be found. Another remarkable score is the average score for trade fairs, the service scored 2,3 (s=0,58). This score shows that trade fairs in the host country can be found online, and it is possible to contact for more detailed information. It is not possible to apply / subscribe online. The average scores for each service can be found in figure 4.10.

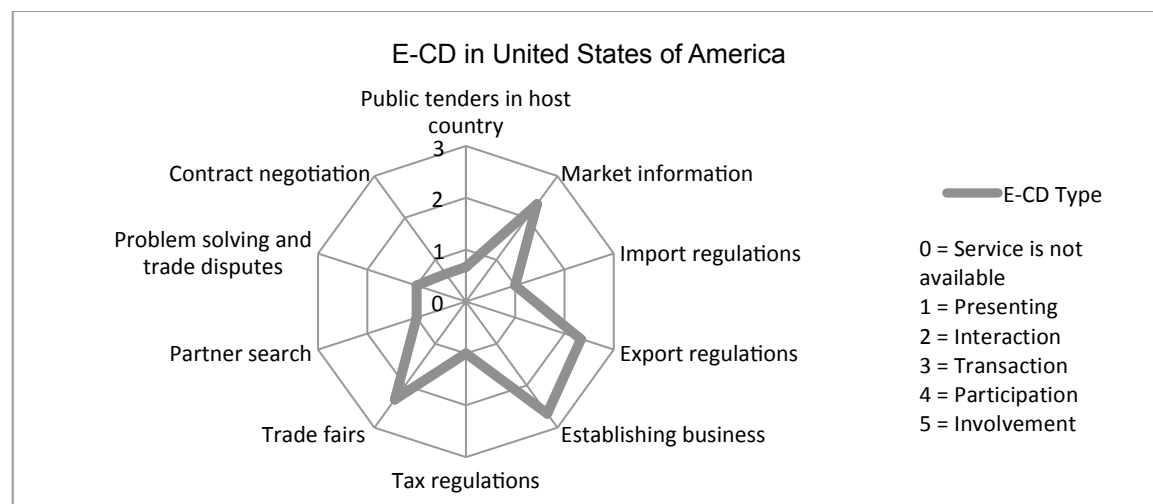


Figure 4.10 – E-CD type in United States of America

Website quality assessment:

During the analysis it showed that the orientation and navigation on the different website is not very distinct and spelled out. The researchers did not agree or disagree on the statement that the website is organized logically (average score 3,0). In this research is found that the orientation on the websites scored on average 3,3 (on a five-point scale). The interaction on the websites can be improved, respondents fully disagree with the statement: the website provides interactive features (average score 1,3). The total quality of the website scored on average 3,2, which is the lowest score of the researched countries.

4.1.10.3 E-CD Outcome

Objective performance measures should drive the development and delivery of effective digital government services. In the strategy of the United States is mentioned that most agencies lack enterprise-wide performance measures to consistently evaluate the success and usability of their websites. This limits the agencies ability to allocate resources effectively to invest in critical-needs areas. Similarly, the lack of a government-wide view of performance for digital service delivery makes it difficult to properly address gaps or duplications in services.

To enable data-driven decisions on service performance, agencies will be required to use analytics and customer satisfaction measurement tools on all .gov websites within 6 months. To help these efforts, the Digital Services Innovation Center (will identify common tools for agencies to use that will enable aggregation of this data at the federal level. Common tools will give us the ability to take a government-wide view of how well we serve our customers and opens up new possibilities for consolidating and improving the federal web space and the growing number of mobile services.

Besides this evaluation, the United States continually evaluate current processes for adopting new technologies and ensuring they provide security and privacy protections. The Federal CIO Council's Information Security and Identity Management Committee will also evaluate opportunities to accelerate the secure adoption mobile technologies into the federal environment at reduced costs.

4.2 Overview and analysis of findings

The strategy, goals, type and outcome of the ten selected countries, as discussed in section 4.1, are summarized and shown next to each other in table 4.11. From this table a comparison is made, showing the differences and similarities between the countries.

4.2.1 Strategy and goals comparison

Strategy:

An analysis of the different strategies showed that the strategies often focus on citizens (as customers) instead of taking the definition of customers a bit wider (i.e. including companies). Countries that particularly mention businesses in their focus are: Denmark, Norway and The Netherlands. For almost all the countries business users are included in the strategy, except for Singapore, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The first two countries (Singapore and Sweden) focus on citizens in their E-Government strategy. The United Kingdom is more focused in internal alignment and reducing waste of project failure. E-Government is used to increase efficiency and productivity of the government.

A second aspect that can be analyzed is how countries "develop a strategy". The extend of development of the strategy varies between the countries that have been considered. In most countries a separate E-Government strategy exist, but in Norway and The Netherlands it is part of / integrated in the ICT strategy of the country. In two countries (Canada and Finland) the business sector assisted in development of the strategy, in order to make it fit to the public. Canada and Finland worked together with various stakeholders to develop their E-Government strategy resulting in more participation from either the business or citizens (as in line with the strategic focus).

The content of the strategy in many countries (Norway, Singapore, Sweden, The Netherlands, France) clearly shows similarities with respect to the focus on availability of information. Another important strategic focus is to increase collaboration with clients of the system: Human centric (Finland), Interaction with citizens (Canada), Co-creating for greater value (Singapore), Customer centric (USA). Countries also show a more internal focus on optimizing internal processes and procedures. This is convenient both for the government as well as for the business. Examples are the co-creation for greater value (Singapore), creating a common ICT infrastructure (UK), Turning ideas into products and services (Finland) and the Shared Platform approach (USA).

In general all countries try to keep up with the speed of ICT and be ready for the next century and trends in Government. In Denmark the strategy is indeed called “The next century of government, on new digital welfare”, France is focused on modernizing the government for the digital economy, Norway wants to improve accessibility, and connect everybody with high speed internet. The USA is building the government for the 21st century, and Sweden wants to achieve flexible E-Government that is based on users’ needs, thereby make it as simple as possible for as many as possible. This shows that most governments are preparing next steps, and becoming more and more online focused.

Goals:

The strategic goals are closely related to the strategy of different countries. The goals of the different governments have a lot in common. The most frequently used goal is to increase the quality of services (Canada, Denmark, France, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, UK, and USA). Efficiency is another goal that goes hand in hand with increasing the quality (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands, and UK). A goal of Finland is to be internationally attractive; this is more focused on increasing import and providing service to companies that want to do business abroad. A focus of Canada and The Netherlands is also to connect with citizens and business.

4.2.2 E-CD Type comparison

The services that are conducted online show multiple stages of development. Most services are available on different websites, but services related to *problem solving and trade disputes*, and for *contract negotiation* are generally hard to find online. Proving public tenders in the host country is also a service that is conducted by 5 out of 10 websites.

The services on different websites show a difference in average scores, the highest average score is the score of the UK (1,9). With this average score the UK services can be typed as an interactive type of E-CD. The lowest average score found is Norway with a score of 0,2. For Norway only one of the ten services can be found online. Figure 4.11 shows the average scores of the 10 countries in one

graph. Most countries (UK, Canada, The Netherlands, USA, Sweden, Finland, Denmark) scored an average score above the presenting stage (average score above 1,0), and show that they are moving to a more interactive type of E-CD services.

The service “*trade fairs*” is the service that scored the highest average score when taking an average of the services of all countries. The average score of trade fairs in all countries scored 2,2. The average scores of all services can be found in figure 4.12, these are the average scores of the services in all countries.

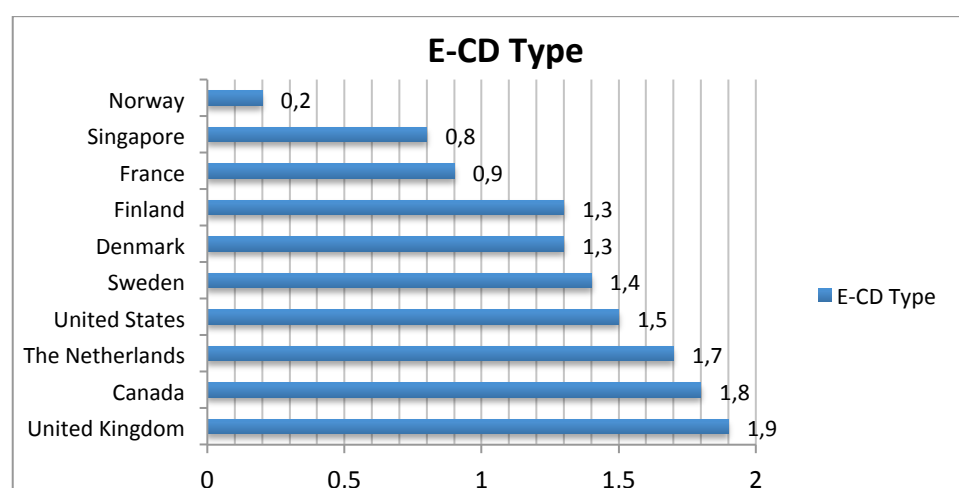


Figure 4.11 – Comparison E-CD Type

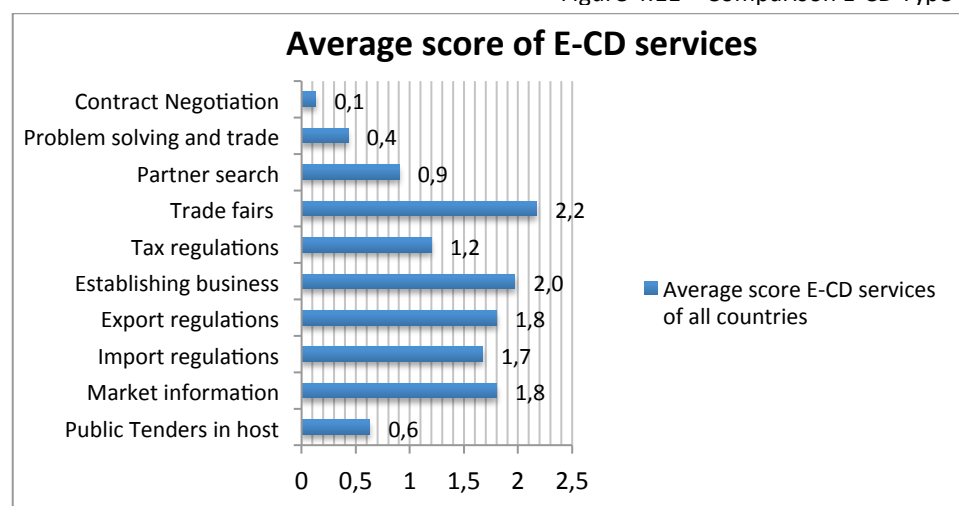


Figure 4.12 – Average score E-CD services

4.2.3 Outcomes of E-CD comparison

Governments can only assess the outcomes of E-CD when these are measured. Therefore it is important to assess, monitor and evaluate the goals that are proposed by governments. The number of countries actively using feedback through monitoring and measurement is 7 out of 10. Not every country shows that they have measures, or the intention to measure progress on achieving E-Government goals. Canada, Norway and Singapore do not provide measures. Measurements are

important to the sustainability of the strategy, and as the framework in this research implies, the outcomes provide input to updating the strategies. Singapore did use the previous strategy as a starting point for the new strategy, but did not include results of measuring and monitoring improvements.

Denmark, Sweden, and The Netherlands work with a dedicated group / board that is responsible for implementation of the strategic goals. These groups monitor the progress, and in case of The Netherlands, they also make the progress available to the public. Finland, France and USA suggested measures and evaluate these measures on scheduled moments. France reviews measures and adds new measures during scheduled meetings. The USA tries to analyze on a systematic and government wide way, the USA measures and analyze all .gov websites and thereby receives a lot of input from both customers as website statistics.

4.3 Explaining E-CD type difference based on country characteristics

This section will explain the difference in E-CD type found in this research. The findings indicate different stages of development of electronic commercial diplomacy for different countries, which are not necessarily obvious.

Two possible explanations have been considered:

- Differences in institutional settings. The institutional setting of the nations research covered four aspects: export of goods and services, GDP per capita, economic growth and ease of doing business. The institutional settings of the different nations are categorized in three levels; low, medium and high performance. One could expect that high performing nations will exhibit a better E-CD performance. However, as is shown in figure 4.13, no correlation between institutional settings (high, medium, low) and the stage of development of E-CD can be found.

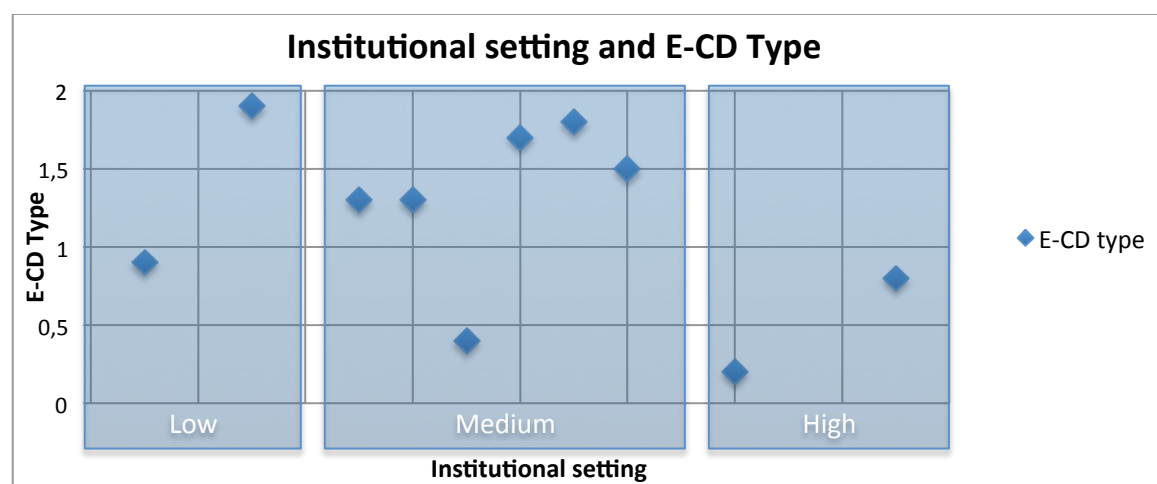


Figure 4.13 – Institutional setting explanation

- Within the framework, differences in vision/orientation and strategy/goals for the various nations are provided. The strategy and goals of E-CD are the setting for E-CD, which influence the type (development) of E-CD. For nations the setting can be between two extreme orientations: *Cost oriented* and *Democracy oriented*. Based on the findings in this research it can be noticed that nations that are more democracy oriented (e.g. The Netherlands, Canada, Finland, United Kingdom, Singapore) shows a higher score of E-CD. Nations (e.g. France, Norway) that are more cost oriented and focus more on the increase of efficiency show a lower score for E-CD type.

Table 4.11 – Overview of findings

E-Government Strategy	E-Government Goals	E-CD Type (average score)	E-CD Outcome
Canada	No central E-Government strategy, but in the business area Ontario a strategy is present. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service delivery - The internal management of government - Management of broader public sector systems - Interaction with citizen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better service quality - Greater citizen trust - Better value for taxpayer, - Increased client satisfaction, - Increased economic growth - Meeting citizen needs 	Interaction (1,8) No measures available
Denmark	The digital path to future welfare, three main tracks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No more printed forms or letters - New digital welfare - Digital solutions for closer collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efficient solutions - Robust and effective services 	Presenting to interaction (1,3) Focused on ensuring a consistent implementation of the E-Government solutions. The implementation is orchestrated by a domain board, with strong coordination of various sections of the public sector. Initiatives need to be documented and benefits need to be clarified.
Finland	The strategy is drawn up in cooperation with decision makers and actors from various sectors of society (400 specialist). The vision of Finland is: “Good life in information Society”, with four focus area’s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human centric and competitive service society - Turning ideas into products and services (innovative system) - Competent and learning individuals and work communities - An interoperable information society infrastructure, the foundation of an information society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An internationally attractive - Human centric - Competitive knowledge and service society 	Presenting to interaction (1,3) Finland included an implementation plan that contains: implementation, monitoring, assessment and updating of measures. Finland suggested 72 measures to ensure Finland’s transformation to an internationally attractive, human centric and competitive knowledge and service society.
France	Development plan for the digital economy, four focus areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enabling all citizens to access all digital networks and services - Developing the production and supply of digital content - Increasing and diversifying the use of digital services by companies, Public Administrations and citizens; and - Modernizing the governance of the Digital Economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% access to fixed broadband internet - Reducing cost - Increase quality of the offered services 	Presenting (0,9) Overviews of implementation of the measures planned. For 2013, 150 new measures are added, which will be reviewed in 2013.

Table 4.11 continued

E-Government Strategy		E-Government Goals	E-CD Type (average score)	E-CD Outcome
Norway	Part of a wider ICT strategy, with the focus on providing service and developing the required back-office infrastructure. The strategy focuses on four area's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High speed broadband (increasing ICT knowledge of population) - Contribute to innovation and value creation in business sector - Stimulating growth and development - Seeking good public self service solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve quality - Improve accessibility - Improve flexibility - Increase efficiency of services 	Not yet active (0,2)	No measures available
Singapore	The vision of Singapore is to Connect people, enrich lives. To achieve this vision Singapore focuses on three strategic area's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-Creating for greater value - Connecting for Active participation - Catalyzing Whole-of-Government transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater value for citizen 	Presenting (0,8)	No measurement available
Sweden	The strategy of Sweden focus on four strategic aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make it as simple as possible for as many people as possible to exercise their rights, fulfill their obligations and access public administration services; - Strengthen the overall development capacity and innovative power of society - Higher quality and efficiency in public sector; and - Achieve flexible E-Government that is based on users' needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing efficiency - Increase quality of services 	Presenting to interactive (1,4)	eDelegation is responsible for implementation of the strategy goals. They made it possible to interact with citizen and business to take part in the shaping of E-Government.
The Netherlands	E-Government is part of the wider ICT strategy, with the focus on delivering new services in a more efficient manner and reducing administrative burden. The focus is on implementing four basis E-Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide widely available, comprehensive basic electronic services for access, information and communication; - Stimulate e-business opportunities for enterprises; - Basic registration, the information should be right, because it is the basis of all other systems - Implementation assistance to municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compact and efficient government. - Administrative burden reduction - An integrated system - Connect with citizen and businesses 	Interaction (1,7)	Operation NUP is responsible for monitoring the progress. Documents will be accessible for citizen and companies (transparent) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First evaluation at the end of 2012, - Second evaluation at the end of the program; 2015.

Table 4.11 continued				
E-Government Strategy		- E-Government Goals	E-CD Type (average score)	E-CD Outcome
United Kingdom	The focus of the strategy is divided in four parts: - Part 1 – Reducing waste and project failure, and stimulating economic growth - Part 2 – Creating a common ICT infrastructure - Part 3 – Using ICT to enable and deliver change - Part 4 – Strengthen governance	- Improving productivity and efficiency - Improve accountability	Interaction (1,9)	A CIO Delivery board was created in spring 2011, this board published the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP). The delivery board is responsible for the implementation of E-Government goals.
United States of America	The US strategy complements several initiatives aimed at building a 21 st century. The US focus on three overarching principles: - An Information-Centric approach - A Shared Platform approach - A Customer-Centric approach - A platform of Security and Privacy	- Increase mobile workforces to access high quality government information and services anywhere - Ensure that the government adjust to this new digital world - Improve quality of service - Increase transparency	Presenting to interaction (1,5)	Performance measures drive the development and delivery of effective digital government services: - Website measures on all .gov website (on analytics and customer satisfaction) - Evaluations of current processes for adopting new technologies - Improve agencies wide performance by website assessments (point 1)

5 Conclusion and discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this research into application and implementation of electronic (web based) commercial diplomacy (E-CD), the effort into E-CD has been evaluated for the top ten rated countries in the use of electronic tools (E-Government).

For this research Electronic Commercial diplomacy (E-CD) is defined as: the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance the access to and delivery of activities conducted by public actors –with or without diplomatic status- for the purpose of business promotion between a home and a host country. E-CD aims to improve the approach and process of government services that facilitate commercial gains.

The web-services are commercial diplomatic services that can be conducted online (e.g. market information, trade fairs, regulations, contract negotiation or partner search). For this study, a framework has been used involving the following steps: E-Government Strategy, E-Government Goals, E-CD Type, and E-CD Outcomes, whereby the outcomes provide feedback to updating the E-Government strategic goals. This model shows a circle of events to indicate that development of E-CD is not a static process, but more a dynamic and interactive process. The model shows that a continuing cycle of events can take place.

Evaluation of the combination of the four elements in the framework of this study will provide results to answer the research question to conclude this research (section 5.2). A discussion and recommendations for further work is presented in section 5.3 and 5.4.

5.2 Conclusion

In this part the subject will be the main question of this research:

What are the types⁵ of electronic services of commercial diplomacy, and to what extend can this be explained by institutional and implementation settings?

When it comes to strategy, the strategy of government is described in an IT- or more often in the *E-Government strategy*. E-Government strategies mostly focus on improvement of public services and make services widely available. The approach is focused on clients, and improving services for them. The *E-Government goals* show that besides focusing on increasing service quality (Canada, Denmark,

⁵ types are equivalent to levels of maturity/development

France, Norway, Sweden, USA) there is also a focus on increasing efficiency. A number of country governments have aimed to connect with clients and create greater value for clients.

E-CD services are placed in five stages of maturity/development – Presenting, Interaction, Transaction, Participation and Involvement – that represents the *type of E-CD*. From the data in this research it is concluded that the current (2012) level of using electronic tools for Commercial Diplomacy is at a level of “presenting data” with some limited “interaction” possibilities. For diplomats the consequence is that administrative tasks still have to be executed, because services can be executed online. The presenting level refers to the simple presentation of information without much functionality. The difference in average scores between the ten countries is high, especially when taking in consideration that the strategies and goals of the different countries have in common that online services are important and needs to be strengthening.

Finally when it comes to *outcomes of E-CD* is it important to measure the progress towards strategy and goals that have been set. Systematically measuring, monitoring or evaluating the progress of the use of electronic tools (“outcomes”) will provide valuable feedback to further definition of strategic goals for E-CD. Denmark, Sweden, and The Netherlands work with a group / board that is responsible for implementation of the strategic goals, thus addressing the importance of implementing E-tools and integrating these into the procedures and processes of the government. These groups monitor the progress, and in case of The Netherlands, they make the progress available to the public. In three other countries (Finland, France and USA) Electronic tools are evaluated and the goals are measured on scheduled points in time. France reviews measures and adds new measures during scheduled meetings. Three countries (Canada, Singapore, Norway) in this research did not use measures to evaluate the outcomes of E-CD. The measures found are mostly ways to measure the E-Government strategy and goals, these are not specific for Commercial Diplomacy.

The overall conclusion of this research is that E-CD is still in an ‘embryonic’ stage. Some countries have clearly done more, but no countries clearly exceed the level of ‘Presenting’ (albeit that some examples of ‘Interaction’ have been spotted). Based on the findings in this research it is concluded that implementation settings can explain the type of E-CD to a more significant extent than institutional settings. E-CD type may well relate to the emphasis given to political orientation and not so much to institutional performance. Countries that show a more democratic orientation seem to show a higher score for E-CD type.

5.3 Discussion

As concluded in the previous section, E-CD is still in an embryonic stage. Differences between countries can be found with some examples of higher stages of development. In this section the

aforementioned findings will be discussed. This section will start with discussing the theoretical and practical implications by reflecting existing literature on the findings by explicating which findings are reinforced and which contradict with existing literature.

First: Ross (2011) describes that diplomacy in the twenty-first century must grapple with both the potential and the limits of technology in foreign policy, and response to the disruptions that it causes in international relations. Digital diplomacy is an important part for government, and can be found in the conclusion of this research. This research reinforces Ross' (2011) findings and show that governments see the importance of digital diplomacy. All governments have developed an E-Government strategy that describes how technology will be used.

Second: To conduct this study, eleven services have been included for review. The chosen services are based on the activities of Commercial Diplomats. (Busschers (2011) provided a structured overview of CD activities, which was used as a basis to select activities for this study. It is not yet investigated whether these services are E-Services. According to the definition of Rust & Kannan (2002) the services can be typed as E-services (E-Services can be defined as services provided over electronic networks (Rust & Kannan, 2002). In this research is found that most of the selected services can be found online. For some services it is clearly not possible to have a full transaction online. Two services in specific are hard to find online. Problem solving services (found on 5 website, but not by all researchers) may be seen as a service that can better be conducted face to face, and require more specialized and company fitted solutions. The same counts for assistance in contract negotiation (service provided by 2 countries). The definition used for E-CD –developed for this research– is valid for this research, and gives further input for future research.

The third point is the measurement used in this research. The measurement is based on the five stages suggested by Lee (2010). Concluded on basis of this measurement is that E-CD services are in an “embryonic” stage (presenting and limited interaction stages). Norris et al. (2001) showed that most state governments have moved beyond the static informational and bulletin-type web sites to offer a wide range of interactive services. A majority of local governments have also established a web presence and are on their way to providing interactive service delivery capabilities. The research of Norris et al. (2001) contradicts this study. This research showed that services are on a lower stage than in the research of Norris et al. (2001). The measurement used in this research is based on the model of Lee (2010). In this model the final two stages (participation and involvement) seem far away, and might not be possible in the real world. The third stage (transaction) however is a stage that can be reached, and makes it possible to execute the full service online.

Fourth to discuss are country characteristics; this has been mentioned in broad terms in literature. Pudjianto & Hangjung (2009) found in their research that environmental context plays an important role in assimilating of E-Government, followed by organization and technological factors. Factors such as; cultural background, regime and institutions of the host country also affect CD (Kostechi & Naray, 2007; Ruël & Zuidema, 2012; Stadman, 2012; Yakop & Van Bergeijk, 2009). In this research four institutional settings are discussed, but no statistical evidence was found to prove a correlation between the development of E-CD and institutional settings.

Davies (2005) suggests that E-government implementation is not just a technological but also organizational change. It particularly demands a greater customer oriented focus from government agencies and is clearly tied to performance improvement. This research reinforce these findings, services are found on websites of different ministries, it is important to align services within the government (organization).

In this work, no elaborate research was done on reasons for differences outside the framework. Stakeholder theory articulates two core questions (Freeman, 1994) . First, it asks, what is the purpose of the firm? Second, stakeholder theory asks, what responsibility does management have to stakeholders? As seen during the analysis, services can be found on different websites of different ministries. In case of E-CD the main stakeholders are businesses. Commercial Diplomacy is often integrated in multiple ministries, and the services of diplomats are also integrated on multiple websites.

5.4 Limitations

This study has several limitations which future research should overcome. The most important limitations are discussed in the following section.

First, the data for this research was found on the government website and in secondary (EU) research. The data found is limited to online published information, this information is often written the local language (France, Sweden, Norway). This data did not include all empirical data necessary to find relations between elements of the framework. Nevertheless, for this research sufficient information was found to analyze strategies and explain types of E-CD services.

Secondly, this research is based on analysis of ten countries that have already put great effort in the use of electronic tools. The extent in which E-CD is developed is also subject to the country characteristics. The extent in which E-CD is developed in these countries cannot be generalized to countries that are not as well developed as the countries in this study.

Thirdly, E-CD type has been researched based on website analysis. This analysis is executed with three researchers, and is focused on Commercial Diplomatic services. The researchers were trained to develop an aligned approach. The levels of E-Government are close to each other and the evaluation partly depends on interpretation of data on the websites. The data from this study provided enough reliability to research E-CD type.

Finally, the outcomes of E-CD could not be researched based on facts or published evaluations, therefore measures of the E-Government goals are researched. In the future can be analyzed whether goals are reached and implemented.

5.5 Future research

Based on the above discussion and limitation some new questions and unanswered questions remain to be solved. This section will therefore explain and suggest future research topics.

In this research limited variables are used that can help to explain the difference between the selected countries. Existing research indicates that home country characteristics might affect the commercial diplomacy (Kostechi & Naray, 2007). This study focused on ten countries that are ahead in E-Government. Additionally this study focused on the most important export country, future research can compare data of different host countries (less important for export), which might give other types of E-CD.

Additionally can be suggested to include export managers / international managers as a unit of observation by researching on what way Internet and electronic tools are used by companies. This data can show gaps in what companies expect and what government provides.

A second suggestion for further research is to replicate this study in other countries. This sample considered all relatively mature countries in terms of E-Government. The difference in E-CD type is still relatively small. Researching other countries, for example emerging economies, can help to research the influence of experience of a country as a potential determinant of E-CD type. These emerging economies can use technology from the start and integrate it in the government organization, future research can search for differences in the use of technology between emerging and developed economies.

Thirdly, a wider and in depth case study can help to understand the correlation between the four factors –strategy, goals, type and outcomes– included in this research. Empirical evidence can help to research whether correlation exist between the variables used in this research.

Fourth, in this research it was not possible to access secure portals. For future research it is interesting to research these portals in order to research whether there is a difference with the current research.

Finally, this research indicated that the organization of CD is different in different countries. The services provided online can be found on different websites of different ministries. The role of CD in different ministries can be questioned, and who is responsible for the information and development of E-CD services. This research does not consider the strategy of CD, and the importance of CD in the countries of research. Future research could focus on the value of CD for a country and research the way E-CD could be organized in an organization, where the interest in diplomacy and services are divided between multiple ministries.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: E-Government index top 20 countries

E-Government Development Index - Top 20 Countries		E-Participation Index Top 20 Countries	
Country	Index	Country	Index
Republic of Korea	0.9283	Netherlands	1.0000
Netherlands	0.9125	Republic of Korea	1.0000
UK and Northern Ireland	0.8960	Kazakhstan	0.9474
Denmark	0.8889	Singapore	0.9474
United States	0.8687	UK and Northern Ireland	0.9211
France	0.8635	United States	0.9211
Sweden	0.8599	Israel	0.8947
Norway	0.8593	Australia	0.7632
Finland	0.8505	Estonia	0.7632
Singapore	0.8474	Germany	0.7632
Canada	0.8430	Colombia	0.7368
Australia	0.8390	Finland	0.7368
New Zealand	0.8381	Japan	0.7368
Liechtenstein	0.8264	United Arab Emirates	0.7368
Switzerland	0.8134	Egypt	0.6842
Israel	0.8100	Canada	0.6842
Germany	0.8079	Norway	0.6842
Japan	0.8019	Sweden	0.6842
Luxembourg	0.8014	Chile	0.6579
Estonia	0.7987	Russian Federation	0.6579

Source: http://www2.unpan.org/egovkb/global_reports/12report.htm

Appendix 2: Overview of CD activities

Activity classification overview - J.A Busschers (2011)						
Type of service	Naray (2008)	Lederman et al (2009)	Kostecki and Naray (2007)	Kostecki and Naray (2007)	Lee (2004)	Kotabe and Czinkota (1992)
	Intelligence	Market research and publications	Intelligence	Market information search	Gathering and dissemination of market information	Export service programs
	Referral	Country image branding	Problem solving	Problem solving and trade disputes	Promotion of home country products and services	Market development
	Advocacy	Export support services	Networking and public relations	Partner search		
	Coordination communication	Marketing		Trade fairs		
	Logistics			Investment facilitation		
				Contract negotiation		

Appendix 3: Activity and Area matrix (Naray, 2008)

	Promotion of Trade in Goods and services	Protection of Intellectual Property Rights	Co-operation in Science & Technology	Promotion of Made-in and Corporate image	Promotions of Foreign Direct investment (FDIs)
Intelligence	Gathering export marketing data	Supervision or violations of IPRs	Monitoring research achievements	Image studies	Identifying potential investors
Communication	Tourism promotion conference	Presentation during awareness campaigns	Preparation of press articles on scientific achievements	Contribution to made-in promotion events	Briefing for potential investors
Referral	Introduction potential exporters	Search for reliable IP lawyers	Facilitation of contracts between H.T. labs	P.R. for large contract where national image counts	Approaching CEOs with investment proposals
Advocacy	Support of firms in dispute settlement procedures	Pressure for improved protection of home country's IPRs	P.R. in favor of joining scientific projects	Defense of national companies singled out by host country authorities	Protection of home country investors in the host country
Co-ordination	Organization of prospect meetings	Co-ordination of legal action	Introduction parties to initiate R&D joint ventures	Co-ordination of made-in campaign	Organizing minister's participation in private investors' forum
Logistics	Embassy's secretariat is servicing a trade promotion conference	Training material and awareness campaigns is printed and distributed by the Embassy	Ambassador or CD host a conference on promotion of scientific co-operation	Translation of the campaigns material is done by the CD unit's staff	Members of an investment promotion mission use office facilities at the Embassy

Appendix 4: Overview of E-CD stages

Metaphors	(Gartner Research, 2003)	(United Nations, 2007)	(Layne & Lee, 2001)	World Bank (2002)	(IBM Business Consulting Services, 2003)	(Deloitte Research, 2000)	(Hiller & Bélanger, 2001)	(Netchaeva, 2002)	(Siau & Long, 2005)
Presenting	(1) Presence	(1) Emerging (2) Enhanced	Cataloguing	(1) Publish	(1) Automate (2) Enhance	(1) Information publishing	Info dissemination and catalogue	Scattered information	Web presence
Interaction	(2) Interaction	(2) Interactive		(2) Interact	(2) Integrate	(2) Two way interaction	Two way communication	Ask questions and take part in forms and opinion polls	Interaction
Transaction	(3) Transaction	(3) Transactional	Transaction	(3) Transact	(3) On demand	(3) Multiple purpose portals (4) Portal personalization	Service and financial transaction	Some services online, E-Government portals	Transaction
Participation	(4) Transformation	(4) Seamless	(3) Vertical integration (4) Horizontal integration			(5) Clustering of common services (6) Full enterprise transformation	Vertical and horizontal integration	Service transformation	Transformation
Involvement							Political participation		E-Democracy

Table 2.1 – The stages of Electronic Government

Appendix 5: Website sample

#	Country	Host country	Websites
1	Republic of Korea	China (23,2% of total export) ⁶	Embassy: http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fchn.mofat.go.kr%2Fworldlanguage%2Fasia%2Fchn%2Fmain%2Findex.jsp Ministry of Foreign affairs: http://www.mofat.go.kr/ENG/main/index.jsp
2	The Netherlands	Germany (26%) ⁷	Embassy: http://www.minbuza.nl/reizen-en-landen/betrekkingen/d/duitsland Ministry of Foreign affairs: http://www.minbuza.nl/
3	UK	United States (14,3%)	Embassy: http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/ Ministry of Foreign affairs: http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/
4	Denmark	Germany (17,6%) ⁸	Embassy: http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Ftyskland.um.dk%2F Ministry of Foreign affairs: http://um.dk/en
5	United States	Canada (19,4%) ⁹	Embassy: http://canada.usembassy.gov/ Ministry of Foreign affairs: http://www.state.gov/
6	France	Germany (16,4%) ¹⁰	Embassy: France diplomacy: http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/
7	Sweden	Germany (10,5%) ¹¹	Embassy: http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.swedenabroad.com%2Fsv-SE%2FAmbassader%2FBerlin%2F Foreign affairs: http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2059?setEnableCookies=true
8	Norway	UK (26,7%) ¹²	Embassy: http://www.norway.org.uk/Embassy/ Foreign Affairs: http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud.html?id=833
9	Finland	Sweden (11,6%) ¹³	Embassy: http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=15969&contentlan=2&culture=en-US Foreign Affairs: http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?culture=en-US&contentlan=2 http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?hl=en&rurl=translate.google.com&tl=en&u=http://www.finland.se/Public/Default.aspx&usg=ALkJrhgT5mUYkzO8zFlcXfNFahOa4sUCmg
10	Singapore	Malaysia (12,2%) ¹⁴	Embassy: http://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/overseasmission/kuala_lumpur.html Foreign affairs: http://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/index.html
11	Canada (backup)	USA (74,9%)	Embassy: http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/washington/index.aspx?view=d Trade commissioner: http://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/eng/home.jsp

⁶ http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/south-korea/export-import.html

⁷ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/nl.html>

⁸ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/da.html>

⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fr.html>

¹¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sw.html>

¹² <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/no.html>

¹³ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fi.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sn.html>

Appendix 6: Coding of services and E-CD type

	Criterion	Indicat or	Nothing available	Presenting	Interaction	Transaction	Participation	Involvement
Business Intelligence	Information about public tenders in host country		No information available	The website presents information about public tenders in host country, but no specific tender assignment.	The websites provides downloadable documents with tender information (including contact information)	The websites provide a database with all public tenders available. It is possible to get more details about tenders and subscribe on specific categories (to receive new possible tenders from that category).	Website provides an electronic tender process, where all proposed tenders are submitted and makes it possible to react on public tenders (submit proposals).	Companies can join a certain industry and show their expertise. In that way they can receive notice of new tender and chat and discuss about tender assignments.
	Regulations	Import regulations	No information available	Website provides basic information about import regulations, such as customs entries, import restrictions.	The website provides detailed information on regulations. The website makes it possible to consult government agencies on which regulations are important and need to be considered. Downloadable documents are available through the website.	The website provides interactive tools with questions (Question and Answer) that help to answer what is needed before importing product/ services. This provides an overview on how to start with importing products/ services.	The website provides detailed information about import regulation, further experience of home country companies can be shared in discussion forums, blogs or other information feeds.	The website involves clients in improving regulations and make them more transparent. Online trainings opportunities are provided that help to improve and discuss import regulations.
		Export regulations	No information available	Website provides basic information on export regulations (e.g. export license, regulations, property right).	The website provides detailed information on regulations. The website makes it possible to consult government agencies on which regulations are important and need to be considered. Downloadable documents are present.	The website provides interactive tools with questions (Question and Answer) that help to answer what is needed before exporting product/ services. This provides an overview on how to start with exporting products/ services.	The website provides detailed information about export regulation, further experience of home country companies can be shared in discussion forums, blogs or other information feeds.	The website involves clients in improving regulations and make them more transparent. Online trainings are provided that help to improve and discuss export regulations.
		Establishing business	No information available	The website provides basic information on how to establish business in host country. This shows that diplomat can assist in establishing business.	The website shows extended information on how to start a business and which regulations are important. Contact information is given to communicate and advice on how to establish a business.	The website explains regulations, procedures and possibilities to establish business in the host country (e.g. agent, distributor, licensing, franchising, joint venture). For each possibility regulations or procedures can be found.	The website makes it possible to participate in the community of other companies that do business in the host country. Information can be shared and discussions about how to establish your business in the host country can take place online.	The website provides chat functions and virtual meeting places with government, other companies and host country parties (e.g. (chamber of commerce, registration, regulations) to discuss and improve regulations and transparency.

	Tax	No information available	Website provides basic information about tax system of home country.	The website provides detailed information on how to deal with host country tax. The website provide a list with tax advisors in the host country, that can assist with the tax system.	Interactive systems with specific situations can be used to find which tax should be applied in different situations.	The website provide an active role in understanding and using the tax system. This includes discussions about specific situations.	
	Market information	No information available	The website provides limited information about which markets are important and their sizes.	Website provides market opportunities in different sectors. It provides information about different sectors, and allows to response or contact people responsible for different sectors. Documents with market information can be downloaded from the website (e.g. news articles, market research).	Website makes it possible to research market information and collect data about the market. It is possible to subscribe on specific markets and track changes on the website. Besides it is possible to provide feedback on the information and receive alerts on updates.	Client can react on market information and makes it possible to give an opinion about it. Discussion forms and blogs about experience in specific markets are used to gain more knowledge about markets and different sectors. Companies can discuss in a specific community about product and markets.	Clients can get more involved and request in chats and discussion platforms which information is necessary in specific markets. Thereby it is possible to share documents and wiki's are used to share content (clients can add, delete or change content).
	Trade fairs / Trade missions	No information available	Event calendar can be found online; this calendar gives information on when trade missions will take place.	Extensive information about dates and purpose of trade fair can be found online. It is possible to ask questions about the specific trade mission, contact details can be found online.	Website makes it possible to search trade fairs and apply/participate in these trade fairs. It is possible to subscribe or receive alerting options for this event (e.g. based on a profile)	Information about trade fair can be found online, further it is possible to react on trade fair and makes it possible to discuss contents in discussion forms and blogs.	Companies can be virtually active involved in the organization of trade fairs. It can be possible to suggest trade fairs in specific industries.
	Partner search	No information available	The website shows that partner search can be provided as one of the services.	The website provides contact information (that goes beyond general email address, info@embassy) in order to contact for partner search services.	It is possible to search for partner organization in a database on the website. This makes it possible to search for specific industries and companies that work in a certain field.	Partners can be found online and contact information is given, diplomats can be contacted online and help to introduce the company.	Searching online for partners is possible, besides it is possible to talk to partners and contact them. A virtual meeting place for companies, which works from two sides (host country can find home country as well).

	Contract negotiation	No information available	The website shows that diplomat can assist in contract negotiation and provides information how this is possible.	The websites provides some contact information or downloadable lists that provide technical support for contract negotiation (e.g. legal advice, tax expertise, bank contacts).	The website organize technical support locally (e.g. legal advice, tax expertise, bank contact). It is possible to ask for specific help and meetings can be organized with partners.	The website makes it possible to be involved in selecting support for contract negotiation and suggest other possibilities. Companies are more involved in technical support and can assist in searches of other companies.	It is possible to be virtually active and get more interaction with different partners who provide technical support. This virtual meeting place can assist in finding partners who can support during contract negotiation.
	Problem solving and trade disputes	No information available	Website describes that service in problem solving and trade disputes are offered. They do not provide this service online in any way, but only presents basic information.	Website provide list of local help with e.g. local lawyers, agencies.	It is possible to submit problems and trade disputes, where the website will provide advice on how to assist and provide contact (specialist) that can help in solving disputes.	Websites makes it possible to talk about specific disputes and companies and experts can meet each other to solve trade disputes.	Companies are virtually involved with government actions, and government keep them posted about solving known trade disputes, and provides advice on how to find sustainable solutions.

Appendix 7: Website assessment

Part one: Commercial Diplomatic services

	Stage	Description
1	Presenting	Presentation of government information on the web
2	Interaction	Two-way communication
3	Transaction	Service and financial transaction on the web
4	Participation	Consultation with public for opinions and surveys
5	Involvement	Virtually active involvement in political decision making
n/a	Not applicable for the reviewed website	

Criterion		1	2	3	4	5	n/a
Information about public tenders	In what way does the website provide information about public tenders?						
Regulations	In what way does the website provide data about regulations?						
Market information	In what way does the website provide market information on different markets?						
Trade fairs	In what way does the website provide information about trade fairs?						
Partner search	In what way does the website provide information about partner search?						
Problem solving and trade disputes	In what way does the website provide information about problem solving and trade disputes (e.g. list of lawyers, tax assistance, problem registration)?						
Contract negotiation	In what way does the website provide the possibility to find contract negotiation (e.g. technical support, legal advice, tax expertise, bank contact).						

Part two: Website quality

Stage	Description
1	Strongly disagree with statement
2	Partly disagree with statement
3	Not disagree / not agree with statement
4	Partly agree with statement
5	Fully agree with statement

Website assessment						
Date:						
Time:						
Evaluator:						
Criterion	Indicator:	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy	The website provides contact information (phone number, email, social media) which makes it possible to verify website contents.					
	Text on the website is well written and understandable.					
	The website contains cited references to sources that can be used for verification purposes.					
	The website provides links to reputable outside sources in order to verify data.					
Authority	The name of the organization to which the website belongs is clear.					
	It is clear who is responsible for the content on the website.					
Currency	The website shows an indication of when the page was last updated/revised.					
	Website data is updated recently (within the past 3 months).					
	If material is presented in graphs and/or charts and/or tables, it is clearly stated when the data was gathered.					
Navigability	The website content is organized logically.					
	Navigation options are distinct and spelled out.					
	Navigation links are provided from all pages: e.g. to homepage and other key pages, to previous page, top of page in long pages.					
	Website provides a search engine that helps to find data efficiently (e.g. when searching suggestions are given)					
	Navigation on the website works effective, and is clear on which page you are at the moment.					
Orientation	The scope of the website is clearly stated (type and origin of information, audience, dates of coverage etc.)					
	The services and information provided on the website are described well.					
	The website provides instruction that helps to understand how to use the website well.					
	The website fulfills the stated purpose of the website.					
Security	Passwords are used to protect certain areas of the websites (log-in required for certain parts of the website).					
	The website is secure when/where necessary					
Interactivity	Website provides interactive features (e.g. forms, check boxes, mail possibilities, forums).					
	The interface of the website is easy to remember and work with.					

Appendix 8: Definition strategy and goals

Strategy	B2G	Procurement (inkoop)
	G2B	Information
	G2B and B2G	Participation
	No focus on business	
Goals	Reducing cost	The process of identifying and eliminating unnecessary costs to improve the profitability of a business
	Improving service delivery	Service is the application of competences for the benefit of another (Vargo and Lusch 2004). Service depends on division of labor and effective co-creation of value, leading to complementary specialization and comparative advantage among participants (Normann 2001). Increased service delivery for government can be more client-central. Thereby government focuses more on the demand of businesses.
	Improving democracy/transparency	Democracy can be explained as a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives. The goal improving democracy and transparency is focused on the improvement of making democratic decision or processes more visible, and easier to participate in these processes.

Appendix 9: Definition E-CD Outcomes

E-CD Outcomes	
Increased participation	Participation can be defined as: Joint consultation in decision making, goal setting, profit sharing, teamwork, and other such measures through which a firm attempts to foster or increase its employees' commitment to collective objectives (business dictionary). This definition will be used in this research, and increased participation is focused on the increase of companies (business) that are involved in the diplomatic process, because of the use of online tools.
Increased trust	Legal entity created by a party (the trustor) through which a second party (the trustee) holds the right to manage the trust or 's assets or property for the benefit of a third party (the beneficiary).
Increased effectiveness	The degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved. In contrast to efficiency, effectiveness is determined without reference to costs and, whereas efficiency means "doing the thing right," effectiveness means "doing the right thing."

Appendix 10: Sources economic data

Population	CIA – The World Factbook
Percentage of enterprises with internet access	European Commission – Eurostat http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/ European Union – eGovernment Factsheets (2011) http://www.epractice.eu/en/factsheets/
Percentage of enterprises using the Internet for interaction with public authorities	European Commission – Eurostat http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/ European Union – eGovernment Factsheets (2011) http://www.epractice.eu/en/factsheets/
GDP and GDP per capita	CIA – The World Factbook
GDP growth rate	CIA – The World Factbook
Export partners	CIA – The World Factbook
Import	CIA – The World Factbook
Export commodities	CIA – The World Factbook
Ease of starting a business (Doing Business rank)	World Bank – Ease in doing business
Ease of doing business (Doing business Rank)	World Bank – Ease in doing business

Appendix 11: Institutional settings comparison

Nations	Ease of doing business		Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)		GDP per capita (2011 estimate)		Economic growth (real GDP, 2011)		OVERALL
Canada	13	M	29% (2010)	L	\$40.300	M	2.2%	M	M
Denmark	5	H	50% (2010), 54% (2011)	M	\$40.200	M	1%	L	M
Finland	11	M	40% (2010), 39% (2011)	M	\$38.300	L	2.7%	M	M
France	29	L	26% (2010), 27% (2011)	L	\$35.000	L	1.7%	M	L
Norway	6	H	41% (2010), 42% (2011)	M	\$53.300	H	1.7%	M	H
Singapore	1	H	207% (2010), 209% (2011)	H	\$59.900	H	4.9%	H	H
Sweden	14	M	50% (2010, 2011)	M	\$40.600	M	4.4%	H	M
The Netherlands	31	L	78% (2010), 83% (2011)	H	\$42.300	M	1.6%	M	M
United Kingdom (UK)	7	H	30% (2010), 32% (2011)	L	\$35.900	L	1.1%	L	LM
United States of America	4	H	13% (2010)	L	\$48.100	H	1.5%	M	MH

Ease of doing business: The ease of doing business index ranks economies from 1 to 183. For each economy the ranking is calculated as the simple average of the percentile rankings on each of the 10 topics included in the index in *Doing Business 2012*: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, resolving insolvency and, new this year, getting electricity. Categories: 1 – 10 = H, 11 – 20 = M, >21 = L

Exports of goods and services (% of GDP): Exports of goods and services represent the value of all goods and other market services provided to the rest of the world. They include the value of merchandise, freight, insurance, transport, travel, royalties, license fees, and other services, such as communication, construction, financial, information, business, personal, and government services. They exclude labor and property income (formerly called factor services) as well as transfer payments. Categories: >75% = H, 50 – 74 = M, <50% = L

GDP per capita: is the market value of all officially recognized final goods and services produced within a country in a given period. GDP per capita is often considered an indicator of a country's standard of living; GDP per capita is not a measure of personal income. Categories: >\$45.001 = H, 40.001 – 45.000 = M, <40.000 = L

Economic growth (real GDP): An economic assessment that involves quantifying the inflation adjusted market value of goods and services produced by an economic system during a given time. A business might use the real gross domestic product (real GDP) of a nation to indicate the standard of living within that country that can help them determine whether or not their products will be successful. Categories: >3,5% = H, 1,5% – 3,5% = M, <1,5% = L