

Such cooperation would also reinforce important earlier joint achievements of the partnership between the EU and Aruba such as the development of a new science faculty at the University of Aruba.

Besides, Aruba is eligible for the InvestEU Programme<sup>13</sup> on a competitive basis, which can also contribute to boost its investments in the digital sector. It will be needed, notably through the technical assistance, to further reflect on how InvestEU could complement this action on digitalisation, which will reinforce the enabling conditions for investments in the digital sector, notably on IT infrastructures.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2. Problem Analysis

Paper-based government processes are time-consuming, inefficient, and prone to errors. It can also lead to corruption and delays in service delivery to people. Aruba faces this problem along with other countries and territories. The lack of digitisation and automatisisation of government processes and services is the main reason behind the inefficiencies and problems in the traditional paper-based system. In addition, the absence of a comprehensive and integrated system contributes to the problem as, currently, government entities have developed their own stand-alone digital solutions and there is no exchange of data between them.

E-governance refers to solutions in which the government's digital systems are integrated and it could potentially include all government processes and services that are digitised and accessible through online platforms. Commonly, e-gov systems encompass three components: G2G (Government to Government, include data exchange between government bodies), G2B (Government to Businesses such as tax reporting and payments, permits and licenses), and G2C (Government to Citizens including citizen registration, social services, and access to government information). Although e-government should be developed using a modern ICT system, its provisions are not demanding for computer resources, and most of the needed IT methods and tools are already used in the private sector (banking, telecommunication, tourism services). Most pertinent challenges in the development of e-government solutions are the relevant legal and regulatory requirements to ensure that privacy and security concerns are addressed, to ensure compatibility with existing government systems and to ensure online accessibility for all.

The Aruban Government has identified the digital transformation of government services as a priority project in Aruba's National Strategic Plan 2020-2022 "Nos Plan Nos Futuro"<sup>15</sup> to achieve the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition to the expected gains in government's efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, further digitalisation of the Aruban government will have important spin off effects on the economic structure of Aruba in the longer term and increase the resilience of the island.

The Aruban E-government Roadmap for 2021-2025 provides "*guiding principles and actions to develop a robust e-government model, empower citizens, and give public employees the necessary skills to help transform government*". Among the envisaged benefits are the following:

- Efficiency gains by transforming legacy systems into simplified paperless systems
- Saves money and time (travel expenses, rent offices, cars, online meetings, seminars, etc.)
- Faster and better e-services for citizens and businesses
- Better data and timely analytics increase the quality of the decision-making processes
- Creates transparency and new opportunities for enhancing democracy
- Mitigates corruption
- Creates equal opportunity for all citizens regardless of their socio-economic background or physical (dis)abilities

The COVID-19 pandemic has strongly deteriorated government's fiscal position. With financial support of the Netherlands, the Aruban Government managed to overcome the crisis, but with an increased debt burden. The current macro-fiscal policy is prudent and directed on reducing the debt burden. In this context, the fiscal space of Aruba to invest in the public digital infrastructure is limited. This Action therefore provides to Aruba the financial leeway to introduce a systematic approach to e-government.

<sup>13</sup> [https://investeu.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://investeu.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted, however, that Aruba needs the agreement of the Council of Ministers to borrow on international markets.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.deaci.aw/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FINAL-NSP-REPORT-STRATEGY-10202020.pdf>