For more information about this interview, please contact Mr. Maxim Chantillon (KU Leuven Public Governance Institute – maxim.chantillon@kuleuven.be)

Internal organizational structure:
Merge between the different organisation into one organisation, i.e. Information Flanders
- Easily confronted with location based data in various policy areas
- AGIV used IT, and the other way round
- Organization now captures the idea of 'bringing together the information' → bringing together the information and the expertise
- Also useful in the austerity policy of the government → however: there is no specific austerity policy for Information Flanders + IT developments receive an extra budget of 10 million euro a year under the Vlaanderen Radicaal Digitaal program.
- Vlaanderen Radicaal Digitaal: yes, there is a link but not the first connection

Previously the organization was a externally independent organization, now an internally independent organization → allows the organization to increase it power / might within the Flemish administration. – there is more cooperation, used to be good in the past but now it is better from a coordination perspective.

IT as a facility has however been moved to the 'Facilitair Bedrijf' – this has caused some tensions and frictions. However, the responsible Minister is still the same (Homans).

e.g. block chains: there is a discussion on who is responsible – is it Information Flanders or the Facilitair Bedrijf. Currently the FB is doing it, but respondent agree that it is more related to 'content' and not purely technical, therefore they believe that it should be part of Information Flanders.

Other point: Study Service of the Flemish Administration is also not part of Information Flanders – remained a separate organization – in Departement of Chancellary under the Minister-President (Bourgeois)

So: there is room for improvement.

Programmatic decision: vision and strategy
Responsible: leading civil servant and the Minister – it is compulsory – 4 times a year an evaluation is made for each civil servant (they all receive their own personal responsibilities and targets). – decided on the level of the management comity.

Citizens are not participating in an active and formal way in setting those targets – they can however have informal contacts. E.g. GDI Council has been abolished. – however: Round Tables are organized on a regular basis to allow citizens / stakeholders to inform policy makers about their needs & requirements.

Functions like the private sector.

Legalistic way of working
Information Flanders has a 'basis decree' → it is a service integrator and they decide on the way of working – how? Via 'regulations'

Effect on the local level is increased as they have the legal obligation to implement certain policy decisions (e.g. GIPOD). → this 'standardization' and 'uniformization' of the landscape increases the possibilities to work together + to install new ways of working that are based on those common solutions. = the legalization is the stick that can be used when necessary.

However: e-gov has a high cost – are all the users/local level representatives satisfied with this way of working? Information Flanders tries to listen to the end-users beforehand and tries to avoid political arbitrariness.

Cooperation with other levels

Information Flanders tries to make agreements with the other administrative levels in Belgium:
- KLIP: common data specifications have been agreed on – but it took 15 years.
- Agree on the political priorities
- GIPOD is alone – no other similar systems in Belgium
- KLIP is a common agreement, WL often looks at VL – BRUX is more pragmatic and often also quicker.
- CRAB: buildings are managed by VL, federal is responsible for the territorial information (parcels)
- GIRB:
  - federal remains responsible for the parcel information → idea/goal: one unique parcel registry (= authentic source) – however: often there are geomatic problems.
  - In this way a system of authentic sources is created = end goal of the first step – continue to build e-services on this system.

There is cooperation with the federal level for the e-service systems: e.g; e-procurement, eID → however: often via their own systems, for reasons of privacy (problem: regulations are so strict for the already existing mechanism that local level decides to make use of another system that has less privacy concerns).

Other countries: UK is important for its performance indicators and the usercentric approach that is taken.

Often: cooperation between local level and federal level, becomes responsibility of the regional administration → need for another approach and redesign of the tools + should all the processes go via Flanders? This is food for thought.

Local level often has a problem of resources, although they often want to participate and implement the policies: e.g; CRAB, GIS Monitoring).

Standardization

Information Flanders has two possibilities to 'standardize' the Flemish Administration and the local authorities;
- Non-binding way, convince – Information Flanders decides
- Binding way, forced – Flemish government decides, Information Flanders initiates.

In general there is no ongoing standardization policy, this is all ad-hoc at the moment. However, there are numerous standards from the geo-world (INSPIRE) that also have an effect on other policy areas as it is focusing on 33 policy areas at the moment.

No common agreement with the federal level at the moment – it is all ad-hoc, always need for discussions.

Necessary to agree on standards at the EU level in a legally binding way → however: now it is non-binding and general – e.g. EIF.

Financial cost

General weakness – most of the time the budget is only foreseen for the development of the e-service or the technical innovation but not for the maintance. However, that is often around 80% of the total cost.

Information Flanders underlines that the missing budget has also an effect on the development of tools: if it know beforehand that the budget for maintance is unexsting or insufficient, then the development of the tool and the tool itself will be affected by this as well.

Relation between geo and MAGDA data (i.e. personal data)

Non-geo data is almost not related or linked to geo data. There is a POI database, now it has been plotted on a map – this map is available at geopunt.be – however, it is not INSPIRE compliant (i.e. a RIST service) – this will need to happen in the future.

E-gov buildingblocks

E-gov buildingsblocks are being defined to form a basis for future e-service and e-gov developments → currently the local level can use those building blocks on a pick-and-choose basis without obligation, but many of those elements will become compulsory in the future.
The Netherlands are a good example of this buildingblocks - way of working

Other topics
Methodology: AGILE way of working: private sector working for Information Flanders claims to work via this system – however it is unclear what this exactly means.
Open data: no problem – has always been the policy of the Flemish Administration – 90% is now open data, on the request of the Flemish government - however: problem are the SLA's: government cannot guarantee 24/24-7/7 availability of data → should this be done by the private sector?
Digital Transformation Office: unclear what it will be – no information – hopes for good contacts, as was the case with FEDICT.
Only Once principle: only for the authentic sources – problem is the 'maintenance': via MAGDA it is ok, but how can it be guaranteed that administrations do no longer ask basic and available information to the users/citizens? Very difficult – i.e. a political decision.