

Digital Services Factory Workshop, 01.03

Welcome Speech by Deputy Minister RID, Kyriacos Kokkinos

Distinguished guests,

Welcome and thank you for coming. I am truly excited to be opening today's thought-provoking event, dedicated to introducing, for the first time, one of the landmark projects in our country's digital transformation journey: the Digital Services Factory. A game-changing initiative that re-frames the way digital services are being delivered in a faster, smarter, user-friendly and scalable way. Through a series of presentations and interactive discussions, we aim to set the foundations for an elevated, more relevant and more efficient public-private partnership in delivering quality public services.

First of all, allow me to welcome our partners from the UK Government Digital Service, who are joining us here today to present this revolutionary project. Team, it is our pleasure to welcome you to Cyprus and thank you for your invaluable contribution to our key mission: to uplift our society and economy through technology exploitation and improve the overall citizen and business experience throughout all their interactions and 'touch-points' with the public sector.

Dear guests,

We are experiencing a period of extraordinary technological change, that is impacting every sphere of our lives. We need to accelerate our digital capabilities to keep pace with the ongoing rapid migration to digital technologies and achieve a fast transition, at scale. Digital public services are an imperative in this journey. One of the key 5 ambitions of Europe's Digital Decade. The bar is high on the customer experience, and our citizens expect us to deliver.

To create a seamless experience, we need to transform the entire public administration; it's a significant challenge but by no means impossible. Until today, navigating public services has indeed been bewildering. Information about how to access services is often presented in hard-to-understand bureaucratic language, and

users must visit different websites or offices for each service. Applications routinely require hard copies of supporting documents to still be printed and signed, and many online forms are just as complicated to complete as the paper versions. Furthermore, the user experience tends to vary across government websites, and users often require multiple accounts and digital IDs to manage their needs.

All of this stands in stark contrast to expectations. We are committed to completely transform this experience, implementing agile ways of working, and providing easy access to quality services, with information in clear and simple language and ideally, through a single digital journey. Through gov.cy. Our new digital portal which will host both digital public services and all governmental websites in a single domain, where people can navigate and access information and services based on life or business situations. With a consistent look and feel across the public services landscape that will increase trust in the government's digital brand and bring about tangible benefits for government, citizens and businesses alike.

Today we take a first step in this direction, through the Digital Services Factory, mandated to industrialize and standardize the delivery of quality digital public services across government. This is a long-anticipated development and it is truly encouraging that we have so many of you – our private sector partners – taking an active interest in participating in this joint effort.

We are confident that through our collaboration with GDS, and leveraging on their extensive experience and insight, we will develop the agility required to accelerate outputs and be able to serve our citizens and businesses in the best possible way, maximizing impact on the economy and society in general. It also reflects the deep and long-lasting relationship between the two countries as well as our shared ambition to promote digital innovation as a key pillar of a new, diversified and more sustainable economic model. To this end, I would like to sincerely thank the UK government, and of course the UK High Commissioner who has honoured us with his presence today, for their valuable support to our efforts towards fueling our eGovernment digital transformation.

Dear friends,

As we move ahead, it is time to make change happen by design, moving forward and moving fast. Effective digital transformation is at the heart of a quick recovery and a sustainable transition. Key to driving resilience and agility in a new norm and a necessity for governments and organizations seeking to transcend the challenges of our era.

We all need to work together to co-create our future. And this is how we should always work. Not for, but with our industry and people. Through open communication and effective collaboration. I urge all of you to share your views, and any concern you may have on what you hear today, and allow us to produce those efficient instruments that will serve both our needs and help us build that strong capacity that would allow swift and continuous adjustment to today's fast changing and highly challenging environment. We are here to present and listen.

Thank you all once again for coming, and of course to GDS for the excellent collaboration. Congratulations to our team and I look forward to the meaningful discussions that I am sure will follow.