ReSPA 6th Annual Conference Proceedings
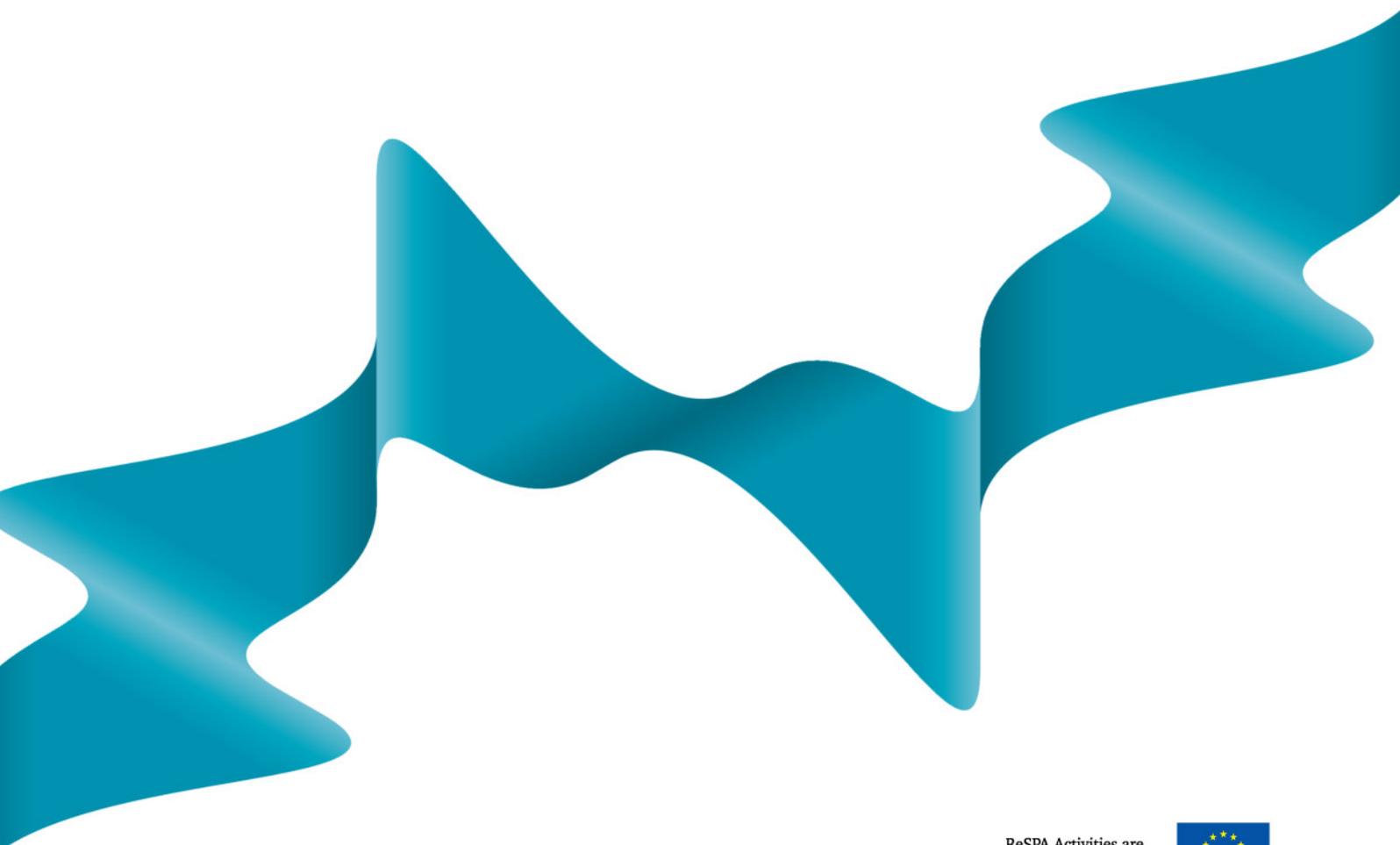
Good Governance through Participative Democracy and Client Oriented Public Administration

ReSPA 6th Annual Conference Proceedings

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ReSPA 6ᵗʰ Annual Conference

Good Governance through Participative Democracy and Client Oriented Public Administration

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) organised its 6th Annual Conference, with the theme "Good Governance through Participative Democracy and Client Oriented Public Administration, on 19-20th of April, in Danilovgrad, Montenegro.

The main conference objective focused on increased awareness on the changing mode of the Governance over the last decades in the Western Balkans influenced by globalisation and the need to adjust to international economic, social and technological development – not least the increasing lack of confidence among the citizens with regards to the functions of the government and the quality of the services that Public Administration provides.

This publication mirrors the conference objectives and focus. In three sections the publication will highlight project experiences and lessons learned:

- Good governance: Modernising public administration
- Participatory Democracy: Open and collaborative government
- Client orientated public administration: Efficient and effective service delivery through ICT

The conference was attended by Ministers and civil servants of Western Balkan countries plus representatives from the European Union, international organisations, civil society and public sector officials dealing with issues related to the Public Administration Reform and Good Governance.

Morten Meyerhoff Nielsen (editor)
22 October 2012
Copenhagen (DK)

ReSPA is a joint Initiative of European Union and the Western Balkan countries working towards fostering and strengthening the regional cooperation in the field of public administration among its Member States. It seeks to offer excellent innovative and creative training events, networking activities, capacity building and consulting services to ensure that the shared values of respect, tolerance, collaboration and integration are reaffirmed and implemented throughout the public administrations in the region.

EDITOR: Morten Meyerhoff Nielsen

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ReSPA 6th Annual Conference Proceedings - Good Governance through Participative Democracy and Client Oriented Public Administration

Public sector trends

Can we compare European public administrations?

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Abstract

This project covers the development of an annual public sector trends report, now in its second year, produced by the Irish Institute of Public Administration (IPA). The report[1] examines trends in public sector development over the last decade. Using data from a variety of sources, information on the size and cost of the public sector, the quality of public administration, efficiency and performance and levels of trust is presented in a simple but rigorous manner. Where possible, the performance of the Irish public sector is compared to that for the EU15 and EU27, as well as looking at trends over the last ten years. The report address issues such as the quality of public administration and the level of trust of the public in public administration.

The report aims to inform public debate in Ireland on the role of the public sector, and bring some evidence to bear on the discussion about the public sector and its future size, shape and role. The report goes beyond the stereotypes and caricatures of the public sector all too common and brings some informed analysis to the table. It has been well received and taken up extensively by the media in Ireland.

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1 The report can be downloaded on: http://www.ipa.ie/pdf/Public_Sector_Trends_2011.pdf

Project background

The debate on Ireland's public sector and public administration, and its role in Irish society, is one that generates much passion as indeed it does in most European countries. But there is often a dearth of evidence brought to bear on the debate. On the one side are those who feel countries has a 'bloated' public sector, and who emphasise the need to cut back and 'rein in' public services. On the other side are those who extol the virtues of the services provided to the public and the benefits that many people receive from public services on a day-to-day basis. Often, these two stances 'talk at' each other rather than engage in genuine dialogue informed by evidence.

In this project we try to bring some evidence to bear on the important debate on the future shape of the public sector. Using data gathered from a number of sources, information on the size and cost of the public sector, the quality of public administration, efficiency and performance, and levels of trust and confidence is presented in a simple but rigorous manner. The first report, *Public Sector Trends 2010* was published in November 2010, and *Public Sector Trends 2011* was published in November 2011. The intention is to make this an annual publication that will build up a comparative picture of public sector performance over time. At its core is a common set of indicators that are monitored, and these may be complemented by once-off data indicators in individual reports.

The original *Public Sector Trends 2010* report was produced over a six month period. The authors were not full-time on the project during this period, and it took 30 person days to produce, excluding printing and production. The second report, published in 2011, was produced over a four month period, but as much of the initial spreadsheet set-up had been put in place, the report took 20 person days to produce. The total cost of production of the 2011 report was of the order of €25,000 (€20,000 salary and overheads, €4,000 printing and production, and €1,000 licensing for access to material such as access to World Competitiveness Yearbook online).

Project objectives

There are no clear or agreed definitions for comparative ranking of public administrations. Although most people would agree that a number of elements need to be included in any assessment:

- *The size and cost of the public sector*. While size and cost of the public sector as a proportion of the economy alone are not the sole or even main determinants of good public administration, nevertheless in terms of value for money in the delivery of public services, keeping check on the size and cost of the public sector and public service is an important consideration.
- *The quality of public administration*. Public administration includes policy making, policy legislation and management of the public sector. Such dimensions of public administration can only be measured by subjective indicators of quality which give a sense of how good the public administration is.
- *Public service efficiency and performance*. There is an onus on public administration, all the more so in times of financial down turn and limited economic growth, to show that services are being provided efficiently and that performance is of the highest standard. The delivery of social and economic outcomes in an efficient manner is central to an effective public administration.
- *Trust and confidence in public administration*. The general public ultimately must have trust and confidence in the public administration of a country if it is to be effective.

In this project the objective was to develop and examine indicators for each of these four elements of public administration. Where possible and appropriate, data is included for the EU15 and EU27[2], thereby enabling comparisons. Also, where data was available, data going back over a ten-year period was provided to enable trends over time to be tracked. The intention was to provide a snapshot of trends in public administration performance in Ireland, to highlight where Ireland is doing well and what challenges are presented and where improvements need to be made. The report is not linked to any particular review mechanism by government but provided to raise general discussion and debate about the direction of public service reform.

In its style and content, the report draws on a number of previous efforts to benchmark and compare public sector efficiency and performance. These include a European Central Bank (ECB) international comparison of public sector efficiency[3], a study by the Netherlands Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) of comparative

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2 The EU15 is the number of member countries in the European Union prior to the 1 May 2004. The EU 27 is the number of member countries in the European Union after 1 January 2007.
3 Afonso, A., L. Schuknecht and V. Tanzi (2003), *Public Sector Efficiency: An International Comparison*, Working Paper No. 242, European Central Bank Working Paper Series, Frankfurt: European Central Bank

public sector performance[4], the World Bank governance indicators project[5], the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 'Government at a Glance' project[6], and an IPA study comparing public administrations[7].

A further key objective of the project was to inform public debate on the role of the public sector in Ireland. As such, the project was not a once-off initiative, but intended to lead to the production of an annual Public Sector Trends report which will enable not only comparison with other European countries but also look at trend developments over time. The report is in its second iteration, being produced in 2010 and 2011.

Technology used

There was no particular technology used in this project, as it was not a technically oriented project but a research project with a report as the desired output. In terms of the approach used, a master Excel spreadsheet was created containing the indicators chosen for the project (such as World Bank Governance Indicators, level of trust measurements from Eurobarometer, information on size and cost of the public sector from the Irish Department of Finance, Central Statistics Office and Eurostat) and the countries chosen for comparative purposes (the EU27 plus selected other OECD countries).

Charts were produced for each indicator, and these were accompanied by short textual analysis and comment in bullet point format. The reason for this was that presentation for public use was an important element of the project. It was considered important to make the output visually attractive and simple to use so as to be accessible by a wide range of stakeholders. In particular, the media were seen as a key stakeholder given their role in disseminating the information to the wider general public audience.

Project development and implementation methodology use

A variety of data sources are used to produce the indicators used in the Public Sector Trends report. Some of this is specific to Ireland only, such as data on the size and cost of the public sector and its various components (education, health, civil service, local government etc). However, many of the indicators used were chosen as they allow comparison across countries. A number of main data sources are used for these comparative indicators:

- The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook
- The World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Report
- The World Bank Governance Indicator Set
- The World Bank Doing Business Indicator Set
- The Bertelsmann Stiftung Management Index (part of its Sustainable Governance Indicators project)
- The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey
- World Health Organisation mortality and morbidity statistics
- Eurobarometer standard surveys

Many of the comparative data sets used for the project need to be interpreted with great care, and this is pointed out in the report itself so that users are aware of potential limitations. First, there is the issue of whether the indicators used to represent public administration provision and quality really captures what public service is about. Indicators, by their nature, only give a partial picture. Second, much of the international comparative data in the report is qualitative data derived from opinion surveys[8]. This survey data comprises small-scale samples of opinion from academics, managers and experts in the business community. The survey data is thus limited both in terms of its overall reliability and the fact that it represents the views of limited sections of the community. Third, the point scores arrived at on some indicators (on a scale from 1–10 for the IMD and WEF data and between –2.5 and +2.5 for the World Bank governance indicators) should not be interpreted too strictly, as there

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4 Social and Cultural Planning Office (2004), *Public Sector Performance: An International Comparison of Education, Health Care, Law and Order and Public Administration*, The Hague: Social and Cultural Planning Office

5 See http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp

6 See http://www.oecd.org/gov/indicators/govataglance

7 Boyle R. (2007), Comparing Public Administrations, Committee for Public Management Research Report No. 7, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration (see www.cpmr.gov.ie)

8 For a discussion on the low availability and limitations of quantitative (and qualitative) international comparative data see Christopher Pollitt,'Moderation in all things: international comparisons of governance quality', *Financial Accountability & Management*, 27(4), November 2011, pp. 437-457

are margins of error associated with these estimates. Fourth, changes over time should be viewed cautiously. Many of the indicators assessed represent 'snapshots' at one particular point in time. Small shifts in annual ranking are not particularly meaningful.

The World Bank governance indicators are subject to severe methodological limitations. The IMD based indicators of quality of public administration are also the subject of methodological concerns. The small sample size and restriction to the business community are significant limitations. Also, the indicators only partly capture issues around the quality and efficiency of public administration, and have a limited conceptual foundation in this regard. Despite such limitations, however, the IMD based indicators do provide one source of information on business perceptions on administrative performance on a consistent basis over time. The World Bank *Doing Business* indicators also have limitations in terms of their coverage of aspects of administrative performance, dealing as they do with specific business related matters. They are also a mix of fact and perception based data developed on the basis of realistic but hypothetical situations with regard to service delivery. But these indicators are an interesting approach to developing a more bottom-up picture of aspects of administrative performance based on the views of service users. As such they attempt to address real life issues faced by public administration users. Similarly the Bertelsmann Stiftung indicators are based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, heavily reliant on the assessment of a small number of highly skilled and experienced academics and practitioners in their assessment of a country's position against the range of criteria used to develop their management index.

In all, the project initiators were very keen to ensure that when users were interpreting the findings set out in the Public Sector Trends report these limitations should be borne in mind. What is of interest is to identify broad patterns emerging from the data.

Despite the limitations of some of the comparative indicators used the process itself was nevertheless found to be useful and positive. The range of indicators used for the project enabled some conclusions to be drawn that Ireland's public administration does not appear to be the best around, but it is a long way from being seen as the worst. Also, the data can be used to prompt discussion and debate on the performance and productivity of public services. Limited as it is, the data here can be a starting point for discussions about the need for more robust measurements. Also, the more robust indicators used in a number of cases, such as the PISA education scores and health status indicators, enabling tracking of high-level social outcomes in a reasonably rigorous manner.

Lessons learned and conclusions

One key finding is that indicators based on people's perceptions of the public service are clearly influenced by general economic conditions rather than necessarily any actual change in service (though clearly a worsening economic environment is likely to contribute to changes in the level of public service provision). For example trends in indicators of business people's perception of the efficiency of public services go up and down in line with the economic cycle, even when indicators such as the World Bank Doing Business indicators show that efficiency remains unchanged or even improves. This is likely to be a reason for a worsening of Ireland's position with regard to some of the indicators in the last couple of years. Nevertheless, such indicators are important in that perceptions influence how people see Ireland as a place to live, do business and invest. Knowing where Ireland's public sector ranks in Europe on a number of dimensions of performance can point out areas where there is a need to improve, and help identify countries to learn from.

With regard to the data collection, the limited availability of good quality international comparative indicators is a major limitation. In particular, getting information on the performance of the public administration remains a major challenge. There are several attempts being made to improve the data base by places such as the UN, OECD and World Bank that may provide better data over time[9].

With regard to using the data to drive innovation and efficiency gains in the Irish public sector, the lesson is that such an exercise has an indirect effect on such initiatives. There is evidence of the information provided in the reports being used by the media and public to better inform the debate on the role of the public service in Irish life. And public discussion on such issues as the size and shape of the public service is being influenced. But it is at this general level that the reports are having an impact rather than at a more detailed operational level.

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9 See for example UNDP (2009), *A Users Guide To Measuring Public Administration Performance*, Oslo: UNDP

Bilbao++

Political management based on economic stringency and strategic budgets

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Abstract

Europe – and in fact the entire world – is currently facing perhaps the deepest and most multiple-faceted financial and economic threat in the recent history. This current global economic and financial uncertainty represents new challenges for local public administrations. "To do more with less" aptly describe the elusive goal of efficiency, effectiveness and added value: A goal which has become an inevitable reality for public administrations.

The City of Bilbao's commitment to the citizens is to achieve the maximum social rate of return on the use of public resources, embodied in benefitting from quality services aimed at the real needs of the citizens. This entails efficiently providing the basic services entrusted to a municipality and dealing with the numerous needs of the different collectives and neighborhoods of the city – all achieved while investing over € 1 billion over 8 years AND repaying existing public debt. Despite the current negative economic climate, the City of Bilbao have through the "Bilbao++: Public Management based on Economic Stringency and Strategic Budgets" Project achieve one of the most difficult objectives for a public administration: To become the only large municipality in Spain that is debt-free (zero debt as for April 2011) while maintaining the high level of operations, services and investment. Bilbao City Council has demonstrated that high level of investment and high-quality service delivery can be maintained in times of economic crisis by adopting a target-driven approach linking the municipality budget directly to strategic objectives and close monitoring. The Bilbao++ project, and the approach which underpins it, may be applicable elsewhere. In fact the innovative public management model developed by the City of Bilbao received on November 17, 2011 its first international recognition when it was awarded with the European Public Service Award (EPSA) 2011 in the category "Smart Public Service Delivery in a Cold Economic Climate". The EPSA awards recognize best practices at European level in the field of modernization of the public administrations. Similarly 60% of the citizens rate the management of Bilbao City Council positively, while only 6% rate it negatively.

Project background

The city of Bilbao has come a long way since the 1980s, when it was immersed in a deep crisis and economic decline. A decline the city has managed to overcome almost thirty years later, through innovation and adaption to new and changing circumstances. The success of Bilbao is largely attributed to its integrated and holistic approach to its economic, social and physical transformation. The Bilbao City Council has been instrumental in regenerating and transforming the city from an obsolete and dilapidated industrial urban area into a knowledge-based economy.

The urban regeneration has created the necessary conditions for the economic and social development of the city – boosted by new technologies, innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity and knowledge.

Bilbao have shown that strong leadership and a commitment to a systematic and long-term plan, based on solid processes and supporting infrastructure, are key factors to the success of a city's transformation. Although transformed since it its 1980s crisis, the economic situation post-2007 have led Bilbao City Council to adjust the municipal budget in anticipation of a worsening of this situation. Given the severity and far-reaching effects of the current crisis, the Bilbao City Council approved an Efficiency and Austerity Plan early on, thus giving the city an additional management tool.

To this date (i.e. September 2012) Bilbao City Hall maintains its management strategy and focus on three key priorities:

- ▪ Guarantee services and attention to citizens.
- ▪ Implement an investment project to modernise Bilbao until 2015.
- ▪ Maintain an attractive and live City form a business point of view.

Project objectives

In 2007 "Bilbao++: Public Management based on Economic Stringency and Strategic Budgets" initiative was designed as a steering mechanism with clear goals for the city's future. A key managing available resources effectively and transparently and in conjunction with citizens and in response to citizen needs.

Other specific objectives of Bilbao++ are:

- ▪ Fulfilling existing public commitments.
- ▪ Increasing the life quality for citizens.
- ▪ Achieving efficiency in municipal management.
- ▪ Overcoming the city's economic deficit (at the time).
- ▪ Repaying outstanding city debt (at the time).
- ▪ Establishing channels of ongoing communication with citizens to gain insight in public opinion.
- ▪ Promoting citizen participation in the drafting of municipal policies.
- ▪ Winning citizen support

Resources used

Bilbao++ is largely limited to municipality resources, a key project success factor has been the political decision of the city, Iñaki Azkuna and the city government scale public services to meet real needs of the citizens while ensuring long-terms financial sustainable.

This, and continious public investments for the maintenance of the quality of life and competitiveness of Bilbao, have resulted in a city which is capable to generate and attract investment and human talent.

Additionally, it city authorities have counted on the collaboration with diverse stakeholders in order to carry-out the initiative. In this regard, the cross-institutional collaboration has been a key enabler of the successful transformation process of Bilbao. The experience of e.g. the Bilbao Ría 2000 (created to guide the recovery and transformation of the derelict metropolitan areas) show that alignment strategies and pooling of available resources lead to increased efficiency, effectiveness and great impact.

Similarly public-private partnerships and cooperation have been actively boosted public administration, but with key objective in mind: To improve of the quality of life of Bilbao's inhabitants. In fact, the key agent in the development of the initiative has been the city's peoples. While the City Council has uses the Area of Participation and District Councils to promote and develop its own participation model, public participation is channeled through Sectorial Councils such as the Local Council for Immigration, Bilbao Municipal Women's Council for Equality, the City Council website (see figure 1 and www.bilbao.net) etc. The City also made active use of "crowd sourcing", actively creating online communities, enables citizens to propose solutions and take an active role in the redesign of sustainable public services. For this purpose the city authority created the citizen forum "Foro del Ciudadano" (see figure 2 and www.bilbao.net/foro_ciudadano). The fora's "profile" in turn has presence in various social networks, in online surveys etc.

Figure 1: Bilbao City Council (Source: www.bilbao.net, September 2012)	Figure 2: Fore del Ciudadano (Source: www.bilbao.net/foro_ciudadano, September 2012)

Resources and technology used

A total € 225,862.00 has been used to contract external expertise, technology and other input (mainly in 2007 and 2008). In addition the Bilbao City Council have utilised its own internal resources to develop the Bilbao++ initiative (e.g. budgets, indicators, monitoring, project management and communication). The budget is part of the Governance Plan 2007-2011.

Political leaders have played a key role from the onset, particularly to ensure political commitment, ownership of the project with the public administration, and to facilitate the relevant political decision for the adoption of specific action lines to prioritise and implement, but also vis-à-vis the presentation and communication of project progress, challenges and results.

On a technical level, designated technical managers have participated in the implementation of specific activities. Technical tools used for the implementation of the project include various IT based management and financial tools, including SAP.

For the development of the project the city has also counted with the support of expert advisors, such as technical staff (e.g. IT, sociological, finance) and multi-disciplinary teams. In this sense, the Bilbao City Council have paid particular attention to achieve a gender balance within its project teams, including the composition of external teams and contractors.

For communication related activities the city has made use of a mix of communication channels including: the municipal website www.bilbao.net, public presentations, press conferences and continious contact with the media, online participation fora www.bilbao.net/foro_ciudadano and on-going contact with citizens (see figure 1 and 2).

Project development and implementation methodology use

The Bilbao++ approach is centered on the strategic management of public resources. As a model the Bilbao's City Council Management Schedule consist of two basic tools, i.e.:

- Governance plan.
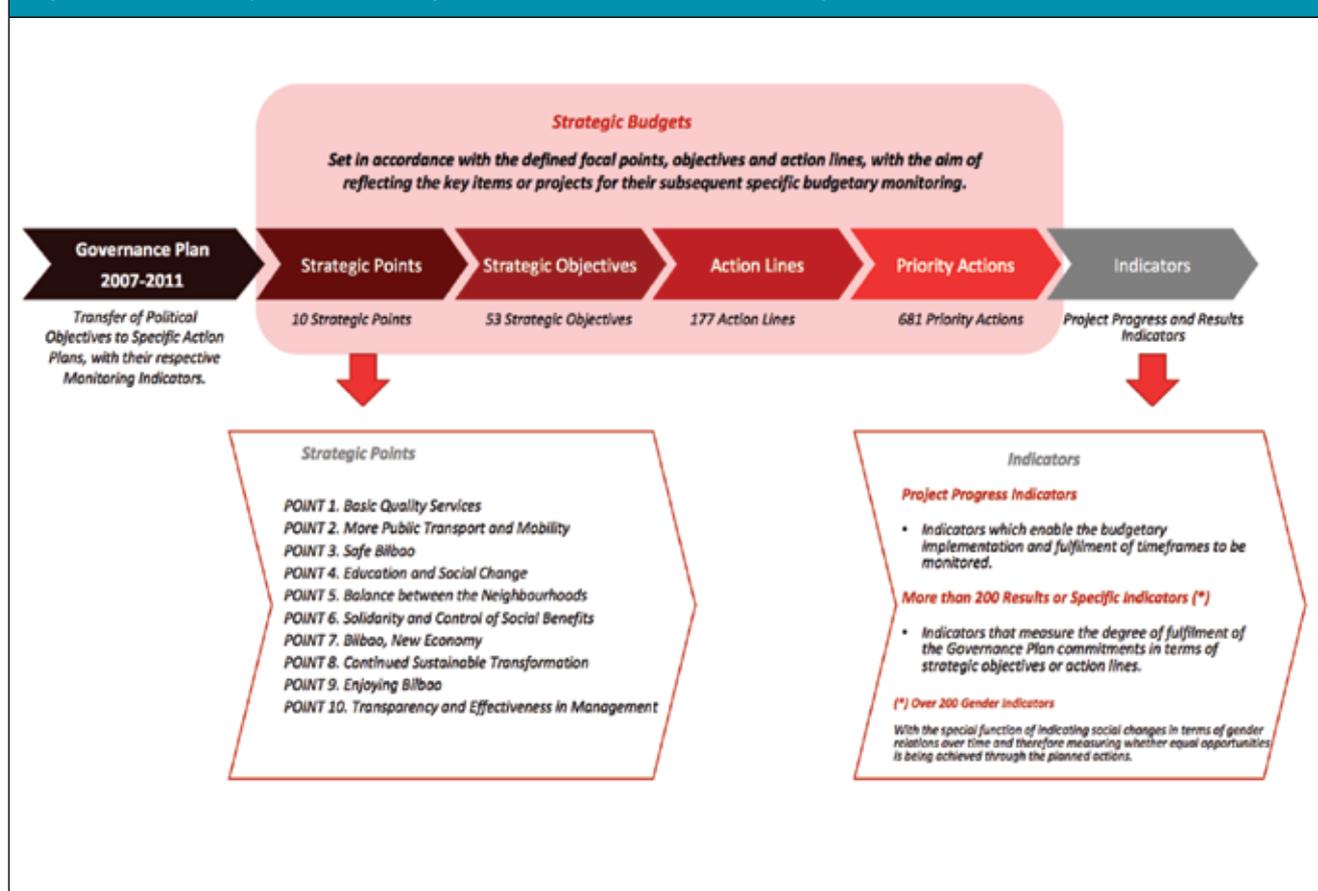- Strategic budgets.

Governance plan

The governance plan involves the transfer of political objectives to specific action plans. As illustrated in figure 3, a city governance plan is translated into a number of strategic points, each of which has a number of strategic objectives. The strategic objectives are in turn implemented through a number of action lines, each with a number of priority areas, each of which is monitored and measured on a number of predefined indicators (or key performance indicators). The 2007-2011 governance plan have ten strategic point covering different policy areas and city administrative departments. The city's ten strategic points are structured in 53 strategic objectives, 177 specific action lines and 681 priority areas.

Thus the governance plan is a dynamic management tool used by the municipality management teams to carry out politically agreement objectives (and the reporting on these), but includes a build-in flexibility allowing city authorities to actively respond to the needs and priorities expressed by citizens through various participation tools (e.g. the city's online fora).

Through collaboration, active participation the aim is to ensure ownership and cross-organisational consensus on the strategic governance plan, its ojectives, specific initiatives and the strategic points.

The ensure consensus and ownership to the governance plan and related initiatives they must take address and prioritise citizens actual needs. The inhabitants of Bilbao are therefore consulted on the governance plan and strategic objectives through various participatory tools including analysis, focus group and questionnaires, and online participation fora.

Figure 3: Bilbao City Council Management Model (Source: Bilbao City Council, 2012)
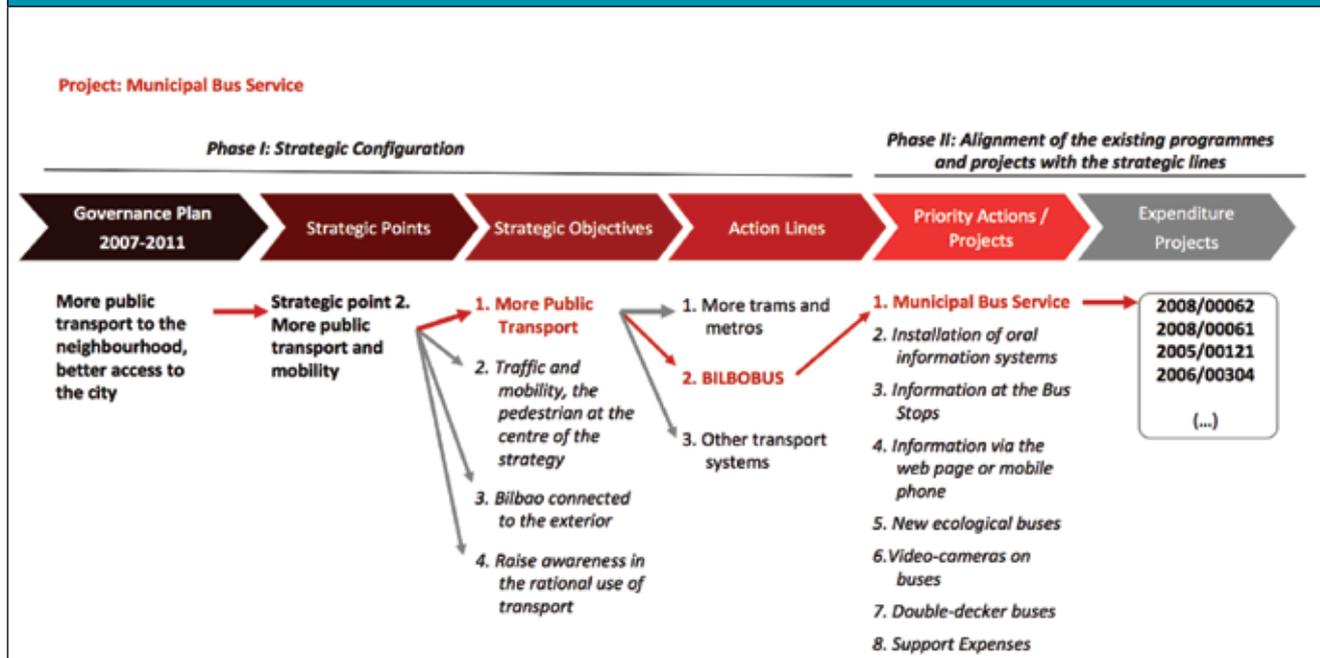
Strategic budgets

The governance plan is allocated resources though strategic budgets. Budgets are set in accordance with the previously defined strategic points, objectives and action lines and monitored accordingly (see figure 4 for Example of Bilbao City Council Strategic Budgetting Model – Municipality bus services).

The strategic budgets transfer the legislative objectives into budgetary commitments. This means that a given city department is given the direct responsibility for budget. This means that budgetary responsibility is delegated to specific department also responsible for implementing a given strategic point, strategic objectives, action lines and priority action.

A consequence of the delegation of budgetary responsibility within the city administration, the city's central Department for Economy and Finance provides the overarching technical and quantitative vision vis-à-vis the city budgets. This is possible as budgets are classified and traceable to across the different strategic points, strategic objectives, action lines and priority actions. This allows budget and economic management to be monitored in relation to the objectives set out in the governance plan, thereby resulting in an alignment of the city budgets to the city's political priorities. In this way, the strategic budgets become an essential tool in the development of political management. Similarly, the strategic budgets enable the cost of the necessary investment to be measured in order to fulfill the strategic objectives and are thus a key tool in the annual budgetary negotiation.

Figure 3: Example of Bilbao City Council Strategic Budgetting Model – Municipality bus services (Source: Bilbao City Council, 2012)

Monitoring and control

A key factor for the success of the project is the development of monitoring and control tools. For Governance Plan 2007-2011 both the system of indicators defined by the City Council Departments, and the analysis of the strategic points, strategic objectives and action lines have been established from the onset. This in turn enables the monitoring of budgetary compliance and timely completion of initiatives.

The use and definition of monitoring indicators enables the regular analysis of progress within the governance plan. Indictors are:

- *Implementation:* Progress and implementation of the planned initiatives.
- *Use:* Resources used with respect to the planned resources.
- *Effectiveness:* Degree of fulfillment of the objectives.
- *Efficiency:* Impact obtained in relation to the resources invested.
- *Quality:* Gaps with respect to the defined objectives / targets.

For a governance plan, as the one for the period 2007-2011, more than 200 specific indicators are continuously monitored. The specific indicators are complimented by other measurements, such as the score cards, enabling which enabling the Austerity and Efficiency Commission of the Bilbao City Council to carry out ongoing monitoring the progress and evolution various initiatives within the governance plan. The continued monitoring in turn enables the city authorities to adjust and align initiatives to changing circumstances while retaining maximum budgetary rigor.

Priority actions and projects

At the end of the management process, i.e. the monitoring and control process outlined above, the City Council have the necessary insight to make any appropriate adjustments and decisions on the priority actions and projects in the governance plan.

Communication and awareness raising

On the basis of increased openness, transparency and responsibility, the governance plan contains a number internal and external communication and raising awareness activities. The aim is to increase citizens and other stakeholders access to information via a various traditional and Web2.0 tools. The city authorities publish a steady stream of information and data related to the governance plan and the various activities including:

- Communication of results by objectives and action lines.
- Monitoring results broken down by area, department and management level.
- Budgetary monitoring results.
- Completion and fulfillment of the strategic results and key performance indicators.

Lessons learned and conclusions

The financial crisis and the post-2007 economic environment have led the Bilbao authorities to maintain fiscal prudency and stringency in its economic and financial policies. Widespread public deficits and increased borrowing have in a Spanish context lead to municipality debt to the tune of € 28,460 million in 2011.

The situation in Bilbao stands in stark contracts. In fact the Bilbao City Council became debt free in April 2011 as the final repayment of outstanding debt made, thus making Bilbao the only large municipality in Spain being 100% DEBT FREE!

Other results of the Bilbao++ initiative in the 2007-2011 are outlined in table 1 below.

Table 1: Selected results achieved during the Bilbao++ initiative, 2007-2011
Positive economic – financial situation in 2012 Bilbao faces a positive economic outlook and a sound financial situation in 2012 due to the effort made by over the last 12 years to pay off heavy municipal borrowing.
Increase of the investment volume During the 2007-2011 period investment volume has been doubled, compared to the 2003-2006 period. This has enabled the continuation and completion of Bilbao's emblematic projects.
Improvement in the effectiveness of municipal management Bilbao City Council has outlined transparency and effective management as one of its focal areas and action lines. This in turn has enabled the city authorities to develop quality service for citizens, in line with people's expectations.
Better life quality for Bilbao's citizens Largely a result of the city's the transformation and the quality city services, the Mercociudad Study, have identified the City of Bilbao as one of the best cities in which to live, work, visit, study and do business in.

Increase in municipal transparency
Bilbao City Council has implemented different permanent initiatives to improve transparency of public and political decisions-making processes including for: City of Bilbao's Civic Council; Neighbourhood Urban Observatory; Promotion of Information Communication Technologies; Participation in the event organised by the International Transparency Foundation in 2008, 2009 and 2010 etc.
Increase in civic participation
Bilbao City Council actively use the area of participation and District Councils to promote and develop its own participation model for the citizens of Bilbao. Participation is channeled through the city's sectorals councils, but the city also pays special attention to neighbourhood where civic participation low (compared to the city average). Similarly neighbourhoods in which projects are initiated as part of the city governance plan are specifically targeted to ensure that local inhabitants are informed and involved.
International recognition
As a result of its city's extraordinary transformation, the model for Bilbao's urban, economic and sustainable revitalisation has been internationally recognized. This includes participation in the Urban Best Practices Area at the Shanghai Expo in 2010, the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize in recognition of its integrated and holistic approach in urban transformation and the European Public Sector Award 2011 for its innovative management model.

While the city have achieved a number of its objectives and may highlight numerous impressive results a number of key challenges persist. One of these challenges is to change attitudes and existing practices, including establishing a common project management model within a diverse and disbursed organisation as a large European public administration, like Bilbao. Fundamental to a successful change in internal processes and organisation models is to empowerment of the technical and project management teams who carry out the day-to-day work of within the municipal management structure.

To minimise the resistance to changing public sector work practices and empowering key employees and teams it is essential to allow the organisation to evolve and adapt to new times and work methods. Bilbao therefore focused on modernising existing processes and organisations structures to have a flexible, motivated and innovative organisation. To achieve this several undertakings were carried out including:

- Designing internal communication processes and providing staff training.
- Boosting a culture of teamwork.
- Introducing IT based management and team management tools such as "Taldeka".

Similarly, citizens need, wish and demand to be heard when changes are made which affect their daily lives. The promotion of transparency in decision-making processes and encouraging a participative civic culture is therefore essential, thus the Bilbao slogan: "*The city is created and built by all of us, because it is ours*"

Summarising the lessons learned during the Bilbao++ project, and the introduction of a culture of political management based on economic stringency and strategic budgets, it is essential to highlight the following:

- Economic stringency as basis to ensure the future of the public organisations.
- Planning, management and evaluation tools are essential in political management.
- It is possible to continue the transformation of a large urban areas and its public administration even in times of crisis.
- Citizen participation is essential and ensures ownership and a wider understanding of the decisions and priorities made.
- Staff must be empowerment, understand what the priorities are and why in order to minimise resistance to change.
- We can always be more efficient: Change and improvement is ongoing!

eProcurement in Albania 2009-2011

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Abstract

Albania has long struggled with corruption and financial mismanagement within its public sector. In response, the country's Public Procurement Agency (PPA) launched a new eProcurement tool, to administer a contract tendering process which is *open*, *transparent* and *clean*. Albania has had an electronic procurement system in place since 2008 (www.app.gov.al). Starting from January 2009, the Government of Albania has made the use of the e-Procurement system obligatory for all public procurement tenders. The PPA is the lead agency for the eGovernment Programme in Albania. No procurement reform strategy has been prepared; however, there is an eGovernment strategy that has been prepared by the National Agency for Information Society, which was approved in January 2009. The National Agency for Information Society coordinates all e-government initiatives in the country, including eProcurement. The only policy body for legislation related to public procurement is the Public Procurement Agency.

Albania became the first country in the world where 100% of its public procurement is exclusively conducted via electronic means. The system provides an electronic marketplace, allowing registered suppliers to view all released government tenders. The Electronic Procurement System (EPS) allows suppliers to bid for, and view the progress of, tenders to the point of final award. This process is free of charge for participating suppliers. Reducing paper, streamlining government contracting and opening the process to public scrutiny have all improved the process of procurement within the country.

The work to maintain the system and administer the entire necessary infrastructure for the application of such a system by the contracting authorities as well as its continuous improvement is still a challenge which the PPA will still face in 2012 as well. Further improvement in this field is needed especially in respect of further harmonisation of the legislation of concessions and procurements with relevant European Union (EU) directives.

Project background

Concerns over corruption and waste within the public contracting process forced the Albanian government to consider a radically alternative public contracting process. It received donor support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) under its Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Agreement Program. Managed under the auspices of USAID's management, in conjunction with Albanian public officials, a new electronic public contract program was developed. This was part of a € 3.85 million (US$ 5 million) program to improve public financial management within the country.

Chemonics International, a US-based consultancy firm, was selected the main contractor responsible for the implementation of the EPS. The work was then sub-contracted to two firms: Alfa XP, a US-based software design company; and ikubINFO Software Solutions, an Albanian company. This ensured the delivery of a quality product, as well as the transfer cutting edge expertise and knowledge to a local firm. Upon completion, ikubINFO Software Solutions was offered a three-year maintenance contract for the EPS.

After a successful test period in a few pilot contracting authorities, the EPS was made mandatory for all contracting authorities (CAs) in January 2009. The use of EPS has subsequently been made compulsory for all government purchases. The EPS also made the public tendering system more open to foreign firms and gave them a greater understanding of the tendering process. Although the data is public, the PPA includes a configured SSL-encryption protocol which provides security in communication or data transfer over the network. The SSL encrypts network segments, ensures the secure exchange of confidential information between contracting authorities and economic operators.

CAs publishes their estimated procurement budget at the beginning of the year, against which the public and authorities can reference savings made at the end of the year.

To optimise the implementation of the eProcurement the PPA have received assistance of various kind, including:

- Support for the strengthening of the Albanian public procurement, concession and public auction systems (2011): In the framework of the IPA 2008 Program, the Public Procurement Agency have benefitted from participation in the twinning project The project aim is to assist in achieving the standards of the European Union, required in the Stabilization and Association Agreement regarding the abovementioned areas.
- World Bank (2011-2012): The PPA received assistance also from the World Bank for the further improvement of the electronic procurement system. The implementation of this project will be completed by the end of 2012.
- Support for Utilities Public Procurement Reform (2011-2012): The PPA continued to be assisted by European Bank for Reconstruction and Development expertise and funding. The aim of the project is the strengthening of administrative capacities in the implementation and enforcement of procurement legislation in the utilities sectors and framework agreements.
- Training in Public Procurement in the Westerns Balkans and Turkey (2012): Funded by the European Union the aim is to enhance performance and professionalism in the public procurement systems of these countries.

Legislative framework

The PPA exercises its activity pursuant to Law № 9643, dated 20/11/2006 "On Public Procurement" amended; Law № 9663, dated 18/12/2006 "On Concessions" amended; Law № 9874, dated 14/02/2008 "On Public Auction" as well as in compliance with the Prime Ministerial Order № 84, dated 10/05/2007 "On the Structure and Organizational Chart of the Public Procurement Agency", amended.

In the course of 2011, there were no amendments to legal acts and by-laws in the field of public procurement, concessions and public auction. This is related to the fact that in 2010, all the above-mentioned acts were subject to amendments, whereas 2011 served to apply and enforce these amendments in practice.

However, it is worth mentioning that during 2011, an amendment of a by-law took place, which directly affects public procurement. Specifically the Guideline of the Council of Ministers № 1, dated 16/06/2011 "On Changes to Guideline № 3, dated 15/02/2001 of the Council of Ministers, 'On the Supervision and Testing of Construction Works', as amended" has been changed. The change affected the first and the second paragraphs of article

2 of the guidelines. The modification, specifying that the supervisors of the works in premises built with public funding are to be selected through the procurement process.

During 2011, with the assistance of the above-mentioned twinning project, the draft amendments to the law on procurement and concessions were drawn up, amendments whose aim is further harmonisation with the relevant directives of the European Union. These draft amendments will be proposed after consultation with all the concerned parties.

In January and during the whole of 2011, the PPA drew up several guidelines to help the contracting authorities: Guideline № 1, dated 09/03/2011 as an addition to Guideline No.2, dated 18/02/2008 "On the Small Purchase (Low-Value Tender) Procurement Procedure" for the purpose of facilitating the procedures of procurement of small purchases; Guideline № 2, dated 28/03/2011. This guideline reflects the changes made to Decision № 53, dated 21/01/2009 of the Council of Ministers "On Entrusting the Ministry of the Interior with the Conducting of Public Procurement Procedures on Behalf and in the Name of the Prime Minister's Office, Ministries and Subordinate Institutions, for Certain Goods and Services." Specifically, this guideline clarified the decentralisation of the procurement procedures concerning the service of physical safeguarding and security, which will be carried out by the contracting authorities themselves; Guideline No. 3, dated 26/05/2011 "On the Conducting of the Suspension Process in the Electronic Procurement System". By way of this guideline, all the contracting authorities are informed about the technical actions that should be completed in the system to carry out the suspension process of a procurement procedure; Guideline No 4, dated 22/07/2011. Pursuant to Article 13/d of the Law on Public Procurement, the Public Procurement Agency, by way of this guideline instructs the contracting authorities on how to proceed, in accordance with the Decision № 472, dated 02/07/2011 "On the Disciplining of Budget Funds for 2011". Pursuant to Article 13/d of the Law on Public Procurement, the Public Procurement Agency, with a view to promoting transparency in the procurement procedures, instructed the contracting authorities about the winner notification form, which should be published in the Public Notice Bulletin, in accordance with the stipulations of Article 58 of the Public Procurement Law. In this framework, Guidelines № 5, dated 14/10/2011 and № 6, dated 03/11/2011 were issued. These guidelines respectively lay down the obligation of the contracting authorities to refer to the ""winner notification form, in accordance with the Appendix to the Standard Tender Documents, for publication in the Public Notice Bulletin as well as the obligation to define this form.

Use of Technology

The eProcurement system operates through a central system that enables use of the system via the Internet. The system is constructed in such a way as to maintain at all times a copy of all data and all actions performed on it. The automatic recording of transactions is done in a separate server called a "Black Box", which is located in a completely different place from the main server and in which, moreover, none of the EPS administrators can enter. Meanwhile, the information in the "Black Box" is available to inspection authorities such as: the Procurement Advocate, Supreme State Audit and Department of Internal Control and Anti-Corruption in the Council of Ministers." The EPS aims both to be transparent, as well as to provide for secure storage of information relevant to the contracting process.

There are significant improvements in the EPS in compliance with the Inter-Sectorial Strategy of Information Society in Albania.

Technically the EPS consist of several different elements. For instance, electronic archive services have been purchase and installation, thereby enabling the transfer of procedures, which have been online for more than a year, from the operational database to the archive. Thus, the archive has been separated from the operational database, enabling the optimising the daily operation and economic efficiency of the latter. The digitization of procurement archive now allows for electronic sending, receiving and storing of documents for the procurement "auditor". Also the EPS have increased the transparency of the tender and procurement process, which any procedure can be audited in full, in real time.

During 2011, the PPA focused on improving of the technical infrastructure ensuring optimal working conditions for all the online users of the EPS and increase the hardware capacities. The PPA's official website was upgraded and enriched with updated information about the procurement process. Some of the key points to which a special and permanent importance was attached including:

- continuous improvement of the security of the Electronic Procurement System;
- monitoring of the performance of the "Internet Information Server – IIS";
- monitoring of the performance of hardware server components, etc.

In this regard it should be mentioned that online maintenance of the EPS's, 24 hours, 7 days a week functionality is a huge challenge as it allows for limited "down time" of the system – even for maintenance. In practice, the Information Technology Directorate regularly monitors the entire system, the hardware devices, log files and back-ups. The purpose is to avoid, immediately repair any possible problem, and to guarantee the functioning of the online system without any interruption. The Directorate of Information Technology of the PPA has worked intensively on the development and improvement of manuals and guidelines for users of the electronic procurement system. Technical assistance is provided to all foreign and local suppliers as well as to all the contracting authorities that use the electronic procurement system, via e-mail, telephone or consultations in the premises of the PPA, on a daily basis.

Human resources management

The PPA exercises its legal activity through its two main directorates: the Directorate of Legal Issues, Monitoring and Publication; and the Directorate of Information Technology. Due to the importance and the extension of the application of the eProcurement system, the Directorate of Information Technology is still the largest directorate in terms of staff numbers, which is still small. The Responsible Authority in the institution which has the regular contact with the High Inspectorate of Disclosure and Auditing of Assets and reports the names of the persons responsible for the disclosure of assets in the institution, and submits the required declaration forms.

To bolster administrative capacities, representatives of the PPA take part in seminars and workshops organised in Albania and abroad. Continuous training is offered also to procurement employees of Contracting Authorities. Many other workshops are organised with the aim of improving the knowledge of participants about the main issues of public procurement and concessions, as well as familiarizing them with the European Union's rules, regulations and stipulations.

Some statistical data

The total number of foreign and local suppliers, registered with the electronic procurement system is 109,369. In 2011, 347 new suppliers were registered with the electronic procurement system, of which 119 (34.3%) were foreign suppliers. The considerable percentage of these foreign suppliers that registered with the system in 2011, mostly from European countries, when compared to the number of Albanian suppliers registered in the course of the same year, shows the high level of trust created by this system not only in Albania, but also abroad.

Contract notices of procurement procedures, contract winner notices, notices of signed contracts, notices of annulment of procurement procedures, public administration notices as well as notices on concessions and auctions are published in the Public Notice Bulletin. In accordance with legislation the Public Procurement Bulletin is published every Monday and contains all notifications on electronic procedures as well as on auctions and concessions. During 2011, the PPA published a total of 52 Public Notice Bulletins with a total of 13,005 pages or 250 pages per bulletin on average. The total number of procurement procedures and contract notices published during 2011 (according to types of contracts, namely services, goods, works, on PPA's official website etc.) was 4,835. The total number of procedures that published a contract winner notice was 4,217.

During 2011, from the "Administrator" account of the contracting authorities in the system, 2,835 user accounts were set up (members of the Procurement Unit, members of the Committees of Opening and Evaluation of Tenders, members of the Complaints Review and Audit Committee, as well as for the contracting authorities in the system).

Conclusions and lessons learned

Among the best indicators of the eProcurement system success is, is the percentage of the funds saved during 2011. A full 18.6% of the funds (allocated by the CA for electronic procedures) available to procurement procedures at the country level. Also, the average of six bids per published tender procedure is another indicator of the level of competition facilitated by the public procurement process and the eProcurement system.

Nevertheless, the work to maintain the system and administer, maintain and continuously improve the required infrastructure for the application of such a system , is still a challenge The PPA's attempts to improve the public procurement system in Albania have been appraised by the Progress Report of European Commission concerning the field of public procurement. Although the European Commission Report does identify the PPA's limited human resources capacities as a hindrance to the fulfillment of all the Agency's legal obligations. The report placed emphasis on the unclear mechanism of monitoring of public procurement procedures and the need for further harmonization of procurement legislation in some specific points, with the relevant EU directives. The report has identified the need for further improvements in this field, especially in respect of further harmonisation of the legislation of concessions and procurements in the field of protection and complaints mechanism. According to this report, all public procurement institutions should ensure sufficient capacities, and the responsibilities and cooperation mechanisms between these institutions should be clearly defined and divided. So the PPA has a series of priorities, on which it should continue to be working. Amendments to the legislation on public procurement and concessions, for the purpose of the further harmonization with EU directives; practical implementation of procurement rules in utility sectors as well as the implementation of the Framework Agreement by some of the contracting authorities; further upgrading of the electronic procurement system; strengthening of administrative capacities of employees in charge of conducting procurement procedures are among these priorities.

Key lessons learned include:

- One of main lessons learned is that without a consensus and decisiveness from the political leadership in order to apply this electronic system, it would be difficult to be overcome the difficulties of a country with an undeveloped infrastructure.

- Without the commitment and good will of the business community, this application would not be successful and, at the same time, a good example to other developing countries.

- Ensure that there are funds and skills available to solve initial technical and procedural teething problems. To this end, the official website the PPA contains several manuals and detailed guidelines to improve the knowledge as regard the functioning of the system. Every procurement official, or economic operators, can get free guidelines at the Public Procurement Agency's premise. Training courses have been carried out on a national level. The courses focus on legal as well as technical aspects of the eProcurement. Similarly, special assistance is provided through e-mail or telephone communications not only to the CAs but also to domestic and foreign economic operators.

- Ensure that a new system is also limited by the weak telecommunications infrastructure. In fact the ultimate success of a national electronic sourcing system is only as good as the penetration of communication technologies amongst the business community. While the lack of a universal and reliable Internet system within Albania may lead to additional pressure on the Government and Internet providers to deliver a new system. This means that the full economic potential of EPS has not yet been reaped- largely due to the country's technological and infrastructure problems.

Speak European – Professional development for accession

European Integration Scholarships project[10]

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Abstract

The European Integration Scholarship (EIS) project aimed to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Serbia to effectively undertake the work required as part of the European Union (EU) accession process. In order to achieve this, a series of training courses for civil servants and employees of local government institutions were organised at the College of Europe (CoE) and the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in 2011. The results were: six specialized seminars in Maastricht or Bruges lasting two to four weeks each. A total of 171 civil servants and employees from public administration and local government engaged in preparing Serbia for EU accession participated. In addition three-month internships were undertaken by 26 civil servants, one-month internships for three civil servants in EU institutions or public institutions of EU member states countries plus three-week general training on European Integration (three courses) for a total of 54 community multipliers in Bruges.

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10 Project reference: EuropeAid/128558/C/SER/RS
11 Project proposer: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, Government of the Republic of Serbia
Responsible person: Ms. Milica Delevic, Director, European Integration Office of the Government of Serbia (SEIO)
Contracting Authority: Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia
Partner/beneficiary: European Integration Office of the Government of Serbia (SEIO) on behalf of the Serbian administration
Contractor: British Council in consortium with the European Institute of Public Administration (Maastricht) and the College of Europe (Bruges)

Project background

Pursuing the path of European integration is a strategic objective of the Serbian government since the important political changes of October 2000 – i.e. the overthrow of Milosevic's regime and establishment a democratic government has led to normalisation of relations with neighbors and the world and to the beginning of the process of Serbian integration into European Union (EU). In April 2008, the EU and the Republic of Serbia signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), the first legal binding framework of mutual commitments.

The European Commission Communication on the Western Balkans from March 2008 underlined the fundamental need to enhance awareness about the EU, from its general values and history to its functioning, as well as to familiarise public administrations of accession countries with the *acquis communautaire*. This issue was particularly relevant in Serbia, due to its isolation from the international context during the 1990s and the limited mobility of its population due to international travel restriction imposed during the regime of Slobodan Milosevic.

The capacities of the relevant institutions are of utmost importance for a smooth and sustainable harmonisation of Serbian legislation, institutional and administrative structures with the *acquis*. The European Commission Progress Report on Serbia of 2008[12] appreciates that Serbia continues to have good capacities in the area of public administration, as showed during SAA negotiations, as well as by the development and adoption of the National Programme for Integration into the European Union (NPI) and by the government's legislation drafting efforts. European integration structures within the government are functioning well and have been recently strengthened, including in the Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO). Nevertheless, capacities relating to future membership still need to be reinforced at various levels, starting with knowledge and application of vast and complex areas such as EU legislation and EU fund management procedures. This is reflected in one of the European Partnership[13] medium-term priorities on public administration: "*To further strengthen European integration capacity within the public administration, embedding the necessary structures within line ministries and throughout government, and improve cooperation mechanisms with all departments dealing with European integration*". Furthermore, the ambitious legislative agenda defined by the Serbian NPI requires solid and well coordinated human resources.

As a consequence the EIS project began work in February 2010, when a period of significant change in the Serbian public administration was already underway, and preparations for achieving Candidate status had begun. The project was initiated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia for European integration with the Serbian European Integration Office as the main partner in this project on behalf of the Serbian administration. The aim of EIS was to strengthen the administrative capacity of the Government of Serbia to prepare for accession to the European Union. Building on and consolidating previous phases of the European Commission (EC) and other donor assistance, this project was aimed at strengthening the capacities of Serbian public institutions and civil society as they related to the process of EU integration. This was critical to the need for society as a whole to get acquainted with the basic features of the EU and its impact on daily life.

The project was funded by the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) – Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2008 (Project Reference: EuropeAid/128558/C/SER/RS) and the total cost of the project is € 2.49 million.

Project objectives

The overall objective of the project was to:

- Strengthen the capacities of Serbian public institutions working at different levels of the government and of society relating to the process of integration of Serbia into the EU.
- Increase public administration capacities and knowledge of European legislation and the European integration process.
- Increase community multipliers' knowledge of European integration in order to raise awareness about the EU integration process and reforms that need to be undertaken within the framework of this process.

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12 Serbia 2008 Progress Report, 05.1102008; http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/balkans_communication/western_balkans_communication_050308_en.pdf
13 Council Decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing Decision 2006/56/EC

The project was comprised of comprehensive and specialised courses covering the various aspects of European integration, accession negotiations and harmonisation of the legal and institutional national systems with the Community *acquis*.

In order to achieve the overall objectives, the project targeted a broad spectrum of beneficiaries including: Central Government, the parliament, public agencies and local government staff. Simultaneously, the project was aimed at stimulating and improving information on European integration that could be disseminated by community multipliers to the wider public. Therefore, it targeted a significant number of representatives of institutions which have the potential to act as "multipliers" within a larger community, for instance university professors and researchers, representatives from civil society, activists, culture and the media and representatives from the business community. In order to ensure sustainability, the project involved central and local institutions and targeted different management levels, with a particular focus on mid-level management rather than on high-level or politically assigned positions. When appropriate, it also gave priority to institutions or staff that have previously benefitted less in other projects and training activities.

Training also included rules of management and implementation of EU funds, with procurement procedures, in view of the introduction of a Decentralised Implementation System (DIS) and EU funds management in a post-accession situation. The courses had a practical and interactive approach as much as possible and included specific assignments, case studies, simulation exercises, examples from EU Member States, and, where appropriate, study visits. They were based on a balanced mix of individual, group, and team learning. Furthermore, on the grounds of the agreements between SEIO and the host institutions, the project provided civil servants and public administration employees with tailor-made internship programmes in relevant EU institutions and Member States institutions and government bodies.

These practical training programmes provided interns with the opportunity to acquire first-hand knowledge and practical experience in the relevant EU or Member State institutions and to make personal contacts establishing the basis for the better mutual understanding.

Technology used

The project was not particularly technology-reliant or focused. Activities were promoted throughout all stages through online resources. The website www.govev.rs was developed for this purpose. The technologies used for the purposes of the website were: PHP, MySQL, Flash, HTML and a proprietary Content Management System (CMS) of the company which developed the website (Green Advertising, www.green-adv.rs).

As part of the initial selection of training and internship candidates, an application form had to be submitted online (basically an online form). The idea was to make the whole process as flexible, widely available and convenient as possible to use. Hard-copy submissions of the application form were nonetheless accepted, to ensure non-discrimination towards applicants who did not have access to the required technology.

As a final activity, the project developed a database of experts. The database was developed using C# (C sharp) technology.

There was no issue with legacy systems, due to the fact that brand-new equipment was bought at the beginning of the Project, therefore all the technology was up-to-date. The total cost of the website development, including updates throughout the duration of the project and the database of experts was approximately € 3,500.

Training for the use of the proprietary CMS was provided by Green Advertising to the project team.

Project development and use of implementation methodology

A customised project management approach was implemented in three program components:

- Training for civil and public servants.
- One-month and three-month internships for civil and public servants.
- Training for *community multipliers.*

The three program components were identified to be in line with the project aims. Similarly the three components coincide with the activities of European Integration Office, which include the organisation of trainings for civil and public servants. In the process of European integration and harmonising Serbian legislation with that of the EU acquis, strengthening administrative capacities on all levels of state administration are essential. With this in mind a conscious decision was made to structure the project so it included trainings as well as internships. Similarly, the Serbian beneficiaries see to gain most from training include civil servants from central, regional and local levels of public administration and government. The sound rational for these choices have been confirmed by the great results of evaluation questionnaire delivered to participants upon completing training programmes and seminars:

- Organisational satisfaction: 93.75%
- Satisfaction with the lecturing: 83.70%
- Usefulness of training: 80.25%
- Average grade: 4.4 (on a scale of one-to-five, with five being the highest)

Five promotional campaigns were launched to recruit and select training candidates: Two campaigns in April 2010 and February 2011 focused on community multipliers; Two campaigns in September 2010 and January 2011 recruited trainees and interns from the civil and public services; The final campaign in late 2011 was aimed at specialists in competition and state aid. Promotional methods included presentations, advertising, website and electronic media.

Results of the EIS initiative include:

- Fifty-four community multipliers, in three groups, participated in three-week courses at the CoE in July 2010, July 2011 and September-October 2011, joining other international participants for at least one part of each programme.
- Between February and July 2011, 171 civil and public servants participated in six tailored three-week courses at the EIPA and the CoE. Participant feedback and evaluation of all training sessions were gathered through questionnaires, reports prepared by the training institutions, and nine seminars in Belgrade, held one week after the participants' return. 38% of the public service trainees and their supervisors were interviewed in order to assess the training and the process of reintegration into their institutions.
- Five two-day seminars for CAPS trainees were held in November 2011 to extend their training in project design and funding. A total number of 94 trainees participated.
- The final CAPS training course in Competition and State Aid was delivered over 2 weeks at EIPA in January 2012, for 21 participants.

Altogether, 189 civil and public servants were trained[14].

- Twenty-six interns were placed in administrations of five Member States of the EU for 3 months during 2011 to work in areas relevant to their expertise and interests.
- Short internships were introduced into the programme as the means of providing time-limited practical training for a few applicants who were generally over-qualified for the standard 3-week training course, and three applicants were there for one month. One had also previously attended a training course at the CoE, as a pilot for the combined approach to professional development. While on placement in Belgium and the UK, fourteen interns were monitored to assess their progress.
- A return seminar for the longer-term interns was also organised, to evaluate their experience. These internships were enabled by a new legal basis, a Government Conclusion specifically defined and adopted for this purpose, passed on in March 2011.
- The closing project conference was organised on 16 December 2011, which was attended by at least 170 participants from the Government, the Delegation of the EU, SEIO, trainee institutions, NGOs, media, educational and other institutions. The EIS project was formally completed on 29 February 2012.

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14 Within the nominal 192 CAPS who received training, three attended the State Aid course and a sectoral course, so 189 separate individuals were trained. Three interns also attended a training course.

Lessons learned and conclusions

All project experience challenges and problems. Table 1 below outlines the five main problems encountered and how they were solved during the EIS project.

Table 1: Problems encountered during the EIS project and their solutions	
The rather low level of interest from the institutions, or more particularly, low interest from the trainees' superiors for the content, relevance or value of the training.	A letter of invitation for participants was sent to their superiors, explaining the objectives and values of the training, most importantly the training value for their institution.
Possibilities for interns to secure work leave for longer periods of time because Serbian law does not recognise internships as a kind of professional development.	The problem was solved by adopting the Conclusion of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, specifically defined for the purpose of the Project, which recommended the internships as a type of professional development.
Possibilities for trainees to secure work leave for three weeks, due to obligations within their home institution or due to first problem outlined above and securing leave under the same conditions for all participants was an issue (some received per diems from their home institution, some had to take unpaid leave, some had to claim vacation days).	A letter of invitation for participants was sent to their superiors, explaining the objectives and values of the training, most importantly the value of the training for their institution. The project secured equal standards of participation for each participant individually (paid training fees, accommodation and travel costs, as well as an amount of € 10.00 per day for minor incidental costs).
Finding candidates with adequate motivation and the required level of English language skills.	The problem was solved by organizing a selection procedure
The unequal level of IT knowledge of applicants.	The project team provided assistance

A key lesson learned during the EIS was that a legal framework supporting this new training model needed to be developed in due time prior to the commencing the initiative, with adequate resources and commitment devoted to its design and sustainable implementation.

Similarly, when conducting training needs analysis (or the TNA), one has to make sure that training is designed to fit all participants (for some participants it may be too basic, too theoretical, while for others it may be too specific and specialised).

Lastly, special attention needs to be given to communicating with, and promotion of training projects among decision makers and the management structure within the civil administration.

Public innovation through collaboration in learning

NDLA – Norwegian Digital Learning Arena

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Abstract

The National Digital Learning Arena (NDLA – ndla.no) is a Norwegian public initiative for open digital learning resources, and broad participation in upper secondary school. NDLA has a total operating budget of NOK 65 million (circa € 8.6 million EUR) per year. This equals approximately 20% of the total allocation of public funding for learning resources in upper secondary education in Norway. NDLA is co-owned by 18 of the 19 county councils in Norway. NDLA is today a success with high and increasing number of users. Schools across Norway benefits from the rich content sourced through NDLA, in their schoolwork.

Project background

One trigger for the emergence of Norwegian Digital Learning Arena (NDLA) was the suggested change in the legislation, giving the county councils the responsibility for the provision of necessary printed and digital learning resources for upper secondary students free of charge.

The change in legislation was accepted by parliament and came into effect in the school year 2007-2008. Another stimulus for NDLA was the revision of the Norwegian national curriculum for primary and secondary education.

The new Norwegian curriculum (also known as Knowledge Promotion) came into effect in the school year 2006-2007. In the revision of the national budget in May 2006, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research put forward a suggested resource allocation of NOK 50 million (circa € 6.8 million) to ensure that appropriate digital learning resources was available for upper secondary education. This additional, one-off, funding enabled change towards getting more digital content to the schools. The county councils of Norway subsequently applied for this additional funding to finance initiatives and projects focused on acquiring, developing and distributing digital learning recourses.

Project objectives

The overall objectives of the NDLA initiative are to develop open high-quality digital learning resources for all, and to involve teachers and students in active and participatory learning processes.

The specific objectives are to:

- Develop open and accessible digital learning resources in all upper secondary education subjects that can be accessed by all free of charge.
- Facilitate upper secondary education characterised by interaction and sharing; to engage teachers and students in active and participatory learning processes.
- Use communities and networks from around the country as a driving force in the development of high-quality digital learning resources.
- Develop and contribute to a marketplace that delivers content and services attuned to the needs of teachers and learners.

Technology used

Both the content developed and the technical infrastructure is based on open licenses and open code. That will also mean that NDLA can be a valuable resource and a partner for other initiatives with similar mandate and goals.

The licenses are displayed with the content, and the code (based on Drupal) is accessible for everyone at bak. ndla.no

NDLA runs an internal training program which provides the participants with the necessary skills required to publish new content on NDLA.no. This is only mandatory for editorial staff. Teachers, and other interested parties, may participate in the NDLA initiative and add recourses without prior training. Necessary quality control is managed through cooperation with private companies, universities, selected schools, and through feedback from visitors on ndla.no.

Necessary support systems for NDLA staff are available through all the 18 participating county councils or via common ICT tools such as Skype, Jira and Google Apps (free/edu- versions).

Project development and implementation methodology use

The further operation and sustainability of operations, development and innovation capacity is secured through a political process involving all 18 county councils. This will be an ongoing process, and the county councils can at any time decide to leave the partnership. NDLA is today fully owned by the 18 county councils behind the initiatives. All on county/regional level government authorities (incl. county councils) have made identical political decisions to anchor this joint ownership. The 18 county councils agree on the level of budget and the level of ambition for the NDLA collaboration. All county councils have an administrative contact point for NDLA and separate bookkeeping measures in-house. One county, Akershus, has decided to leave the partnership in 2012.

As a public entity, NDLA staff is on loan from individual organisations i.e. the county councils (the county of Hordaland). This means that NDLA staff is on loan from their respective employers, normally one of the participating county council. In other words NDLA is a virtual organisation without a physical headquarters. This model gives emphasis on local ownership, both in each county, but also in schools and for participating teachers. As a virtual and distributed organisation NDLA can quickly scale its size to match the changing needs. The participating teachers also benefit from this model because they retain the same contractual and job security as their normal county employment, i.e. return to their previous jobs at their schools are guaranteed.

NDLA's project development and implementation methodology borrows heavily from agile development and process management theory and practice. NDLA as an organisation uses aspects of LEAN management, and is today totally process driven. This was necessary as NDLA also uses the Norwegian RIS framework (i.e."roller i samspill", or in English "roles in interplay") as a tool for mapping and optimising processes. Both LEAN and RIS have particular value for NDLA as a virtual organisation as they factor in the intensive communication, and more fluid change in personnel.

The framework Project Development Model in turn is used to manage different projects. NDLA has also based the IT administration around Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL)[15], and is now implementing DevOps between the processes of development and application management.

Lessons learned and conclusions

NDLA is a unique collaboration between 18 of Norway's 19 county councils, enabling and empowering the county councils to carry out a task they are obliged to carry out according to the national education and training legislation.

Key lessons learned in the NDLA include:

- ▪ A virtual organisation with a small administrative core can function well. The pooling of administrative resources with already existing ones keeps the need for investment in administrative software and services to a minimum.
- ▪ Joint development and sharing resources has enabled NDLA to increase the volume, diversity, the perceived quality and the awareness among NDLA constituents without additional expenditure or resource requirements.
- ▪ New forms of collaboration have managed to balance growth, innovation, participation, complexity and quality.

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15 For more information on ITIL see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_Technology_Infrastructure_Library

For some the key results achieved by NDLA are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Key results of NDLA
Before NDLA Norwegian schools had significantly lower possibilities in regards of getting digital learning recourses. The number of subjects on NDLA´s pages has risen from three in 2007, to 37 subjects in 2011, of which 29 are accessible via the NDLA website, and more subjects will be added in 2012.
User statistics show an increase in traffic over the last year in by approximately 100%, with a daily number of visitors reaching approx. 22,000.
Awareness among key NDLA constituents, such as upper secondary teachers, has increased considerably with more than 70% of the teachers being aware of the NDLA resources.
The number and scope of services have increased considerably, which allows for sharing, joint-creation of content, re-use and the phasing in of user-generated content.
The number of subjects has risen from two in 2007, to 37 subjects in 2011, of which 29 are accessible via the NDLA website, and more subjects will be added in 2012.

Ministers and High Ranking Officials from Western Balkans in the Round Table

Mr. Gerhard Schumann-Hitzler, Director DG Enlargement, IPA Strategy & Regional Cooperation, European Commission

Plenary Session at the conference

Round Table Meeting in the Ministry of Culture of Montenegro in Cetinje

ReSPA Director Suad Music in his opening speech

Conference Participants at the event

Participatory Democracy:
Open and collaborative government

This section highlights examples of open and collaborative efforts in Europe.

ITDL – IT-SUPPORTED PROCEDURE FOR DRAFTING LEGISLATION IN SLOVENIA
Andraž Pernar

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE
A process of involving users through traditional and Web2.0 tools
Tore Christian Malterud

FOSTERING STRUCTURED DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN CROATIA
Case of the Council for Civil Society Development
Vesna Lendić Kasalo and Igor Vidačak

Collaborative governance

A process of involving users through traditional and Web2.0 tools

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Abstract

As an exercise of political authority and the use of institutional resources to manage a society's problems/affairs governance has a concept been high on the agenda the last 20-30 years.

This paper argues that Web2.0 and other internet based technologies presents a key breakthrough, presenting a pivotal instrument in open governance. By providing an easy and effective means of sharing information helps greatly in beginning to restore trust and integrity in government, a space is made for more democratic input on behalf of citizens. Authorities, as a result, can harness technology and simplify procedures and make them more efficient, create new channels that facilitate the involvement of civil society and other stakeholder in governance thus opening up decision making processes, increase transparency and facilitate democracy.

In establishing open governance, it is important to share information but to also allow civil society to contribute through public scrutiny, which is made easier through new forms of information communication technology.

Project background

During the last 20-30 years the concept of "governance" has been high on the agenda and can, in broad terms, be seen as the exercise of political authority and the use of institutional resources to manage a society's problems/affairs.

Governance as a concept is not about who exercises power or being government. Rather the focus is on the environment and the relations within which the power is executed. It is administrative and process oriented with regulatory functions (rather than politics, which is a group of different people reaching collective decisions).

Thus governance should be seen as a series of tasks which are all related to the environment surrounding the public sector, not just describing the tasks of the public sector but also how it operates and functions, or how it ought to operate, in relation to its environment. This explains how the institutions, directly or indirectly, use their powers in relation to citizens and business. The tasks and roles have, however, changed remarkably over time, mainly as a result of new demands from the private sector and civil society.

Research on innovation in the public sector has tended to focus on service delivery. There is relatively little about innovations in governance.

Project objectives

Open governance has as a key objective increased collaboration between various sectors and actors whether public, private or social – in other words increased social integration.

Collaborative governance, by definition, collectively empowers various sectors and actors from society to take part in decision-making processes. Some of the innovative projects highlight ways in which this extends to even more specific sectors that are not only marginalised from political decision-making processes, but within society itself.

Integrating citizens in a variety of public sector and decision-making procedures is, a demonstration of collaborative governance, showing initiative to integrate specific, marginalised social groups within the general public takes the idea of collaborative governance further, encouraging collaboration at all levels of society in this and ensuring that all are incorporated and benefit from the partnership.

Technology used

Active use of new emerging Web2.0 and social media to facilitate transparent communication attitude is increasingly key to governance.

Transparency is very important to the concept of open and collaborative governance, and this is one of the reasons why the web-based technologies like the internet have proven to be such a useful instrument in achieving this goal. Many innovation projects make use of how easily accessible the internet is by using it as a mode from which citizens can moderate particular government or administrative processes. That said a number of traditional none-technical and emerging Web2.0 tools are available to enable not only open government but increased user-involvement and participatory design of government services. Tables 1 and 2 by Meyerhoff Nielsen categorise and outline the strengths and weaknesses of the various tools.

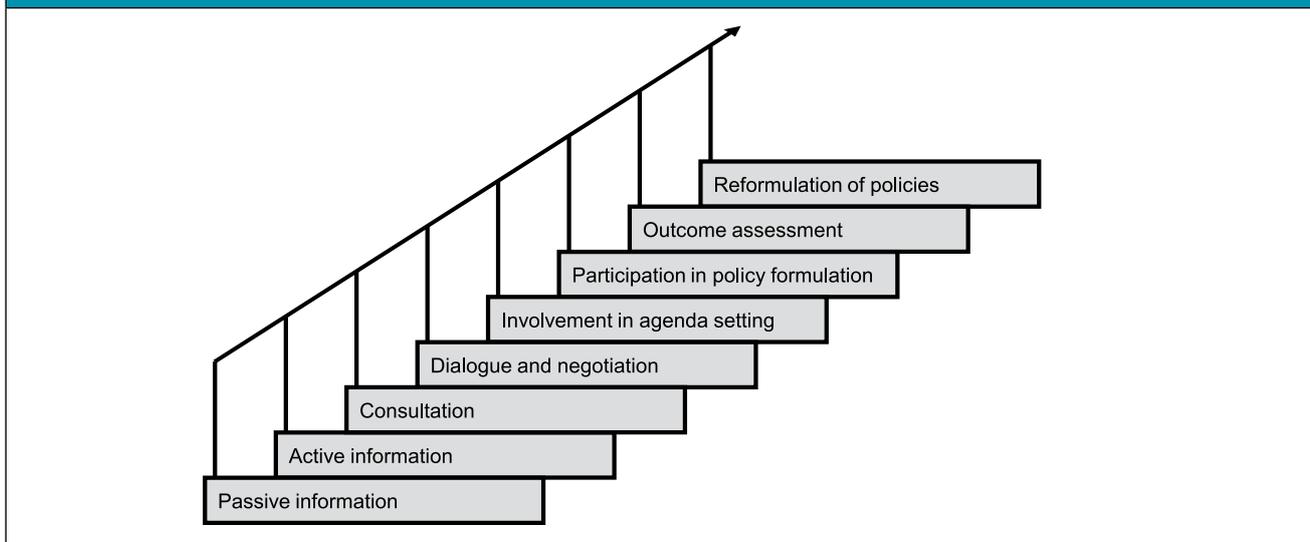| Table 1: Traditional tools (Source: Morten Meyerhoff Nielsen)		
Tool	Description	Advantages/strenghts and disadvantages/ weaknesses
Panels and focus groups	Panels and focus group are both forms of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about personal perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, idea or the like. Questions in focus groups are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. For panels questions can be asked in groups or on an individual basis. Examples: On/offline panels and focus groups and personas.	Advantages: • Relatively easy to set-up and maintain • Online panels and personas have relative low maintenance costs • Explorative, validating, in-depth and representative esp. if questions are asked in group settings allowing for discussion • Can be used to survey attitudes, test content, structure, design and solutions before, during and after development • Can be carried out in-house and with relative frequency if so wished • Personas can function as a template for content and service development, design, internal communication (cross organisational, with contractors etc) avoiding misunderstandings and external promotion. Disadvantages: • Requires representative recruiting • Focus groups can be relatively costly and get off topic • If based panel participation is voluntary frequency should not be too high or there is a risk that volunteers drop out • Interviews can be expensive to carry out whether carried out in-house or by contractor • Often qualitative output • Personas risk limiting the focus on simplified characters and being outdated • Required in-house experience and skills
Think-aloud, try-it and user tests	Tests carried out by users to test the user experience in relation to structure, functionality, look-and-feel of a given service or piece of content. Purpose is to collect feedback from the target or actual users to validate an issue or provide in depth information. Examples: think-aloud, try-it and other forms for user tests.	Advantages: • Validating and in depth • Can be made representative • Based on actual use and behaviour • Tests content, structure, design and solutions before, during and after development • Can be carried out in-house and with relative frequency if so wished • Can be done with high-frequency if data caption tools are in place Disadvantages: • Require representative recruiting • Can be costly • Mainly qualitative in output. • Risk of narrowed focus on testing rather than innovation

Service mapping, analysis of use and user statistics	Service and heat maps utilise data to display areas of services or a webpage most frequently used or scanned by users. User statistics focus on the actual use of a given website, webpage or online services. Statistics collected could be in the form of number of visitors, number of webpages visited, length of visit, number of services activated and completed etc. Data is used to monitor actual use and identify strengths and weaknesses of a given webpage, its content, a service etc. Examples: Service and context mapping, heat-mapping, eye-tracking analysis of content and service use statistics.	Advantages: • Explorative, validating, in-depth • Based on quantitative data and actual use and behaviour • Can be done in-house or by contractor Disadvantages: • Requires validated use and user data plus data on actual eService activations and transactions. Data caption system therefore a prerequisite
Surveys	Surveys collect quantitative information about the participants' personal attitudes, opinions and habits set against their particular demographic. Surveys may be voluntary or incentivised with the latter being considered more likely to catch a wider and more representative range of respondents compared to un-incentivised surveys. Examples: Personal, telephone and online surveys plus user-knowledge and satisfaction measures.	Advantages: • Can be tailored to be explorative, validating, in-depth and or representative • Online surveys generally cheaper then telephone or in person surveys • Can be set to compliment and/or supplement other available data, or to measure user.-knowledge and satisfaction • Can be set to collect qualitative or quantitative input (latter with some limitations) • Can be done in-house or by contractor Disadvantages: • Can be expensive (esp. personal and telephone surveys and to measure user-knowledge and satisfaction) • Relative low frequency and low number of questions or quality and number of responses may fall

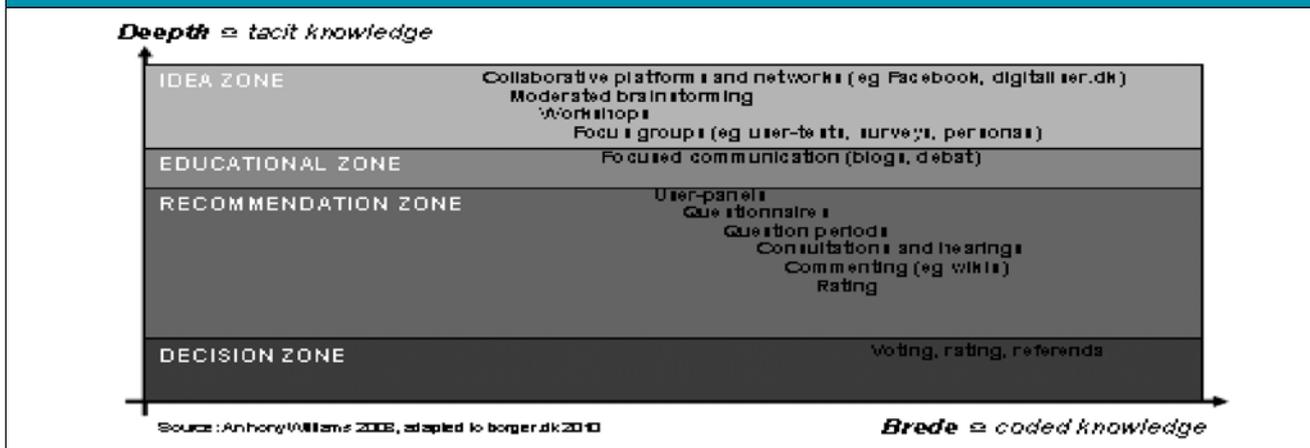| Table 2: Web 2.0 tools (Source: Morten Meyerhoff Nielsen, 2010)		
Tool	**Description**	**Advantages/strengths and disadvantages/weaknesses**
Social and professional networks	An online service or platform built upon and reflecting the professional or social networks and relationships between people (e.g., interests or activities). A network generally consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), social ties and a broad range of services (e.g. e-mail, chat, messages, blog posts and content). It offers the users the opportunity to exchange ideas, activities, events and interests with members of a personal network. Examples: Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and Twitter.	Advantages: • User and target audience is present • Informal tone, two-way dialogue and open to all • Input directly from users and stakeholders • Can be combined with various publications and feedback components as well as portal • Dialogue creates ideas and innovation • Good communication and PR channel • Independent, neutral platform Disadvantages: • Use and feedback is not guaranteed and the dialogue on social networks is often superficial and difficult to encourage a constructive debate • Alternative channel for debate and voting, opens another channel for communication • Added value and tipping point unknown • Not necessarily full control
Social and professional platforms	An online collaborative platform, facilitating the cooperative and work processes that help more people to interact and share information to achieve a common goal and thus promote innovation. The internet makes it easier to disseminate and exchange information and knowledge as well as facilitates contributions from individuals. A crucial element of social and professional collaboration is that ideas occur everywhere and that individuals are able to share these ideas. Social cooperation corresponds to crowd sourcing, where individuals work together towards a common goal. Examples: Wikis like MediaWike, DokuWiki, TikiWiki, Google page wiki, blogs like Wordpress or Blogger and collaborative office solutions as digitaliser.dk, Debategraph, Teamwork or Work Spot.	Advantages: · Two-way dialogue and discussion forum · Input directly from users and stakeholders · Can be combined with various publishing and feedback components as well as a portal · Dialogue creates ideas and innovation · Common platform, forum and resource Disadvantages: · Use and feedback is not guaranteed and can be difficult to encourage a constructive dialogue · Alternate channel · Added value unknown
Social publication	An online service or platform that facilitates sharing, publication, changes, folksonomies, user creation and mash-up of content. Content may be in the form of video, images, text, etc. Examples: YouTube, Flicker, SlideShare, RSS feeds and Twitter	Advantages: · Active update of user and stakeholder · Helps to maintain interest · Gives the user a "share" in the content and how it is used · Alternative tools for mediation and alternative to text - web accessibility · Compliment a platform with audio, pictures and text · Give users a choice of medium · Can be used on different networks and collaborative platforms and a portal Disadvantages: · Potential information overload · The value of user-generated content can have large fluctuations · Copyrights not always respected · Can be heavy/time-consuming material upload/access

The internet is used in a number of ways. such as a means for publishing and sharing government/public sector information, as a forum for evaluation and expression of opinion, for furthering transparency by providing easily accessible information and facts of government activities on websites. However it can do more than simply provide passively information. In engaging citizens in joining the process of government it can also act as a means of monitoring and voting on particular projects/issues for citizens, as a means of facilitating participation in decision-making and administrative processes, facilitating overall efficiency in otherwise complex and slow-going processes through active interrelationship between public sector actors and citizens, none-governmental organisations (NGO's) business etc, and be instrumental in providing solutions to whatever problem a project is aiming to tackle. Various models mapping the engagement process exist. The European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) have in connection with the European Public Sector Awards (EPSA) 2011 mapped the "involvement staircase" based on the experience of government organisations from across Europe.

Figure 1: The involvement staircase (Source: Tore C. Malterud, European Public Service Awards, 2011, adapted Morten Meyerhoff Nielsen, 2012)

In figure 2 below, Meyerhoff Nielsen have adapted adapt Anthony Williams model in relation to the various participatory and user-involving tools outlined in table 1 above.

Figure 2: Tool for user-involvement and knowledge, understanding and value creation (Source: Anthony Williams, unknown, adapted Morten Meyerhoff Nielsen, 2010)

Populating the Williams model according to the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional and Web 2.0 tools outlined in table 1 and 2 it becomes clear that that ideas are best realised through dialogue, in-depth experience and knowledge, workshops and focus groups. More traditional tools seem to be the most appropriate and generate the most value in relation to innovative service design. That said Web 2.0 collaboration platforms are ideal for collecting and presenting the output generated by traditional tools. In addition Web 2.0 collaboration platforms can facilitate further brainstorming and promoting new ideas generated elsewhere. A similar exercise could be done for the EPSA involvement staircase with similar results.

Project development and implementation methodology use

The concept of Opening up the Public Sector through Collaborative Governance is to shift the ownership of decisions and processes from governmental bodies to individuals or collective groups of private stakeholders in collaboration. In theory it does not change the responsibility of the decision makers, but only the level of openness during processes.

As such it does not change the traditional balance of power, but secures acceptance, ownership and quality. As outlined in table 2 various participatory tools can be used to strengthen the link to democracy in an environment in which society has become more and more complex. At the same time the border line between private and public sector has weakened and the population has become more and more demanding both in "value for money" terms and to when it comes to quality of the services. For the public sector an opening-up can be seen as a challenge and an unnecessary interference in the processes, but on the other hand ownership and acceptance can avoid back lashes.

Lessons learned and conclusions

The public sectors use of media has changed remarkable during the last 10-20 years, both related to delivering information on rights and obligations and also in an active communication through what is often referred to as Web2.0 (i.e. professional and social media).

As outlined in the above sections, Web2.0 and internet based technologies has truly been a key breakthrough, presenting a pivotal instrument in open governance, which as an easy and effective means of sharing information helps greatly in beginning to restore trust and integrity in government, as space is made for more democratic input on behalf of citizens. Through the use of the internet, authorities can make use of the availability, interoperability and speed of online applications to simplify procedures and make them more efficient. Similarly by creating channels that can be accessed by citizens and businesses government can facilitate the involvement of civil society and other stakeholder in governance thus opening up decision making processes, increase transparency and facilitate democracy.

In establishing open governance, it is not only important to share information for citizens to have oversight but to also allow civil society to contribute by opening the project to public scrutiny, which is done easily through these new forms of information communication technology.

Fostering Structured Dialogue with Civil Society Organisations in Croatia

Case of the Council for Civil Society Development

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Abstract

The paper deals with innovations related to the structuring of a continued dialogue between Government and civil society in Croatia. Since its establishment in 2002, the Council for Civil Society Development has gradually developed into the most important institutional mechanism for civil dialogue. The aim has been to actively engage the wider civil society into the shaping of public policies in Croatia. The innovation consists in the procedure of electing representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) as members of the Council, out of more than 45 000 associations in Croatia. Given the difficulties most governments face when trying to set criteria for identifying and nominating CSOs in various advisory bodies, working groups and similar consultation mechanisms, the procedure for the election of CSO members of the Council is an example of good practice, with the potential for replication in other countries.

Project background

The Republic of Croatia was one of the first countries in Central and Southeast Europe to adopt a systematic approach to the creation of an enabling institutional and legal framework for structured civil dialogue and overall support to the development of civil society.

The turning point took place at the end of the 1990s, with growing awareness of the importance of civil society development as a factor of pluralism and in the development of democracy in Croatia. Since then, it has been clear that the issue of democratic consolidation is not simply a question of political parties, electoral legislation, capital ownership, shares and stock markets. In fact a successful democracy encompasses the building of a strong civil society – i.e. citizens and non-governmental stakeholders organised and active in a broad spectrum of special and group interests.

Since the end of the 1990s, the three-pillar institutional framework, have gradually been built with the aim of developing a structured process of co-operation between the state administrative bodies and civil society organisations in order to shape new public policies, and create conditions for sustainable development of civil society in Croatia. This framework is based on the joint work of the Government Office for Cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (founded in 1998), the Council for Civil Society Development (set up in 2002) and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development (established in 2003) with the purpose of strengthening the role of Croatian civil society organisations as autonomous, competent and active agents of the economic, social and political development within the country.

The three-pillar institutional framework has contributed to civil society capacity building and has enabled civil society organisations to grow into important catalysts of democratisation, good governance, economic growth and employment. The three-pillar framework has evolved gradually in the course of the last 15 years – in line with the continued re-assessment of the actual needs to be met and outstanding issues to be resolved on the path towards creating and enabling a favourable environment for the development of civil society in Croatia.

The establishment of the Council for Civil Society Development, as the key institution for civil dialogue in Croatia, was based on the need to provide a legitimate platform for regular government – civil society interaction in shaping new public policies. The legitimacy of CSO members of the Council was only achievable by allowing CSOs themselves to elect the members of that advisory body of the Government. By enabling CSOs first to nominate and then vote for their candidates strengthened the position of the elected CSOs representatives in the Council. In addition, the possibility to engage in regular policy dialogue with CSO representatives from 12 different sectors of activities, as well as with representatives of other parts of organised civil society (trade unions, employers and foundations) is highly valued by the Government.

The work of the Council is complemented by the activities of the Economic and Social Council – Croatias highest body for tripartite social dialogue – and by the more than 100 advisory cross-sector bodies (committees, standing working groups, etc.) involving more than 800 representatives of various organised interests in public policy making in various sectors. In addition, the parliamentary working committees comprise more than 100 representatives of interest groups, selected on the basis of public call, serving of permanent committee members, and having therefore regular access to Parliament decision-makers.

Objectives of the Council

The main objectives of the Council for Civil Society Development are to improve the existing legal, financial and institutional conditions for sustainable development of the civil society in Croatia and to strengthen the role of civil society organisations as active participants of the national policy-making processes.

The work of the Council is based on the notion of openness and inclusion as drivers towards a more efficient and transparent public administration. Creating an open space for cross-sector cooperation, dialogue and consultation, capacity building on different issues such as inclusive and participatory public policy development, monitoring and evaluating the overall State funding of public benefit programmes and projects run by civil society entities, as well as supporting volunteering and active citizenship are some of the main goals and tasks of the Council for Civil Society Development, supported by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development.

The Council activities respond to the actual problems which Croatian administrations daily face vis-á-vis structuring the communication with a variety of civil society actors, and increasing the transparency of its work and decisions. By regular exposure to the constructive opinion and assessment of their work by external stakeholders, government bodies now tend to introduce new practices much faster than was previously the case. Through the collaboration of the Council and Government Office, a wide range of education activities are made available to civil servants on the national and local levels. The objective is to assist them in improving their consultation practices, open up more to the interested public and perform their tasks in a more transparent and democratic way. The structured dialogue with civil society within an advisory body is only one of the possible forms of collaborative governance; the Council also aims to promote other mechanisms of information, consultation, involvement and partnership with the interested public in shaping new public policies. Compared to alternatives for collaborative governance through IT enabled governance (or eGovernance) and participation tools (including eParticipation tools), occasional public hearings or similar ad hoc meetings, etc., the regular structured dialogue between Government bodies and CSOs from all sectors of activities has the potential to transform the culture of work of public bodies.
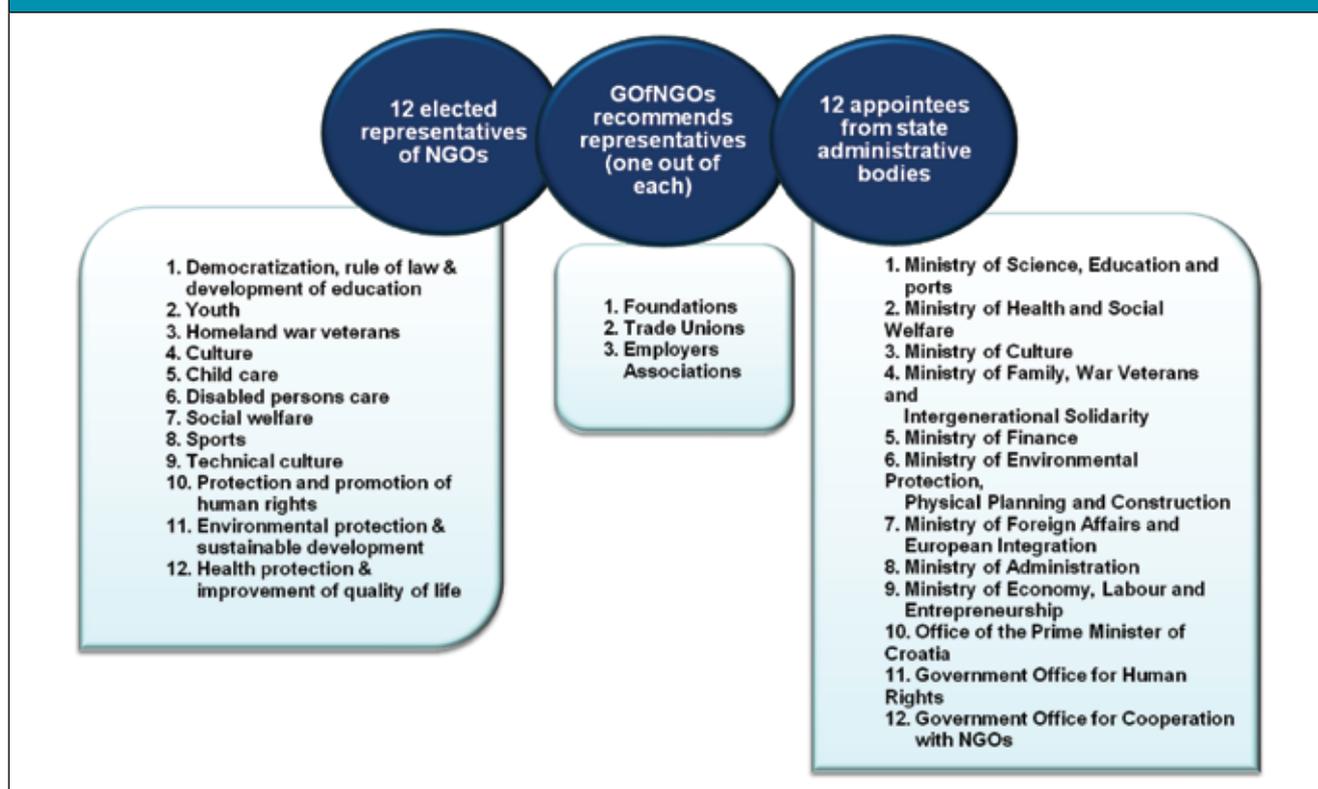
Enabling civil society organisations to elect their members in the Council

As an advisory body of the Government, the Council provides a forum for direct and formalized dialogue between government bodies and wider civil society (citizens associations, employers, trade unions and foundations). It is composed of 27 members (see figure 1):

- 12 representatives of government bodies'
- 12 representatives of NGOs/citizens associations (elected by the NGOs themselves through a public, transparent election procedure)
- 1 representative of trade unions (nominated by the coordination of trade union federations)
- 1 representative of employers' associations (nominated by the Croatian Union of Employers)
- 1 representative of foundations.

The Council work with a three year mandate and currently in its fourth assembly. It usually meets once a month and operates through three Standing Working Groups, with administrative and expert support provided by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs.

Figure 1: Composition of the Council for Civil Society Development

Members of the Council representing civil society organisations are elected by CSOs themselves through a transparent and democratic procedure on the basis of a public call for nominations and public call for voting for eligible candidates – which is a unique and innovative practice in this part of Europe. The participation of hundreds of CSOs in electing the Council members makes it a legitimate body in which the exchange of opinions, know-how and experience between the representatives of different sectors takes place.

The two-stage procedure of electing Council members begins with a public call for nominations published in all media and the website of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs. NGOs nominate candidates solely for the area in which they operate, taking into account that every NGO or a formal network or association of NGOs can nominate only one candidate as a member and replacement member of the Council. Nominations are sent by post using a standard nomination form with a set of required supporting documents. The expert commission appointed by the Council checks the eligibility of candidates and establishes the list of candidates with valid nominations published on the Internet. After that, a public call for voting for eligible candidates is published on the Office website and NGOs vote for eligible candidates by submitting a standard voting form available on the Internet by regular post, respecting the principle that one organisation can vote only once. Finally, the expert Commission (nominated by the previous Council) proceeds to count the votes, and the candidates with the largest number of votes are proposed to be appointed members and replacement members of the Council by the Act of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. For the purpose of ensuring transparency, detailed information on all valid and invalid votes by candidates is available on the Internet. In addition, all organizations are able to access all supporting documentation and check the validity of votes sent by post, which contributes to the transparency of the process.

At the last election for the Council, in 2010, 787 NGOs sent their voting ballots for the candidates for Council members (and replacement members) in different sectors. It proved of a great concern and interest who represents the civil society to the government and what kind of expertise will be added to this advisory body of the Croatian Government.

The innovation in Council's work consists in the procedure of electing CSO members of the Council, out of more than 45 000 associations in Croatia. Given the difficulties most governments face when trying to set criteria for identifying and nominating CSOs in various advisory bodies, working groups and similar consultation mechanisms, the procedure for the election of CSO members of the Council for Civil Society Development is a proven model, with the potential for replication in other countries.

Overview of the Council work and achievements

Since the establishment of the Council, during the last ten years and its four mandate periods, the Council met more than 60 times in regular sessions, but also initiated approximately the same number of events focused on promoting civil dialogue in Croatia. The Council activities, jointly with the Office for Cooperation with NGOs and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, led to some positive results, including the adoption of policy initiatives such as:

- National Strategy for Civil Society Development and the related Operational Implementation Plan[16], which saw the cooperation of over 60 civil society organisations, government bodies, local authorities, universities and businesses;
- Code of Good Practice, Standards and Benchmarks for the Allocation of Grants[17]to NGOs –which regulates the basic standards and principles of practice in state administrative bodies and the office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in the procedure of allocating grants from the state budget funds to organisations for the implementation of their programmes and projects of special interest for the general/public good in the Republic of Croatia. All State bodies act according to the provisions of this Code, so that available resources are used efficiently in society and state budget funds, distributed rationally and transparently to organisations for the implementation of public-benefit projects and programmes. The Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs is responsible for collecting and analysing the CSO finance reports – detailed report are published annually[18]. All reports

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16 http://www.uzuvrh.hr/stranica.aspx?pageID=202 or for an English version http://www.uzuvrh.hr/userfiles/file/Nacionalna_Strategija_ENG.pdf

17 http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2007_02_16_657.html or for an English version http://www.uzuvrh.hr/UserFiles/Code%20 of%20good%20practice_SG-MDx3.pdf

18 http://www.uzuvrh.hr/userfiles/file/Financijsko%20izvjesce%202008.pdf , http://www.uzuvrh.hr/userfiles/file/Izvjesce%202009%20 lowres.pdf , and http://www.uzuvrh.hr/userfiles/file/uzuvrh_-_izvjesce_o_financiranju_projekata_u_2010%20_godini1.pdf

are available from online where all publicly accessible data on financed projects and programmes are available. The online database contains reports from 2004 onwards. The Government office is also responsible for continuous education of civil servants at national, regional and local level in terms of the implementation of the Codes good practices. In this regard the Office and National foundation have developed a Handbook for the implementation of the Code with detailed explanation of the procedure and all necessary templates[19].

- Code of Practice on consultation with the interested public in adopting new laws, other regulations and acts[20]. The Code establishes general principles, standards and measures for conducting consultations with the interested public, in the procedures of enacting laws and adopting other regulations and acts of state bodies which regulate matters and take positions of interest for public benefit (protection and promotion of human rights, public services, the justice system, environmental protection, etc.) In order to include the consultation standards into practice, the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Code[21] has been developed by Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs in order to ensure the harmonized application of the Code in central administration bodies and in the Government offices where *consultation coordinators* are appointed. The Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs has also developed a training programme for consultation coordinators. This training programme helps ensure that consultation coordinators are up-to-date on the modalities of consultation. Similarly regular monthly coordination meetings are held. As a result of these efforts state government bodies have developed a special website for consultation containing legal drafts and public consultations, thus improving the availability of such material and information.

- Furthermore, it has contributed to the sustainability of public financing of civil society organisations, by introducing a legal obligation to distribute 50% of all lottery revenues to civil society organisations. The Government Regulation on the criteria for establishing beneficiaries and the manner of distribution of a part of the lottery revenue is re-adopted annually. In practice this mean that the precise distribution of lottery revenue is adjusted annually. The annual reports on financing the CSOs prepared by Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs contain a detailed review of financial and non-financial support to CSOs from the Government of the Republic of Croatia, Government offices, state administrative bodies and other public institutions awarding financial support from the State budget as well as lottery revenues. The grants awarded are analysed in accordance with the general and specific area of work, duration, implementation status, beneficiaries and activity type of the funded projects and programmes. The Council regularly discusses the report. These discussions take place prior to their submission to the the Government in order to formulaterecommendations for enhancing the system for funding programmes and projects of civil society from the State budget and other public sources.

Apart from the policy documents and legislative work done in the area of civil society itself, the Council had the opportunity to discuss and react to many more different legislative activities as a legal and legitimate stakeholder representative of civil society. The presence of Council members in different public forums, their opinion being asked and respected and their election being fruit of a transparent and democratic procedure made an impact on the way the public administration works in the field of cooperation with civil society. It is spreading to other fields of the public sector and creating a common space for institutions and NGOs to discuss and tackle issues of importance to the future of their respective sectors.

The members of the Council have the obligation to maintain regular communication with the NGOs in their area of work and have sector meetings at least two times a year, depending on the approved funding for such activities. The purpose of this practice is to strengthen the accountability and transparency of work of Council members, but also to contribute to a regular exchange of information, networking and transfer of know-how among civil society organisations.

The Council also establishes constant or temporary working groups. According to the Council Rules of Procedure, various working groups can be set up in order to enable more detailed discussion on important policies and to draw from the expertise of other institutions and stakeholders.

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19 http://www.uzuvrh.hr/userfiles/file/prirucnik_final.pdf
20 http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2009_11_140_3402.html or for an English version http://www.uzuvrh.hr/userfiles/file/code%20of%20practice%20on%20consultation-croatia_final.pdf
21 http://www.uzuvrh.hr/userfiles/file/Smjernice_PDF.pdf

The formal administrative support to the Council is provided by the Office for the Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in particular by the Department for Strategic Planning, Programming and Informing which administers the Council's budget line, its logistics and all administrative tasks. The Department employs five people that assist the work of the Council, among other tasks, preparing its agendas, reports, calls, invites and the financial costs of the members of the Council.

Lessons learned and conclusions

The activities of the Council greatly contribute to the promotion of the concept of open, collaborative governance and transparency across the Croatian public administration. It does so by introducing a new dynamic into the policy-making processes in Croatia, contributing to the quality of debates and diversification of perspectives and opinions on key strategic development issues in the country. The Council has not only produced quantifiable results that can be expressed in numbers, but has also improved the atmosphere and communication between the Government and its bodies and civil society organisations as it raised the cross-sector collaboration to a higher level, allowing the principles of openness, transparency, participation and accountability to become increasingly accepted across the public sector in Croatia.

Finally, The Council has proven to be a sustainable project, implemented by both the Government and the civil society sector since 2002 and, as such, continues to operate and contribute to civil society development. Although the Council has been recognised as an important mechanism with great potential for replication in other countries, it should be noted that this, or similar instruments for strengthening structured civil dialogue, should be considered as only one of many possible methods of building open and inclusive policy making, and certainly not a substitute for a lack of genuine interaction with diverse civil society, as an integral part of the everyday work of all public administration bodies. Continuous efforts are needed in building the capacities of public servants to implement new ways and methods for improving dialogue with citizens and civil society organisations, not only at national but also at local levels.

ITDL – IT-supported procedure for drafting legislation in Slovenia

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Abstract

The preparation and final formation of regulation is a process, in which the ministries, the public, government offices, the government and the national assembly are actively involved. Parts of this process were already supported by some previously developed software tools. The *IT-supported procedure for drafting legislation (ITDL)* initiative focused on the various aspects of the legislative process to ensure the functioning of various software platforms and the use of a full range of related software products. The result of the project is a system which allows coverage of all the essential steps in the process of adopting a legal act, operating uniformly in all spheres of competence, which are involved in the process of preparing and adopting legislation. Strong emphasis is also placed on the fostering of the involvement of public contributions in the process of drafting regulation. Linking back-end systems of the ITDL with the web sub-portal eDemocracy allows for easy monitoring of existing legislation and preparation of new legislation in one place, which is of paramount importance to users. Above all, this part is very useful for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the professional sphere of the public, which are in this way able to convey comments and suggestions, thus contributing to better legislation. Also supported in the process is the electronic signing of documents, while the collection of documents and the preparation of all regulation material is centralised.

Project background

The ITDL initiative for an IT-supported procedure for drafting legislation was launched with the objective to regulate the procedure for drafting and adopting legislation in the Republic of Slovenia; it primarily focused on aspects which lacked IT support, or where IT could facilitate increased efficiency and effectiveness in the process, and covered all stages from planning to submitting a piece of draft legislation to the government for consideration. Ministries and government offices used to draft and coordinate regulations with other ministries, the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Legislation and the interested public in line with their own internal organisation of work and document management. With the intention to implement the principle of public participation in the process of drafting regulations, the Access to Public Information Act stipulates that a draft piece of legislation must be published on a website, but in practice some of the ministries failed to strictly observe this provision. By introducing an IT-supported procedure for drafting regulations and by adopting minimum standards for public consultations, the aforementioned principle was fully implemented when the ITDL system became functional, i.e. on the 1 April 2010.

Under previous arrangements, regulations had to be submitted for publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia in written form. Draft regulations, adopted regulations and unofficial consolidated texts were published on different sites – including websites of various ministries, the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, the website of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, the website of the National Assembly, Register of Regulations, etc.. This scattered system led to dissatisfaction and confusion among users and interested parties in the public, private and civil sector. Similarly it often caused undue prolongation of the drafting procedure; moreover, regulations were (too) frequently amended because of the lack of coordination with the interested stakeholders and the public.

The ITDL project delivered a system that addresses the essential steps of the procedure of adopting regulations as well as standardising the operations of all ministries involved in the process of drafting and adopting regulations, thereby facilitating easier and simpler exchange of documents and opinions. The system devotes considerable attention to integrating contributions by the interested public into the content of a regulation. The back-end IT system for drafting regulations is linked to the eDemocracy sub-portal[22], which offers a 'one-stop-shop', enabling easy monitoring of the applicable regulations and regulations in the drafting procedure, which is very important for users. Most importantly, this part is very useful for NGOs as well as the professional and lay public, all of which can promptly make their comments and proposals, and thus contribute towards drafting better regulations.

The ITDL system has ensured that all ministries follow a standardised procedure for drafting regulations in terms of substance and as regards technical features; it also introduced electronic services into the process of drafting legislation, which means that as of 1 April 2010, when the ITDL system was launched, paper is no longer used in drafting regulations.

In the period 2005–2011, approximately € 1,150,000 was spent on the ITDL project – including direct and indirect costs for development, acquisition, implementation, maintenance, human resources etc.

Human resources:
- Ministry of Public Administration (project sponsor and its technical and content leader) – up to four employees.
- Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Legislation (project content leader) – up to three employees.
- SRC, d. o. o. (technical implementation) – up to six employees.

Costs:
- Sponsor and content leader of the project (gross salaries of the employees), approximately € 450,000.
- Technical provider, approximately € 650,000.
- Licence and hardware costs, approximately € 50,000.

The project was financed from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia.

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22 http://e-uprava.gov.si/e-uprava/edemokracija.euprava

Project objectives

The ITDL project pursued the following objectives:

- ▪ to create standardised software support for users at the ministries, government offices and the government, which must be user-friendly, easy to use and must offer automated procedures whenever possible;
- ▪ to provide the public with easy online access to regulations in the drafting procedure and, at the same time, encourage the public to actively participate in all phases of the procedure of adopting legislation.

The main strategies in the implementation were the following:

- ▪ to attain the main objective, i.e. to provide full IT support to all key phases in drafting legislation;
- ▪ to complete the project phases within the stipulated time schedule;
- ▪ to take utmost account of the guidelines for public participation in drafting legislation;
- ▪ to apply modern organisational and technical methods and tools in the implementation of the project;
- ▪ to obtain the best possible ratio between the funds invested and the functionalities produced by the project; to successfully complete the first production phase of the project and to continue the project with a view to increasing the user-friendliness of the software and improving the accessibility of information to the general public;
- ▪ to make new tools, created on the basis of complete technological solutions, available to the legislation drafting process stakeholders who did not participate in the first phase of the project (for example local government authorities);
- ▪ to create products that will increase the satisfaction of users in workplaces where active participation in drafting legislation is required, greater satisfaction of the general public with the transparency of the drafting procedure and the possibility of participating with opinions and proposals, and to provide an ecological solution that will contribute towards reducing paper and fuel consumption.

It was apparent during the planning of the project that the number of concurrent users expected in production would be large; this expectation proved to be correct: The application have approximately 800 active daily users (a relatively high figure compared to Slovenia's population size and user-statistics for other government websites).

One of the project's performance criteria was to ensure the overall stability of the system, which provides support in drafting legislation and is hence of extreme importance. The ITDL system is a linking element that connects a large number of registers, back-end systems and central services. Not a single serious case of inaccessibility of the system was detected during the first year of its production use. The stability of the system is maintained by monitoring systems that are a part of the Central Module (CM), which is designed to inform the technical staff as well as the head of project of errors that could possibly occur. Users can also contact technical help via a designated telephone number and e-mail address.

The main reasons underlying the need for IT support offered by the ITDL system were defined and grouped into three basic sets.

The first set covered the creation of standardised software support for all users at all ministries, government offices and the government. The software had to be user-friendly and easy to use, and the procedures had to be automated and standardised as far as possible.

The second set included the provision of simple online public access to regulations under preparation; in addition, the public was to be further encouraged to communicate and actively participate in all phases of the procedure of adopting regulations.

The third set addressed the streamlining of the process, i.e. enabling faster exchange of documents and materials between users, while simultaneously eliminating multiple entries of the same data, as far as possible.

The above was achieved by learning from similar initiatives abroad, consultation by external stakeholders and ministries and extensive user-testing before launching the system.

While all the above mentioned objectives were attained by the establishment of the system production environment; nevertheless, technological updates are made regularly to the whole system to ensure the continued user-friendliness, efficiency and effectiveness of the platform.

Technology used

The ITDL application is based on Lotus Notes (LN) technology. An individual user does his/her work in a LN application which connects to the Central module when files or statuses have to be interchanged. The Central module is operates on Oracle infrastructure. To ensure full-time communication with the eDemocracy sub-portal, where regulation drafts are published, JAVA technology (JAVA modules) is being used. To successfully convert files from DOC to PDF/A format (a specialized format of PDF that is designed for long-term storage of digital content), an Adlib converter is used.

The beginning of regular production operation of a system can be a significant turning point or a potential obstacle. It represents a psychological tipping point when all participants experience some level of fear and when questions arise as to whether the system is ready, technologically stable, well-tested and, in general, ready to be released to its users and the public, etc.

The complexity of the system, its dependence on a large number of databases, back-end systems, registers, portals etc., make the switch from system test to production operation a very important step. Needs, proposals and ideas related to the regular use of the system can only become apparent through regular use by hundreds of users. These ideas and proposals generate solutions to upgrade basic processes, which the system must support, and also play a very important role in how an average user perceives the system. User comments are collected at all levels from the beginning of the production use of the system; also introduced are regular modular upgrades, which are scheduled in intervals that enable users to access proposed upgrades in a reasonable time, while not forcing them to work in a system undergoing continuous and unexpected upgrading and changes.

Another important obstacle to be tackled was the users' fear of working with the ITDL system. Here, regular training of those who use the system has been of vital importance. Information for use is essential but not sufficient for normal work. Users are better able to comprehend the meaning and work processes supported by the ITDL applications if they can share experiences with other users and test the system in a test environment and during training sessions. Under-trained users give rise to two potential risks: the first is the 'innovativeness' of such users who use the application incorrectly and thus 'ensure' that data is entered inconsistently and processes are conducted in a wrong way; the second and even greater risk is the aversion and fear of users towards a system not familiar to them, which could significantly diminish the added value of the entire project. Regular training has ensured that these risks are kept to a minimum or even eliminated.

Project development and implementation methodology usage

The ITDL project is a result of co-operation between the Ministry of Public Administration, which acted as a technical and content leader of the project, and the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Legislation, which acted as a content leader. SRC d.o.o. is the project's external contractor. Ministries, government offices and the Secretariat-General of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia were invited to submit user proposals and comments during the planning phase of the project; on 19 November 2009, the government adopted a decision approving mandatory use of the ITDL system in the drafting of legislation, and setting 1 April 2010 as its production operation start.

The project stakeholders were as follows:

- the Ministry of Public Administration as the project sponsor and its technical and content leader;
- the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Legislation as the project content leader;
- SRC d. o. o. as the main contractor;
- all Slovenian ministries, government offices and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

Lessons learned and conclusions

The ITDL system represents an important technological and organisational step forward in the functioning of the state administration. It brings about a simplification and standardisation of the work of every user in the process of drafting legislation. In addition, the central storage of documents ensures greater transparency and allows for an analytical review of the drafting procedure, which provides an excellent basis for potential further

improvements of the procedure. From the viewpoint of the citizens, the observance of public opinion is an essential element and the public's actual participation in the regulation drafting procedures can influence the content of legislation.

After two years of the ITDL project's operation, approximately half of all regulations being drafted or already adopted are accessible on the eDemocracy sub-portal. While the percentage of accessible documents is satisfactory, the aim of the Resolution on Regulatory Activities and the ITDL initiative itself is to ensure the accessibility of the highest possible number of regulations, which enables the more active participation of professional and lay public in their drafting. Furthermore, one of the aims is to establish the eDemocracy sub-portal as a 'one-stop-shop' providing all information of a public nature on regulatory activities to the public. The ITDL system is the only permitted application on which the procedure for drafting legislation can run and which also enables online publication of regulations in the drafting procedure; consequently, the publication of regulations on the eDemocracy sub-portal prevents unnecessary duplication of regulation publication on other websites.

To date 2,097 regulations have been entered into the ITDL system between 1 April 2010 and 1 December 2012: 1,100 rules, 706 decrees and 291 acts. In the same period, the eDemocracy sub-portal published 1,045 regulations: 626 rules, 275 decrees and 144 acts.

On the basis of comments and proposals submitted by the ITDL system users at ministries and government offices and in line with experience gained in the system development process, the leader of the ITDL project prepares sets of application upgrades on a regular basis with a view to simplifying users' work, and also to achieving the common objective of providing the most user-friendly and efficient application. The ITDL initiative has been a success, precisely because it standardised and technically supported the process of drafting legislation, while enabling online publication of regulations in the drafting procedure, thus making them accessible to the public. The success of the ITDL system is further supported by the fact that the system has not encountered a single technical problem that would hinder users' work. Overall the ITDL has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire legislative drafting process.

Round Table Meeting in the Ministry of Culture of Montenegro in Cetinje

Participants at the conference

Participants at the conference

Client orientated public administration:
Efficient and effective service delivery through ICT

This section highlights a number of examples of ICT enabled service delivery initiatives in Europe.

eMUNICIPALITY OF BAR
Technology use for more efficient and effective service provision
Sanja Stanišić

DEVELOPING A CLIENT-ORIENTATED PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
The case of the Republic of Macedonia
Ivo Ivanovski

MYPAGE – PROACTIVE, PERSONAL AND MOBILE
Joint development model for efficient and effective service delivery channel
Morten Meyerhoff Nielsen

Developing a client-oriented public administration

The case of the Republic of Macedonia

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Abstract

One of the highest set priorities of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2010 - 2015 is reform of the public administration. This area has been identified as a key factor for improving the business climate and achieving the benchmarks outlined by the European Union (EU) for potential membership of the Union.

A centralized body leading and coordinating the reforms was created within a separate ministry – the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA).

One of the main aspects of the reforms is to transform the "traditional" bureaucratic administration into a citizen-oriented one, which will be in line with citizens' (clients') needs and requirements.

Projects such as the one-stop-shop system, improving administrative decision making, eServices based on the Interoperability Framework and other projects in the field of eGovernment, open government, eDemocracy tools and reformed front-desk services have to date had a positive impact on developing a client-oriented public administration, efforts already recognised by the European Commission (EC).

The objective of this paper is to give the reader an insight into the current projects of the Ministry in the field of eGovernment, taking into consideration relevant national and international factors of influence.

Project background

The Ministry of Information Society was formed in 2008. In 2011, The Government of the Republic of Macedonia decided to broaden the scope of the Ministry, including the area of public administration reform, and thus the Ministry of Information Society and Administration was formed. The rationale of this decision lies in the fact that previously the Ministry of Information Society was already implementing a eGovernment programme which is one of the most important pillars of a public administration reform programme. Adding competences to the Ministry portfolio allowing it to carrying out public administration reform is in line with the vision of using ICT as the main catalyst of these reforms.

The projects that the Ministry is currently coordinating in this area are identified in the National Strategy for Pubic Administration Reform 2010 – 2015. The main focus of the Strategy is aimed at developing a client-oriented public administration in the Republic of Macedonia, an administration that is in line with the expectations of citizens and an administration which serves to fulfil the needs of its citizens.

Project objectives

The vision stated in the National Strategy of Public Administration Reform 2010-2015 is to achieve a public administration that will be effective, efficient, and accountable, with citizen-oriented services that operate in a transparent and open way, while meeting all values and standards of so-called "good governance" within the "European Administrative Space". Thus the aim is for public administration to become an effective facilitator for the continuous and sustainable social and economic development of the country. To achieve these aims, the most relevant objectives related to developing a client-oriented public administration are:

- improve the quality of administrative services for citizens, with an emphasis on improving and rationalising administrative procedures by their simplification and interconnection with the contemporary IT solutions (including all aspects of eGovernment and eAdministration concepts);
- improve over-the-counter administrative services taking into account citizens' requirements and needs, with an emphasis on a citizen-centred approach;
- involve citizens in the decision-making process by providing participative democracy tools;
- improve transparency and openness of the public administration through improved access to public information.

Developing a client-orientated public administration is a complex matter. The key initiatives related to reforming administrative procedures, outlined in the following sectors, aim to provide the reader with insight into the approach taken..

Reforming administrative procedures

One-stop-shop system

According to the amendments and supplements to the Law on General Administrative Procedure (LGAP), the addressed institution is obliged, in cases where citizens do not possess complete documentation for the required service and/or the exercising of their rights, to complete the request with the missing documents and not to ask the citizens to do it themselves. The one-stop-shop system ensures that citizens can address an institution with a completed request for a service or the exercising of their rights, and an official administering the procedure is obliged to provide data facts "ex officio" from the competent body's official records. The official should act in the same way in a case when official records are kept by another state body that keeps official records, and is obliged to provide required data within three working days of the day of receiving the request.

In accordance with the amendments to the LGAP, institutions are obliged to exchange data and documents for providing front-desk administrative services to citizens. The MISA is a consultant mediator point for ensuring a unified way of exchanging paper and electronic data and documents between institutions.

Silence is approval

The amendments and supplements to the LGAP also determine the steps to be followed by the competent bodies in the decision-making procedure. This is particularly relevant when a citizen request, is not followed

up upon by the competent body within the legally prescribed period – eg within three days as specified in the LGAP (see above). The provisions provide more concrete deadlines for the action of a managerial official or a managerial person from a body, and for the procedure of the State Administrative Inspectorate. These provisions clearly determine the competences of the State Administrative Inspectorate in respect of conducting procedures, making decisions to eliminate irregularities, and ensuring the initiation of a procedure for establishing civil and criminal liability.

Interoperability

The Interoperability framework was established in 2010 in accordance with the new introduced Law on Electronic Management. The framework regulates the electronic exchange of data and documents between state institutions. The defined standards set in this framework are in compliance with the European Interoperability Framework (EIF).

The Interoperability system is an electronically standardized mediator system for the exchange of data and documents between institutions in accordance with the need for administrative services, referring to the introduction of a one-stop-shop system according to the amendments to the LGAP. The system is of great importance in respect of introducing an automatic process for the exchange of data and documents between institutions.

Presently, the Central Registry, Agency for Real Estate Cadastre, Customs Office and the Public Revenue Office are connected through this system – all institutions collect, maintains and own the registries and data most important for the development of an IT and technology enabled client-orientated public administration. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the Action Plan for the expansion of the interoperability system. In this period a connection is being forged between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply, Health Insurance Fund, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund and the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia. The broadening of the scope of the system is based on the conducted comprehensive network analysis of the needs of the institutions for data and documents.

eDocuments

Within the eDocuments project, co-operation between institutions facilitate the continued development of quality one-stop-shop services based on the electronic exchange of data and documents. This will help eliminate the need of citizens and companies to provide documents from other institutions to be attached to the request for completion of the administrative service.

eReminder

MISA started the eReminder project, which is an automatic electronic system for sending notifications to citizens about the realisation of certain administrative services. For an example, if the driving license of a certain citizen is due to expire soon, the system will automatically notify him/her via e-mail or SMS. This not only provides value to the citizen in question, but minimise the cost of doing so incurred by public administrations. This is enabled through the automation and re-use of already existing information and data within the public databases and registries.

Open eServices

MISA started an analysis of the feasibility of implementing an "open eServices" project. This project is based on public–private partnership, a business model which ensures that companies can implement electronic services and than receive a percentage of the price that the citizen pays for the service. The purpose of the initiative is to speed up the introduction, quality and number of electronic services to citizens and companies, without having any significant impact on the budget of the country. The project is currently on the concept stage and, depending on the concluding analysis the Government will decide whether it is feasible to continue with this concept.

Open data

MISA started the "Open data" project, which enables public data kept in institutions to be published in standardized "raw" electronic form, so that any stakeholder can use them for developing various electronic services. The project is based on the concept of data.gov and data.gov.uk, which was started by the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

MISA have already identified a core set of data which will be published on future open data portal. The data can be re-used by any interested party to develop electronic services, e.g. mobile applications for Android or iPhone etc.

eForms

Within the eForms project 22 applications have been designed for seven institutions, through which citizens can electronically submit requests for certain services. The selection of, and decision on, which forms will be moved to eService, was influenced by the 20 eGovernment services defined as benchmarks by the European Commission and as well by the current capacities of the institutions.

The forms have been designed to mimic the look-and-feel of the physical form and the design of the website of the institutions on which the forms were published.

The eForms were developed in the period of 2010 and were published at the beginning of 2011.

Electronic payment of administrative fees

The citizens of the Republic of Macedonia since 2009 have been able to pay administrative fees for services offered by the state administration bodies by SMS. A court fee payment is also being implemented in the middle of 2012.

An administrative fee payment system via the internet has been made available as well. It is up to the institutions to integrate their existing and future electronic systems providing electronic administrative services with the payment system, and thus provide a possibility for electronic payment.

eTax for citizens

One of the most important eServices (http://etax.ujp.gov.mk) that was introduced in February 2012, was the electronic service by which all citizens, can submit their tax declarations and pay their taxes electronically, in accordance with the upgrade of the eTax system.

The eTax system for large taxpayers, i.e. legal entities, was introduced in 2006. In 2008, the system was made available to all other companies of medium and small taxpayers. In 2012, the system was upgraded in order to provide the possibility for citizens to file tax declarations and pay their taxes in a complete electronic process.

Involving citizens

Citizens' charter

The main government portal (www.uslugi.gov.mk) is a standardized informative portal through which all citizens and businesses can have quick and simple access to information on services offered by state institutions. The portal was upgraded with a Citizens' Charter instrument, which enhanced the portal with the possibility to assess the offered services using an assessment form.

Every two weeks, MISA delivers to the Government a report – a review of unanswered queries and unpublished services on the www.uslugi.gov.mk portal, as well as quarterly reports on results gained from service assessment forms by users. The institutions are directly obliged on the Government sessions to act on the unanswered queries within a period of five days. Also, the report provides a random selection of answers in order for the Government to have insight on the quality of the answered questions.

Citizens can use the portal www.uslugi.gov.mk to pose questions regarding the services which are offered by the institutions. Since its launch in 2005 until the end of 2011, 13, 176 questions have been posted on the portal, 4, 616 addressed to the Ministry for Education and Science, 1, 773 to the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy and 1, 675 to the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management.

Toll-free number for services

MISA is in charge of the free telephone line 15111, through which any citizen can get information about administrative services provided by state institutions. This line has been conceived as an additional auxiliary tool for supporting information provided by the central portal of the Government.

eDemocracy portal

Introducing of the eDemocracy web portal (www.e-demokratija.mk) is a response to the need to establish a new modern way of public debate. It provides a simpler and more accessible way for citizens to take part in public policy creation with the support of modern information and communication technologies.

The eDemocracy portal, introduced at the beginning of 2012, provides an easily accessible way for citizens of the Republic of Macedonia to give their opinion both on draft and final documents of the Government and be actively involved in the decision-making process.

ENER

The Single National Electronic Registry of regulations (www.ener.gov.mk) is an electronic system that, apart from existing regulations, also contains draft laws of ministries in their preparation stage. The ENER is a functional tool enabling all stakeholders to submit their comments and proposals directly to the competent institutions.

The purpose of this registry is to provide citizens, the business community and all other stakeholders with a tool for involving them in the law-drafting procedures.

Improving administrative front-offices

Scoreboard

The aim of the "scoreboard" is to enable citizens to assess the administration, that is, the counter staff who provide the service. Devices have been installed – "scoreboards" in several pilot institutions, which can be used by citizens to assess a received administrative service by pressing one of three options (satisfied, neutral and dissatisfied). These assessments are gathered in a database that is further to be integrated with the register of public servants and the appraisal methodology of the employees.

The summarised results from the scoring are sent regularly as a report to the respective institutions and the Government. The Government is assessing the reports on the Government sessions, determining which institutions are lacking in the quality of service provided to the citizens. This has an impact on the Directors of the institutions to initiate actions to improve the quality of service provided on the front desks.

Mystery shopping

A "mystery shopping" activity has been conducted in 2011 in most of institutions which provide over-the-counter administrative services. Several "agents" applied for administrative services as regular citizens, and noted the weaknesses in the process. On the basis of their observations, a comprehensive report was developed, summarising the identified weaknesses in the institutions.

Having in mind the indicated problems, a plan of activities was created with a goal of overcoming the identified challenges in the report. This plan is continuously implemented by the institutions involved. MISA prepares a summarised report on implemented activities by the institutions, which is discussed on a regular basis at Government sessions.

MISA will continue to carry out this activity in the future as it proved to be a provider of vital information. The plan is yet to be defined for the future.

No wrong door

"No wrong door" is a serving approach based on the principle that the citizen should receive service no matter what public sector organisation or service request channel approached. The concept has been designed in order to direct people who have certain needs to the right "door".

The "no wrong door" concept is based on a commitment by civil servants to respond to the needs and requirements of citizens directly, i.e. providing a certain service to a person on the spot or indirectly by connecting him/her with a relevant and competent person. In order to ensure implementation of these principles in practice, MISA organised training programmes (based on a train the trainer concept) for human resource units in each state administration body, who will then go on to organise training for employees in their institutions.

Training of front-desk employees

One of the major focal point of the public administration reforms is improving the perception of institutions vis-a-vis their contact with citizens.

In that regard, MISA is continuously organising training for employees in state institutions who are working at the frontdesk and have direct contact with citizens. The training courses are focused on improving citizens service experience when requesting or receiving public sector services. The purpose of the training is to provide front-office staff with the knowledge and skills for fulfilling a minimum level of professional and quality of service, ethical and professional behaviour and a focus on citizens and consistency in service.

Technology used

The eGovernment projects are being implemented in accordance with eGovernment Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2010-2015. The general technical framework of electronic administrative services is defined in the Law on Electronic Management and its bylaws. Institutions should comply with the set standards and the interoperability framework.

Overall, the development of IT solutions is outsourced to private companies, in order to focus more on the organisational changes which need to be introduced.

In terms of the type of software used, there is no limitation – currently institutions implement customised, proprietary, open-source software, etc. The tendency for the future is to migrate to cloud computing, taking into account the economic rationale behind this solution. MISA is already making an analysis of the feasibility of conducting this migration process, and the benefits which this process will provide.

Project development and implementation methodology use

MISA acts as the policy leader for the reforms which are being implemented. It acts as an initiator of the projects, and horizontal coordinator of projects in other institutions, in accordance with the strategic guidelines. It is actively supporting and monitoring the projects which are being implemented in the administration.

All these projects are supported by the Government. On a two-weekly basis, MISA provides to the Government's sessions a report on its current activities in the field of the reform of the public administration. Challenges and problems of more significant importance that are faced are solved at the Government sessions, directly obliging the involved institutions to carry out certain activities in order to overcome these challenges.

MISA staff has been trained for PMI (Project Management Institute) project methodology. In accordance with the current process of implementation of ISO 9001:2008 in the Ministry, MISA is planning to integrate this methodology as a referent project methodology in related procedures for project management.

Lessons learned and conclusions

Implementing horizontal projects by involving many other institutions has proved to be a very challenging task. MISA is an institution that was formed with the one goal of making reforms, and other institutions usually perceive the imposed reforms as being of a "forced" nature. In that regard, implementation of some of the projects faces resistance by the administration, especially at a more operational level.

The benefits of implementing an eGovernment programme are absolutely recognised and understood. It is obvious that developing IT solutions in the administration and providing electronic administrative services, is leading to higher efficiency, transparency and accountability of the administration. Yet, in a time of global crisis, one will need more devoted political will to carry out eGovernment projects because of the fact that these projects are the highest budget-consuming activities in the reform.

The projects highlighted in this paper confirm the government's support for transforming the public administration into a more citizen-oriented one. Still, one should also recognise the need for changing citizens' behaviour, since they are less encouraged to demand improved services or to be involved in the decision-making process. In

fact, the scoreboard project and its statistics accessing the work on the front-offices shows proof that citizens are still "afraid" of the imposed "traditional" perception of the "power of the government" – the statistics show that 80% of the citizens pressed the green button meaning they are satisfied with the service provided.

One can surely conclude that these reforms require time to change both the approach of the institutions and the perception of the citizen as a client.

eMunicipality of Bar

Technology use for more efficient and effective service provision

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Abstract

The eMunicipality of Bar is an integrated information system which enables more efficient, responsive and transparent operations of the local administration. It speeds up work processes, makes databases easily accessible and makes file processing and management easier.

The integrated information system implies that the entire file and document processing is automated. Hard copies are stored only in the Citizen's Bureau which operates as a one-stop shop. Various documents produced upon completion of file/document processing (e.g. permits, licenses, notices of rejection or acceptance) are automatically stored in appropriate electronic registers.

Citizens are able to obtain quickly and easily information relating to the status of their requests or documents under processing, while authorized staff can easily oversee the performance of each employee/department, and supervise file/document processing.

The eMunicipality also enables automated management and control of the tax-paying system, public procurements, investments, as well as human resources and finance management. It also includes databases relating to all areas of municipal operations.

Project background

The Municipality of Bar is one of 21 Montenegrin municipalities. It has a favourable geographical position: situated in the southern part of the country, Bar represents a marine gateway to Montenegro and an important economic centre. Tourism is the priority economic sector, since there are excellent resources for development of this industry:- it includes 45 km of Adriatic coast, 9.5 km of which are sandy beaches; 67 km of Lake Skadar's shore, a rich cultural heritage and good sports facilities. Bar has 43 000 inhabitants and it is 4th most populated municipality in Montenegro. However, over the summer tourist season the population more than doubles.

Due to the number of inhabitants and temporary residents, as well as the number of companies operating in Bar (10% of the total number of companies in Montenegro), the Municipality of Bar has a relatively high number of employees (280) working in six departments: the Agency for Investment and Real Estate, the Economic and Finance Department, Department of Urban Planning, Housing and Environmental Protection, Department for Social and General Affairs, Fire Department and Municipal Police Department.

The municipality, despite being considered one of the most developed in the country and a leader in innovations in terms of the usage of new technologies, has faced the same problems that many other municipalities worldwide have been facing – insufficient efficiency and transparency. Therefore, the intent of the municipal authorities was to create a more efficient administration and business-enabling environment, i.e. to improve delivery of services, provide full transparency of work processes and reduce business barriers by applying state-of-the-art information and communication technologies (ICTs).

In order to achieve these goals the Municipality of Bar simultaneously implemented two projects: a "guillotine review" of regulations and eMunicipality. The guillotine review of regulations is an orderly and transparent process of counting and then rapidly reviewing regulations against clear criteria, and eliminating those that are no longer needed. The goal of this of the process is to reduce business barriers. i.e. create a business enabling environment and stimulate economic growth. As a result of the guillotine review municipal administrative procedures were shortened, simplified and a registry containing all formalities and procedures (including all relevant data such as legal basis, responsible person, deadlines for a certain formality/procedure) was made available to citizens/clients.

Subsequently the eMunicipality project was implemented in two stages. First, throughout 2008 hardware and IT equipment was procured and the IT communication network configured. Second, byy mid-2009 the first version of the new software application was delivered and put in use.

The total value of the project, including both hardware and software component, amounted to circa € 280,000.

At the moment the municipality is the only one in Montenegro to have completely automated its work processes and gathered into one place all the information necessary for smooth operation of the local administration. The Union of Municipalities of Montenegro recognised eMunicipality of Bar in November 2010 as a best practice in the introduction of ICTs in service delivery.

Project objectives

The eMunicipality project was aimed at improving the services and the operations of Bar's local administration. Obviously, the implementation of eGovernment projects at all levels is not a single event, but rather a long-term process of transforming the government to focus on citizens' services.

Therefore, the initial focus was on creating a paperless government and improving the quality of services, efficiency and transparency of work processes. Namely, to simplify document management and processing procedures, increase responsiveness and accountability of the local administration through the usage of ICTs. The goal was also to enable citizens to obtain quickly and easily information relating to the status of their requests or documents under processing.

In addition, it was necessary to enable local government and heads of departments to obtain in a short time full information regarding the status of all documents under processing and activities undertaken towards their completion.

Since there were legacy systems in some of the departments, it was necessary to create an efficient and functional integrated information system which would enable automated management and control of the tax-paying system and tax payers, public procurements, investments, municipal properties, as well as human resource and finance management.

The goal of eMunicipalty was also to create good quality databases relating to all areas of municipal operations, such as: non-governmental organisations (NGOs), cultural and sports organisations and events, the education system, etc.

The application of this integrated information system implies that file and document processing is entirely automated. In the Citizen's Bureau, which operates as a one-stop shop, all documents are scanned and attached to the corresponding files. The same happens with the documents arriving through the web portal. The hard copies are stored in the Citizen's Bureau only, and the processing is entirely automated.
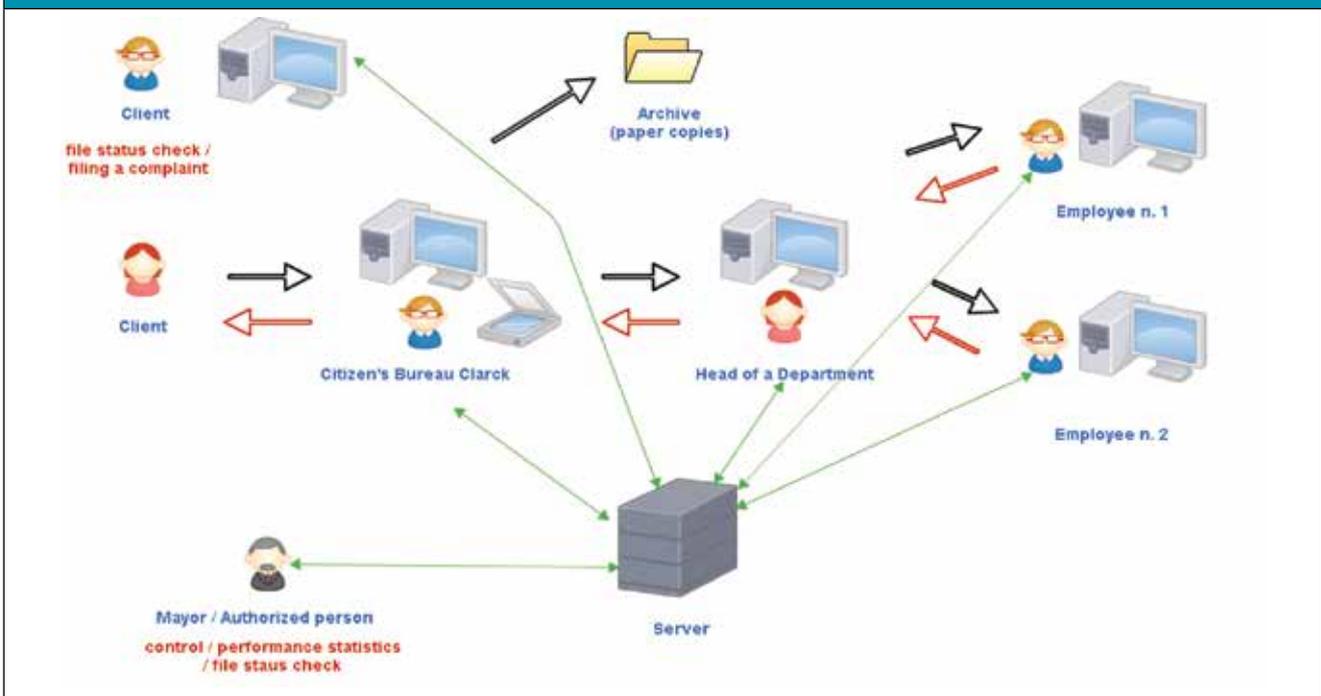
At the very moment a client submits a request and the Citizen's Bureau make a record of the file, attaching all the corresponding documents as scanned copies, the head of the competent department is able to forward the file to his/her employees for processing and follow up the entire procedure. They can check the file status at any time by logging onto the eMunicipality system using their user names and passwords.

The employees can search the files assigned to them using various criteria. They are automatically informed of the arrival of new documents relating to the files they are processing.

Authorised persons can easily check the status of files at a certain point in time and determine the performance of each employee, as well as each department.

The various documents produced upon completion of file processing (e.g. permits, licenses, notices of rejection or acceptance) are automatically stored in the appropriate registers.

Figure 1: Workflow diagram (Source: Municipality of Bar, 2012)

Technology used

The software application was tailor-made to satisfy the specific needs of the Municipality of Bar. It was developed in the C# programming language, under the .NET framework 3.5. Microsoft SQL Server 2005, Enterprise edition, was used as a database management system, while Microsoft Internet Information Server acts as the web server.

16 servers were procured in order to provide smooth operation of the entire integrated information system. Database and web servers were configured in clusters to be able to continue to operate even in the event of some of them having a systems failure.

Uninterrupted power suppliers (UPSs) keep the system in function for a certain period of time in case of a power failure. A generator unit was also procured to serve as an alternative power supply in case of long duration power outage.

All data within the eMunicipality system is copied regularly, and one copy is saved outside the municipal premises so they can be easily restored even in case of a complete systems failure.

There were legacy systems in some of the departments, and the new software application provided full integration, i.e. complete data transfer from legacy systems was enabled in order to secure a functional and efficient fully integrated information system within the municipality.

While the first version of the software application was being tested and corrected, staff training sessions were organised on a "one-to-one" basis – meaning that every employee was trained at his/her working place.

The cost of the development of the software application, which included also staff training, amounted to circa € 170,000.

Project development and implementation methodology use

The eMunicipality project was implemented in two stages:

- ▪ Procurement of computer equipment and configuration of IT infrastructure
- ▪ Software development

Both stages were preceded by preparation of adequate design and project documentation. The implementation of the project was supervised by the municipal working team led by the Chief Administrator.

The software was developed using an agile approach, as it was customized to the needs of Bar Municipality and it was impossible to determine in advance all the requirements of the application. The developers needed to have regular contact with municipal staff as their feedback was of utmost importance. The customised software was chosen for several reasons: Since the Government of Montenegro had signed the license agreement with MicroSoft, we didn't have any additional costs for using Microsoft's database management and internet servers. Besides, at the time of the software application development, the developers had considered Microsoft's servers safer then open source ones.

Lessons learned and conclusions

Project experience has shown that in order to be able to successfully implement this kind of project, decision makers, with power and authority to impose a decision/solution in case of a problem, must be from among members of the municipal working team, besides IT personnel.

As a result of the guillotine review of regulations we had a registry of all municipal administrative procedures/formalities, which contained all the relevant data (e.g. what documents are needed for the issuance of a formality, who is responsible, what is the time limit) prepared before the start of the eMunicipality project. This registry enabled the developers to work more quickly, and it prevented manipulation by staff.

The major problems encountered during the project implementation were insufficient computer literacy and obstructions to the usage of the system which one part of the staff and middle management carried out in order to prevent full transparency of their work and efficiency. While the first one was easy to solve by organising several ECDL (European Computer Driving License) courses for staff, the municipality is still dealing with different kind of resistance to the usage of this information system.

NOTE: The full potential and benefits of the eMunicipality project cannot be realised until the Law on eSignature is fully applied in Montenegro and the municipality is legally allowed to issue electronic documents.

MyPage – Proactive, personal and mobile

Joint development model for efficient and effective service delivery channel

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Abstract

MyPage is the citizen's own personal page and entrance to public administration (local, regional and national) in Denmark. Developed on time and on budget, MyPage is linked to the national citizen portal, borger.dk (BDK).

MyPage allow all Danes to: log in using their digital signature; access personal information from tax and health authorities, the central personal and property registers, etc; access a growing number of relevant, user-centric e-Services for building permits, tax, digitally signed electronic post, patient health journals, etc.

The authorities can offer citizens personalised online access using MyPage free of charge, saving a single authority c. DKK 1.6 million (€ 0.22 million) in acquisition plus DKK 1.6 million (€ 0.22 million) in annual operation costs – on a BDK investment of c. DKK 4 million (€ 0.54 million).

MyPage uses a SharePoint2010 platform, is coded in .NET, complies with WCAG 2.0 AA and legislation governing privacy and security of personal data, and is approved by the Danish Data Protection Agency.
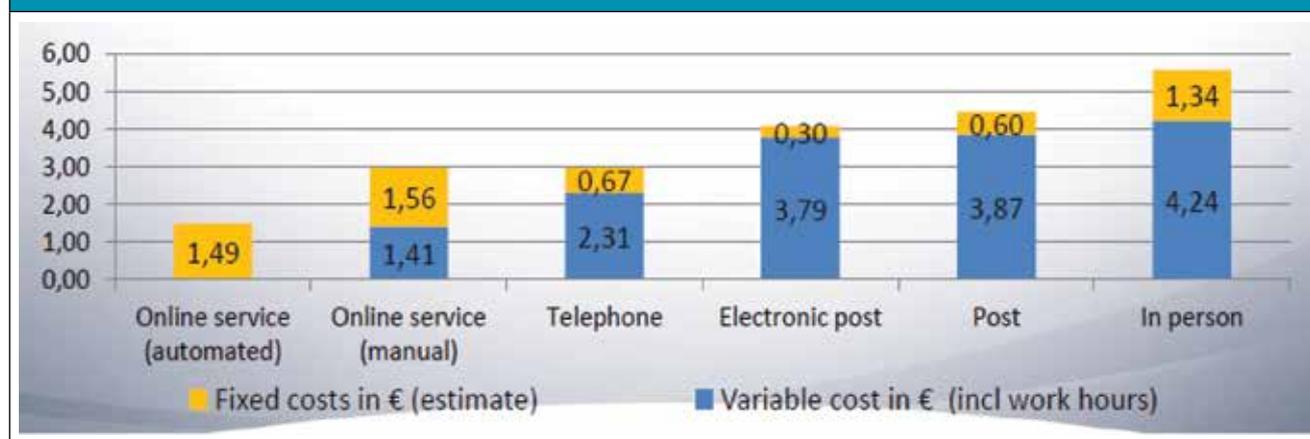
Project background

The merging of several factors sparked the MyPage initiative, particularly the:

- ▪ Potential of channel strategies
- ▪ Need for more personal and citizen-centric presentation and combination of 800+ specific articles (public sector texts), 600+ online services and personal data stored by the public sector on citizens for the more than 1-1.2 million unique monthly BDK visitors
- ▪ Surveys showing that a personal, one-stop shop online was expected by citizens
- ▪ Business case for joint development and re-use of the MyPage infrastructure

Specifically, the economic potential of channels strategies rests on the specific characteristics of various service channels. An analysis commissioned by the Local Government Denmark (the national association of municipality) shows online self-service is between 2 and 3.75 cheaper than other public service delivery channel (in 2011) in Denmark, see figure 1 below for details.

Figure 1: Average service delivery cost, per service channel, for an average municipality in Denmark (Source: KL, 2011)

Studies show that 85% of Danes want to serve themselves online, as long as the solutions are user-friendly. But only 10-15% of the civil service takes place digitally. The discrepancy between supply and demand in the area reveals a large, untapped potential. BDK has therefore teamed up with five municipalities in the MyPage project to create added value for citizens and free up resources in the municipality. The value of moving citizen services requests and delivery on-line is supported by Deloitte's data. The Deloitte analysis of Copenhagen show that written requests represent 27% of all requests in the city, but account for 51% of service delivery costs. Online self-services account for 19% of total service requests, but a mere 1% of municipality service delivery expenditure. On this basis the Copenhagen business case is estimated to amount to DKK 23.5 million (€ 3.2 million) annually from 2012 – if the number of service requests and quality of delivery is retained and citizens use the most appropriate and cost-effective delivery channel.

Project objectives

Released in October 2010, and officially launched in January 2011 together with the Municipality of Copenhagen there are a number benefits for public administrations and citizens which makes MyPage relevant in relation to increased efficiency and effectiveness in public sector service provision.

The MyPage target group can be divided into two principal groups: citizens and authorities.

Authorities

In principle all authorities obliged to provide citizen-related information or services are included in the BDK MyPage target group. These authorities are potential providers of information, data and widgets on MyPage. The current focus is on national and local authorities: national authorities because they provide the personalised data (e.g. ID numbers, property information) and information (e.g. health and tax information) and eServices relevant to all (e.g. change of address and tax solutions); local authorities are essential, as they, by volume,

provide close to 80% of public services in Denmark, the majority of online solutions and are generally citizens' first point of contact. The current economic climate makes municipalities particularly relevant. On the one hand, local authorities face great financial challenges, combined with increasing user demands. On the other hand, municipalities are the single largest group of authorities in Denmark, have the most to gain financially from the free re-use of MyPage and to encourage citizens to use online services.
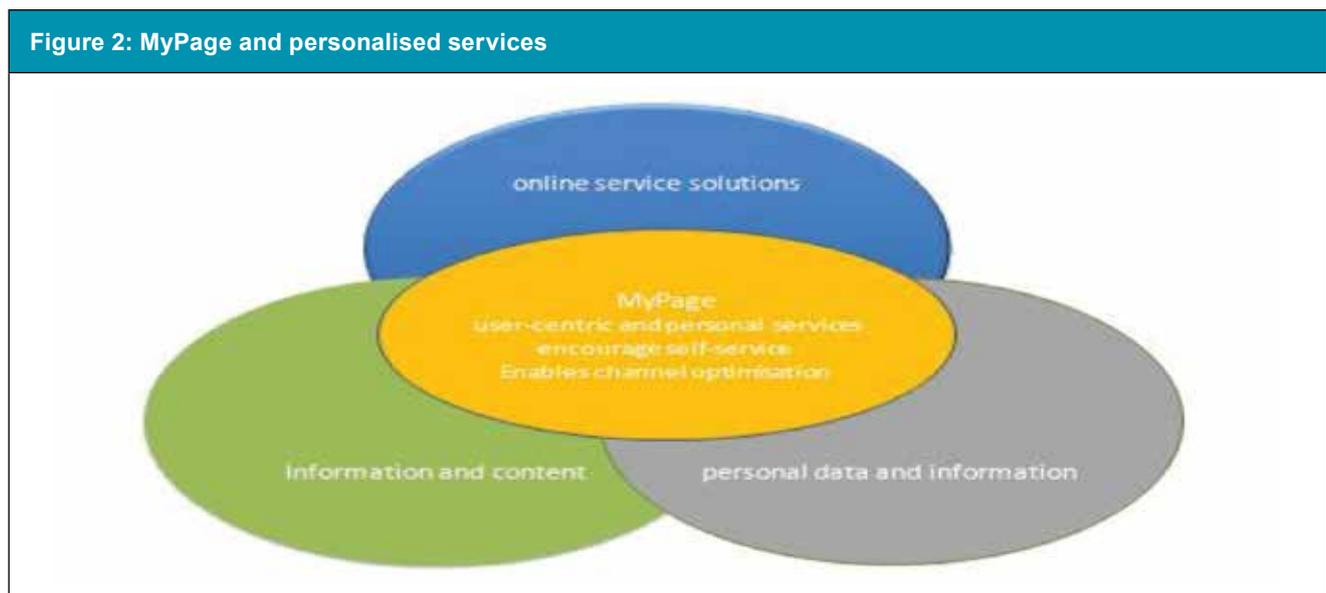
Similarly, all Danes and residents with a Danish ID number aged 18 years or older have a BDK MyPage. Within this group the initial focus is on the c. 1.2 million unique BDK visitors who are a mere click and login away from their personal MyPage. In addition, key sub-groups include:

- The five original municipality partners representing 51% of all municipalities and c. 24% of the population. With a total of 50 municipalities having joined the initiative 51% of all local authorities representing c. 60% of the population are on board;
- The c. 3.4 million Danes with an electronic postbox (eBoks) who have access to it via MyPage.

To reach citizens and encourage take-up, BDKs communication strategy in 2011 will revolve around MyPage. In addition BDK and MyPage are key focal points of existing NITA, MSTI, Government and LDG eGovernment strategies and action plans – including the LDG and the national eGovernment Strategies 2011-2015.

Personal, user-centric and relevant

Inspired by PageFleks, MSN my page, Google IG, norge.no personal page, MyPage is designed to give citizens secure access to private information in a user-centric manner. The objective is to facilitate transparency by giving citizens access to information held by authorities, improve the service experience and encourage peoples' use of government eServices. Personalised services are created by the combination of three components: Relevant information, personal data and services functionality which can be acted upon – as illustrated in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: MyPage and personalised services

Portal services (or widgets) are developed with "personal fragments", fragments which specify the target users e.g. by geographical location, age, gender, employment, whether they have children, a specific interest, a student loan, an outstanding parking ticket, etc. For instance, a health-related portal service can be developed to target women, aged 25-40, living in Copenhagen, with children at a specific school, and who have an outstanding parking fine – an extreme example but one which illustrates the level of personalisation MyPage is capable of.

Widgets developed by national authorities are automatically available to the relevant target groups regardless of their place of residence. Regional and local authorities can develop widgets for specific target groups within their geographical area of responsibility – and at their own pace.

MyPage widgets are redefining service delivery by: Focusing on users and their dependants (e.g. spouse and children); merging information, data and services into a whole, previously not available for the public sector

online. MyPage and the widgets displayed allow for complete online service transactions previously only possible in writing or in person. This is made possible by combining different elements on MyPage, including: Secure access, digital signature and digital post; personal data (e.g. income, tax and property information) needed to complete service transactions, plus the eServices themselves.

Re-use of key infrastructure

MyPage is available for free to all 98 municipalities, 5 regions and all national authorities and agencies. MyPage enjoys the support of the Local Government of Denmark (LGD), Danish Regions and various national ministries. In addition BDK and MyPage are key elements in the policies and initiatives from the National Information Technology and Telecom Agency (NITA) and Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MSTI), Local Government of Denmark (LGD), Danish Regions and the Government. This also includes the LGD and national eGovernment Strategies 2011-2015.

Proven business case

Launched jointly with Copenhagen, MyPage allows the city to eliminate unneeded capital investment of c. DKK 1.6 million (€ 0.22 million) and save c. DKK 3.2 million (€ 0.43 million) in annual operation costs (estimated by consultants Strand & Donslund for Copenhagen) compared to alternative platforms for "personalisation" of content and services.

The MyPage platform project allows authorities to minimise individual infrastructure investments and operation costs. Conservative estimates (based on the Strand & Donslund study, see Results) show that the MyPage-related initial savings for the five municipalities committed to MyPage in 2011 are:

- DKK 8.0 million (€ 1.1 million) in acquisition costs
- DKK 9.6 million (€ 1.32 million) in annual operating and maintenance costs from 2012
- The savings increase as the number of authorities providing the portal services grow! In March 2012 close to 50 of the 98 Danish municipalities have either purchased a starting package of widgets similar to the five original cooperation partners or are in the process of doing so.

In the wider context, MyPage enables authorities to actively encourage citizens' increased self-service online. Personalisation via MyPage is an essential element in the channel strategies of an increasing number of authorities: Copenhagen is actively using MyPage (see figure 3) to:

- Increase online service transactions from 19% of all requests in 2009, to 37% in 2012;
- Save DKK 23.5 million (€ 3.2 million) annually.

Figure 3: Channel optimisation in Copenhagen Municipality 2010-2012 (Source: Copenhagen Municipality, 2010)

Channel optimisation in Copenhagen Municipality 2010 – 2012

Year	2009				2012	
Service entry points	54				33	
Request type	Request no.	Request%	Unit cost	Expenditure%	Requests%	Expenditure%
Written requests	2,544,000	27%	€14.77	51%	12%	33%
In-person requests*	5,382,000	18%	€10.74	24%	15%	29%
Call centre requests	3,344,000	36%	€5.37	24%	36%	35%
Online self-service**	1,800,000	19%	€0.40	1%	37%	3%
Total number of requests	13,070,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* Incl. C. 3.8 million library visits
** Requests on www.kk.dk concerning service offers (incl MyPage). Excl. Library website visits
Source: Copenhagen Municipality & Deloitte, 2009

MyPage is positively received by IT developers who are proactively developing widget interfaces for existing eServices (e.g. DanskScanning's WebLager solution for building permits), with creative and technical support from BDK.

Technology used

No specific installation procedures are required for authorities wishing to use MyPage as a platform to display information, data and eServices. The portal services and widgets must be provided in specific technical formats (see Special technical requirements) and comply with national legislation governing privacy and security of personal data. In addition, the Danish Data Protection Agency requires that a data processing agreement is signed between BDK and the service provider (i.e. an authority or IT developer).

An indirect requirement is that websites and online services from 25 May 2011 must comply with the so-called Cookie Directive – the European Union Directive 2009/136/EC – requiring that users must give informed and prior consent to the placement of cookies on their online devices (PC, mobile, tablet, etc). As part of a NITA taskforce on the topic, BDK will proactively amend the MyPage user consent form to ensure that MyPage and its content comply with the Directive in due time – a real value added to those authorities using MyPage.

For citizens there are no specific installation procedures required for use of BDK's MyPage. A PC, an active internet connection and a valid digital signature are the only requirements for logging on to MyPage.

A PC requires Internet Explorer 7+, Firefox, Safari or Chrome, but otherwise there are no formal requirements for minimum internet bandwidth.

A valid Danish digital signature is required to log on to MyPage. A digital signature can be ordered free of charge by all individuals with a valid Danish ID number and requires no technical installation as it is based on a combination of a login, password and a physical key card with codes. More than 3.6 million digital signatures have been issued (to 5.4 million Danes) with c. 3 million activated for use of both public and private services.

MyPage use a SharePoint2010 platform and is coded in .NET. MyPage complies with WCAG AA web accessibility standards. The Danish Data Protection Agency has approved MyPage as being compliant with national legislation governing privacy and security of personal data.

Authorities and IT developers can choose one of three technical formats, ensuring flexibility vis-à-vis formats and the level of sophistication of the widgets developed. A MyPage widget consists of a header retrieved from BDK's service database, a portal service and an editorial field where BDK inserts relevant links to information and web content. The technical integration formats for MyPage widgets are:

- iFrame widgets must use https, but it is possible to use with or without the public-sector-federated login (i.e. NemLogin). The height of an iFrame solution may not be changed dynamically. That is, if the content of the iFrame exceeds the defined height of the widget, a vertical scrollbar will be included automatically.
- XHTML widgets cannot return data from the supplier's system to the user. They may use http or https but the former requires an installed VPN tunnel between the supplier and BDK's servers. JavaScript is not possible and URLs must not contain headers or body tags.
- PortalAddIn is a .NET Framework 4.0 Assembly (.dll) implementing a specific interface (IPortalAddIn). It has been developed by BDK to allow safe two-way communication and transfer of date between the supplier and BDK's servers.

As outlined in the Installation procedure of the product/project, the technical requirements for citizens are minimal. For full functionality of MyPage and its content Internet Explorer 7+, Firefox, Safari or Chrome, a good internet connection and a valid Danish digital signature are all that is required to log on to MyPage.

Project development and implementation methodology use

The partnership
MyPage is developed as a public-public partnership. The core partners are the Centre for BDK and the municipalities of Copenhagen, Aarhus, Aalborg, Frederiksberg and Næstved.

The BDK model
To fully understand the implementation model used for the MyPage project, it is essential to understand the BDK finance and governance model.

The finance model and budget sources have been outlined previously (see Input/resources). The BDK governance model centres on the portal's cross-organisational mandate and objectives to promote and facilitate digitisation in Denmark. Daily operation and development of BDK is located in the Centre for BDK in the Danish Agency for Digitisation (an agency within the Ministry of Finance). The Steering Committee is active in the strategic development, activities, objectives and success criteria of the portal. Decisions are made through an open and informed dialogue with BDK. The Steering Committee consists of representatives from all levels of the Danish public sector, which includes various ministries and agencies (e.g. Inland Revenue, Ministry of Finance and the Digital Taskforce, Health, Interior), Danish Regions, LGD and municipality representatives.

The joint-MyPage development and partnership model
The model pools resources, knowledge and experience to develop an attractive and flexible platform for all to use – i.e. MyPage. The BDK governance and finance model proves that joint development can lead to cost savings (funded by national, regional and local authorities). The cross-organisational view of the MyPage business case is also innovative:

- Development, operation and maintenance costs are covered by BDK, but financial benefits are reaped by authorities using MyPage, plus improved online user experience
- Authorities avoid investing in delivery platforms, but focus on developing attractive and user-friendly content and solutions
- Authorities rely on BDK for technical and practical expertise, etc.

The MyPage project consists of two elements: the development of MyPage; and coordination with the five municipality partners.

To implement the MyPage project, BDK and its five municipality partners agreed on a joint management and communication structure. This included definition and agreement on: project description and objectives; task descriptions and definitions; decision-making powers and responsibilities; timeframe, and; budget (based on Danish Agency of Digitisation and Ministry of Finance standards). Cooperation agreements between BDK/ Danish Agency of Digitisation and the participating municipalities formalised the MyPage project.

The MyPage project team used a combination of good project management in the development and implementation of the platform including:

- 1/3 PRINCE2: A process-based system focusing on: business justification; a defined organisation structure for the project management team; a product-based planning approach; emphasis on manageable and controllable project stages, but; flexibility to be applied at a level appropriate to the project
- 1/3 SCRUM: An iterative, incremental methodology for project management and agile software development. Key is the empirical approach and acceptance that problems cannot be fully understood or predefined at the start of a project. Focus is to deliver defined tasks on time, on budget and per specification, but allowing for change
- 1/3 BDK/Danish Agency of Digitisation best practice project implementation: a joint project room; visual project plan (literally a full wall with colour-coded cards with key tasks, descriptions, responsibilities and deadlines); continuous dialogue and clarification of queries and outstanding questions, and; weekly review meetings

Other important aspects ensuring timely, and on budget, completion include:

- Work at subcontractor's premises weekly for joint coordination, question, development and implementation
- A test case developed by BDK but continuing informal tests by subcontractor
- A fixed-price contract to minimise budget risks, ensure a realistic time schedule and minimise change requests, and to have manageable project phases and tasks

Lessons learned and conclusions

In addition to an appropriate project management and implementation model (see above section) a number of other lessons are worth highlighting as they facilitated the on-budget and timely completion of the MyPage project including:

- PARTNERS: Continuous dialogue and clarification of queries and outstanding questions and weekly review meetings
- SUBCONTRACTORS: Work at subcontractor's premises at least two days a week for joint coordination, question, development and implementation; continuous dialogue and clarification of queries and outstanding questions; weekly review meetings; a test case developed by BDK but continuing tests carried out informally by the subcontractor
- CONTRACT: Fixed-price contract to minimise budget risks; a realistic time schedule and minimal change requests; division of the project into manageable phases and tasks
- OTHER: Think logically, plan ahead and adjust if necessary, relevant and possible; do not rush and do not get stressed; communicate and inform relevant internal and external parties; have fun!

This publication takes stock of examples of good governance through participatory democracy and client orientated public administration in European, presented at the ReSPA 6th Annual Conference, in Danilovgrad, Montenegro, in May 2012. The publication mirrors the conference objectives and focus. In three sections the publication will highlight project experiences and lessons learned: Good governance: Modernising public administration; Participatory Democracy: Open and collaborative government and Client orientated public administration: Efficient and effective service delivery through ICT.

ReSPA is the international organization established as a joint initiative of the European Union and the Western Balkans Countries. ReSPA organizes and delivers training activities, high level conferences, networking events, mobility schemes, summer schools, study tours and publications, in the pursue of transferring new knowledge and skills as well as facilitating the exchange of experiences both within the region and between the region and the EU Member States in Public Administration Reform and Civil Service in the Western Balkans. ReSPA is located in the municipality of Danilovgrad, 25 km away from Podgorica, the capital City of Montenegro.