

# **Citizen First Conference**

## **Ieper, 13-14 Sep 2007**

**"Putting the Citizen First.....How Technology can help"**

*13-14 September 2007, City Hall, Ieper, Belgium.*

**[www.ieper.be](http://www.ieper.be)**

## **Putting the Citizen First**

**[www.citizen-first.net](http://www.citizen-first.net)**

Services for citizens are increasingly being deployed by Public Agencies on a supply-side efficiency basis, without actually determining the needs and wishes of the citizen. This has led to low usage of the services by many citizens, especially those with special needs. However technology can help to address this by providing opportunities to put each citizen at the centre of the services being provided to them in the context of their needs and community, leading to an engagement that improves the quality of life and reduces the social and spatial isolation of all citizens. This conference will consider the issues and share the experience and best practice of the 5 regions in the Citizen First project that have been exploring this over the last 3 years. This should be of interest to all regional or local authority officers and politicians involved in, or concerned with, social inclusion, e-inclusion, e-democracy, e-participation and people empowerment.

### *Programme*

#### **Thursday, 13 September 2007**

1400: Workshops & Visits  
1800: Nocturne In Flanders Fields Museum  
1900: Reception in the City Council Hall  
2000: Last Post Ceremony  
2020: End of Day

#### **Friday, 14 September 2007**

09.00: Registration and Opening Official Addresses

10.15: Keynote Address by Mr. Colin Wolfe, Head of Unit, Territorial Cooperation, European Commission, DG Regio (tbc)

10.45: Address by the Prime Minister of the Belgium Federal Government

11.30: Presentation on CitizenFirst Lessons Learned ~ Mr. Michael Mulquin, CitizenFirst/ Cambridgeshire County Council, UK

12.00: Panel Discussion Q and A

12.40: Introduction to Parallel Workshop Sessions

12.45: Lunch in City Council Hall

14.00: Parallel Workshops

1. Empowering Communities
2. Engaging Young People
3. Inclusion of Elderly and Disabled
4. Training & eLearning

16.30: Report from Workshop Rappatours ~ Q&A

17.15: Closing Address followed by reception.

- Main Programme : €100,00 (€75,00 before September 1st)
- Companion Programme : €60,00

## **Introduction to the Mid West Regional Authority:**

The Mid-West Regional Authority was established with effect from 1st January 1994 under the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1991 (Regional Authorities) (Establishment) Order, 1993. This Establishment Order was made by the Minister for the Environment with the consent of the Minister for Finance under Sections 3 and 43 of the Local Government Act, 1991.

### **Powers, Functions and Duties:**

Regional Authorities have been given a general competence to do all things necessary and expedient for the effective performance of their functions, including wide consultation with local, regional and other public authorities, engagement of consultants and advisers, participating in or promoting research, borrowing, purchase and leasing of land and property, requesting information and attendance at a meeting of representatives from any local or public authority.

The principle functions include:

- Promotion of co-ordination in the provision of public services in the region
- Promotion of co-operation, joint action etc. between local authorities, public authorities and/or others
- Reviewing the overall development needs of the region and the making of statements on them as appropriate, and keeping under review the provision of public services in the region
- Reviewing the Development Plans of local authorities in the region and in adjoining regions
- Preparation of a Regional Report (Plan) covering development needs, review of local authority development plans and the provision of public services in the region
- Provision of proposals, advice, recommendations or information to Government in relation to applications for E.U. assistance

- Reviewing and monitoring the implementation of measures for which E.U. assistance is made available
- Preparation of Programme of Work, estimate of Expenditure and Receipts, Statement of Accounts and Annual Report
- Preparation of Regional Planning Guidelines (Planning and Development Act 2000)
- Provide, at the request of the Minister of Finance information, recommendations and/or advice in connection with the preparation of any plan, programme or other measure for the purpose of making or supporting an application to the E.U. for financial assistance.

### **Údarás Réigiúinach an Mheán Iarthair**

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Citizen First is an outcome of the June 2003 INTERREG IIIB NWE Workshop held in Ireland where a Partnership was formed with common objectives to ensure that organisations are increasingly citizen-centric in service provision. Citizen First aims to reduce the digital divide that affects communities and citizens in the territories of Mid-West Region (Ireland), Eindhoven Region (Netherlands), West Flanders (Belgium) and Cambridgeshire (UK).

The main aim of the project is:

To empower NWE Citizens by engaging with their communities to deliver the services that they require in an inclusive Information Society that overcomes social & spatial isolation.

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