

EUROPEAN PUBLIC SECTOR AWARD 2021

Building a Better Europe for Citizens General Report



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EPSA 2021 PUBLICATIONS

General Report

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The European Public Sector Award and Green Public Administration: Challenges and Opportunities for Implementing the Green Deal

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Digitalisation and Engagement: Transparency, Inclusion, Privacy and Security in the Public Sector

Giulietta Marani and Clara Cotroneo

What Can We Learn from the Best Government Innovations by European Countries?

Menno Spaan and Giulietta Marani

No Innovation Without a Crisis?

Menno Spaan



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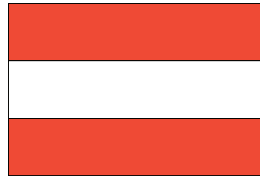
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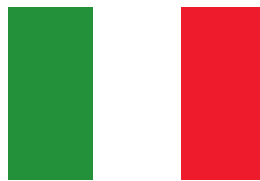
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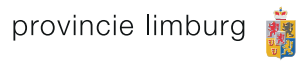
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FOREWORD

Marco Ongaro, Director General EIPA

It is a great pleasure and honour to present to you the report of the 8th edition of the European Public Sector Award. In November 2019, I assumed office as Director-General of EIPA, in the same week, in which the award ceremony of EPSA 2019 was held. Thus, EPSA 2021 is the first edition which I have fully accompanied from the beginning, and I am very proud that EPSA remains one of the flagship projects of EIPA. This report is only the beginning of several activities to increase outreach, to share knowledge, and to help building capacities in public administrations all over Europe.

The theme of EPSA 2021 is “Building a better Europe for citizens”. The relevance of this theme cannot be overstated. The COVID-19 pandemic, which is a social and economic crisis, challenges the way we safeguard public health, how we continue to ensure educating children and young adults, and how we conduct business and in fact our daily life. At the same time, the crisis provides for opportunities to rethink and reform policy making, business and public administration. The crisis pushed important priorities, like digitalization, yet these priorities existed before the crisis, and they will exist beyond it. The goal of EPSA is to be at the forefront of this reform agenda and to facilitate innovation in public service delivery.

EPSA 2021 responds to on-going challenges by awarding innovation in three categories: green, digital and innovative public administration. For the 2021 edition, we received 126 applications from 23 countries. Most applications were submitted for the innovative and digital category (60 and 54 respectively). The green category received 19 applications, a number that is certainly increasing in the years to come. In each categories, we selected winners, and we awarded 30 good practice certificates across categories for solutions improving public service delivery.

EPSA 2021 includes several knowledge-transfer activities. In addition to this report, we will release supplementary publications to engage in-depth with challenges and service delivery in the green, digital

and innovative category. To help building capacities, we will organize together with the European Commission a series of workshops to enhance skills and competences of public sector officials to develop and implement innovative solutions. Together with the OECD, we will organize a high-level conference on the past and future of European public administration to further increase outreach. To share knowledge widely, we are building an online database with applications of EPSA 2021 and previous editions.

The 8th edition of EPSA coincides with the 40th anniversary of EIPA anniversary, which was celebrated with the theme “Next Generation EIPA”. The challenges have changed over the years, but EIPA remains committed more than ever to fulfil its role as centre of expertise for learning and development in the European public sector, together with our partners, the European Commission, the OECD, its Member States and in a broader way the various EU institutions and agencies. With its new thematic focus on current policy priorities, and with new activities of knowledge transfer, a new generation of EPSA is committed to public sectors innovation in times of crisis and recovery, and beyond.

EPSA would not be possible without the support of its partners and I would like to thank the institutional and financial partners of the 2021 edition: the European Commission through DG REFORM and the Technical Support Instrument, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and, last but certainly not least, our local partners, the Province of Limburg and the City of Maastricht.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the EPSA team at EIPA for their work and dedication to ensure the success of this award scheme.

I hope that this report will be a source of inspiration for public administrations across Europe to adapt to current and future challenges, and to improve the delivery of public services.

1. INTRODUCTION

Christoph Klika

The 8th edition of the European Public Sector Award takes place in exceptional circumstances.¹ Early 2020, Europe was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and since then, EU institutions and Member States are grappling with the political, economic and social effects. Responding to the challenge of a cross-border, public health crisis and recovering from the economic consequences has moved to the centre of attention by policy makers and citizens. In response to the crisis, EU institutions have stepped up to coordinate the procurement of vaccines and treatments, and to support Member States in decision making by providing EU-level data and information. New measures and instruments have been proposed to strengthen EU capacities to respond swiftly and effectively to cross-border health threats. Following the negotiations for the next Multi Annual Financial Framework, extra financial resources as part of NEXT GEN have been made available.

While COVID-19 provides for exceptional circumstances, it is nevertheless important to remember that societies are faced with continuing challenges which will outlast the current crisis. To address climate change, the excessive use of natural resources, the loss of biodiversity, social justice, equality and equal opportunities in the digital age, to name but a few, are continuing challenges for policy makers in the EU and in the Member States at all levels of government. These challenges are reflected in the current priorities of the EU, in particular, the European Green Deal and A Europe Fit for the Digital Age. In this context, EPSA 2021 has introduced three award categories linked to key initiatives of the European Commission: green, digital and innovative public administration.

For EPSA 2021, a total of 126 applications were received from public administrations across 23 different European countries and one EU agency. The applications allow a cross-sectional view on current challenges and how administrations responded to these practical solutions. In terms of award categories, 19 projects were submitted in the

Green category, 54 projects in Digital, and 60 in the category of innovative public administration.

The 2021 edition received applications in a variety of areas, in particular, public administration modernization and reform, information society and digitalization, education, health, sustainability, public order and safety as well as justice reform and human rights. The countries with the highest number of applications are Austria, Spain, Greece, Slovenia and Italy.

In addition to the winners in three categories, 30 projects have been awarded good practice certificates, 7 for the green category, 12 for digital and 11 for innovation. In line with the theme of EPSA 2021, the received applications show a high degree of commitment by public administration to the needs of citizens, with a number of projects being based on citizen participation. These projects highlighted the creativity of public administrations at European and national level in addressing the challenges mentioned above. Hence, on top of award nominations and good practice certificates, 2 projects received a special recognition for responding to challenges stemming directly from the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1. Knowledge transfer

One of the ambitions of EPSA is to showcase excellence in public sector innovation, and to be a source of inspiration and new ideas. To this end, EPSA 2021 entails several knowledge transfer activities. These activities shall contribute to a joint European effort in building and enhancing capacities of public administrations to develop and implement innovative projects.

This general report gives an overview of the EPSA 2021 edition providing a discussion of EPSA 2021 in context, statistics and descriptions of projects in all

¹ The first edition of EPSA took place in 2007. Since 2009, EPSA is organised and managed by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA).

three award categories. In three chapters on green, digital and innovative public administration, we start by providing policy context for each category. We then analyse the projects of EPSA 2021 based on a simple classification of public sector innovation.

The first type relates to administrative process. This class includes several types of process innovation, for instance, the development of processes related to research, innovation and self learning, or the inclusion of stakeholders and citizens in the delivery of services. The second type relates to service delivery itself.

In addition to the general report providing an overview of EPSA 2021, several publications will focus on specific topics relevant for the 2021 edition. Three publications deal with the respective award categories whereas one publication reflects on innovation in times of crisis. The following additional reports are being published:

- The European Public Sector Award and Green Public Administration: Challenges and Opportunities for Implementing the Green Deal
Christoph Klika
- Digitization and Engagement; Transparency, Inclusion, Privacy and Security in Public Sector
Giulietta Marani and Clara Cotroneo
- What Can We Learn from the Best Government Innovations by European Countries?
Menno Spaan and Giulietta Marani
- No innovation without a crisis?
Menno Spaan

Following the publication of the specific reports, knowledge transfer activities of EPSA 2021 entail several workshops throughout the first half of 2022. The workshops cover specific topics relevant for public administrations to address current and future challenges, e.g. foresight, green administration, digitalisation or human resource management. The main objective of these workshops is to enhance capacities at all levels of government to address challenges by way of innovation.

In addition to the specific workshops, we will organize a high level conference together with the OECD. The conference will bring together experts and practitioners to discuss how lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic can be transferred to improving public service planning and delivery, and how, in the

future, the public sector can better respond to crises.

To capitalize on the experience gained throughout the 8 editions of EPSA, we will develop a digital database which will contain projects from EPSA 2021 and previous editions. The database shall support capacity building in the long term by providing continuing, free-of-charge access to good practices in the public sector. Hence, the database is integral to the ambition of EPSA to be a source of inspiration and new ideas for public sector innovation.

1.2. Structure of general report

This report is structured as follows.

In the second section, following the introduction, we present the background to the EPSA 2021 edition. First, we elaborate on the policy context by briefly highlighting the main points of the respective EU priorities in each category. We then provide information about the assessment of EPSA 2021 applications before concluding this section with the results.

In the third section, we engage with the applications for EPSA 2021 in more detail by categorizing applications, and by appraising projects based on themes and responses to common challenges.

In the conclusions, we summarise the main points of EPSA 2021.

In the annex, we provide information about the 30 projects having received good practice certificates. First, we present key data by providing general EPSA 2021 statistics. This is followed by separate sections for the three EPSA 2021 categories. In each section, we provide statistics related to the respective category, followed by executive summaries of the respective projects. The executive summaries give readers both an overview of each case and also the contact details of the project leaders and the name of organizations which submitted the application so that contact can easily be established for encouraging mutual sharing of experiences.

Finally, the annex includes a list of all EPSA 2021 applications.

2. EPSA 2021 EDITION

Christoph Klika and Veronica Menegatto

In the context of the current priorities of the EU, EPSA 2021 has introduced three award categories: green, digital and innovative public administration. In this section, we highlighting the main points of the respective EU priorities.

2.1. Policy context of EPSA 2021

Green Public Administration

In December 2019, the European Commission released the communication on the European Green Deal (CITE). The communication “resets the Commission’s commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges” (CITE). The Green Deal is an over-arching policy agenda related to several policy areas: climate change, energy, industrial policy and circular economy, construction, pollution, biodiversity, agriculture and transport. In the annex of the communication, the Commission included a roadmap with key actions for implementing the Green Deal. Accordingly, for each policy area, several strategies, action plans and legislative proposals have been adopted since the release of the Green Deal communication.

In relation to climate change, the main objective is to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030, and to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. In July 2021, the European Commission adopted a set of proposals to this effect (the so-called fit for 55 package). By laying down these objectives, the EU aims to become the world’s first climate-neutral continent. The reduction of emissions is closely linked to several actions in the context of energy policy. In national energy and climate plans, the Member States have to lay down measures on emissions reduction, energy as well as research and innovation to meet the 2030 energy and climate targets.

As regards environmental protection, the Green Deal includes several strategies related to biodiversity, pollution, circular economy and waste management. The circular economy action plan, adopted in March 2020, is one of the main pillars of the Green Deal. The action plan sets out to reform policies along the entire life cycle of products, from design and production to consumption and recycling. The so-

called Farm to Fork strategy requires overhauling the EU’s agricultural policy. By transitioning to sustainable food production, the strategy aims to contribute to objectives and targets related to environmental protection, climate

In addition to legislative proposals in various policy areas, the Green Deal has an important financial dimension. To finance the transition to a green and sustainable economy, around 30% of the EU’s multiannual financial framework and the NextGenerationEU funding instrument have been allocated for green investments. There is a strong connection between the Green Deal and the Recovery and Resilience Facility. To receive funding, Member States must devote substantial investments to achieve climate objectives. Moreover, various funding instruments in the EU’s cohesion policy entail similar requirements. The Just Transition Mechanism aims to alleviate the socio-economic impact of the transition in the most affected regions.

Digital Public Administration

The ambition to make “Europe fit for the digital age” relates to several policy areas: internal market and competition, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity as well as research and developments, vocational educational training and human rights. In February 2020, the Commission released the communication Shaping Europe’s digital future to lay out this ambition. In March 2021, in light of the challenges due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission reiterated this ambition in a second communication. Together with the European Green Deal, the digital agenda is one of the cornerstones of the current policy priorities. It is also vital for recovery from the pandemic. To receive funding from the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Member States must devote substantial investments to achieve objectives related to the digital agenda. Under the headline “Shaping Europe’s digital future”, the Commission pursues the digital agenda in three pillars: technology, economy and society.

The objective of “technology that works for the people” entails the protection of citizens from cyber threats but also investments in digital skills. To facilitate technological foundations of the digital age, investments into broadband and computing

capacities are planned. One of the main ISSUES is Artificial Intelligence.

The “fair and competitive digital economy” shall ensure fair competition in the EU, which includes strengthening the responsibilities of (large) online businesses, while ensuring innovation in the digital economy. It entails access to data while safeguarding data protection.

To pursue an “open, democratic and sustainable society” the digital strategy sets out to combat disinformation online and to provide citizens with more control over their data. The digital strategy is linked to the Green Deal as it aims to reduce emissions by the digital sector and to contribute to the objective of climate neutrality.

Innovative Public Administration

The innovative category of EPSA 2021 links to various initiatives at the international level, in the EU and in the Member States,² Although the EU does not have the competence to adopt legislation geared towards public sector innovation, several initiatives exist which aim foster innovation, support Member States and facilitate cooperation among administrative bodies. The report Powering European Public Sector Innovation, released by the Commission in 2013 in the midst of the recovery from the financial crisis, is a landmark document in this respect.³ The report is based on the premise that the role of the public sector is not only to facilitate social and economic innovation, but to innovate the delivery of public services to better respond to societal challenges. In light of

the exceptional circumstances of the EPSA 2021 edition, this premise is still relevant today. There is, furthermore, a strong link to the green and public administration, given that many innovations aim for sustainability, ‘greening’ and digitalisation.

In the recent Staff Working Document ‘Supporting Public Administrations’, the Commission gives an overview of the various EU support instruments to cope with current and future challenges.⁴ In the document, the Commission calls on all stakeholders to turn innovation into an integral part of public administration. This will require fundamental changes of organisational culture, new skill sets for public officials and citizen involvement. Given the complexity of current and future challenges, efficient, inclusive and effective public service delivery will be crucial to maintain public trust in governments’ abilities to cope with these challenges.

2.2. Assessment and evaluation methodology

The EPSA 2021 good practices, nominees and award winners were identified according to a four-step assessment process. Generally, projects submitted were first checked against the eligibility criteria laid down in the Terms of Reference of the ‘Call for applications’. If these were met, a registration number was allocated to the project and it would be subject to evaluation based on six evaluation criteria.

² The EU cooperates closely with the OECD, for instance, through the Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI).
See: <https://www.oecd-opsi.org/>

³ Powering European Public Sector Innovation: Towards A New Architecture. Report of the Expert Group on Public Sector Innovation. European Commission, Brussels, n.d.
https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/42-public_sector_innovation_-_towards_a_new_architecture.pdf

⁴ Commission Staff Working Document, Supporting Public Administration in EU Member States to Deliver Reforms and Prepare for the Future, Brussels, 29.4.2021, SWD(2021) 101 final.
[https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD\(2021\)101&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD(2021)101&lang=en)

Evaluation criteria

Innovation	i.e. evidence of the novelty of the solution, the degree to which the case shows a leap of creativity in the practice of public administration and demonstrates a different approach which goes beyond what was previously applied and how this results from a learning, innovation and self-improvement culture within the entity and/or adaptation/ evolution of innovative solutions by other entities.
Impact/results	i.e. evidence of realisation of planned objectives and activities by illustration of proven evidence of benefits, visible impact/tangible results (which may be based on demonstrably high levels of achievement/achievement of significant improvements from a low base).
Stakeholder engagement	i.e. evidence of citizen, business and civil society co-operation and/or response to consultation, evidence of intelligent engagement with external and/or internal stakeholders
Relevance	i.e. evidence of the particular needs and constraints of the context, the core needs of target groups and final beneficiaries and how the actions address those needs.
Sustainability	i.e. the case has potential value and lessons which are relevant to other entities because it provides the potential for successful replication in/adaptation to other contexts (e.g. different Member States and levels of government and peers).
Transferability	i.e. the case has potential value and lessons which are relevant to other entities because it provides the potential for successful replication in/adaptation to other contexts (e.g. different Member States and levels of government and peers).

Given the exceptional circumstances of EPSA 2021, the assessment process differed from previous years in that evaluations had to be conducted online. Nevertheless, due to well-established procedures and criteria as well as the expertise of evaluators and jury members, we were able to maintain an evaluation methodology to highest standards of integrity and quality.

Timeline and assessment process

7 April and 26 April 2021: As a first step, two information days were organized to inform prospective applicants about content and organization of EPSA 2021.

26 May 2021: Training for Evaluators by Michael Burnett

28 May 2021: Deadline for applications (extended from 3 May 2021)

1 – 13 June 2021: In the first step of the assessment process, projects within each award category were allocated to each evaluator based on their professional background and sector (a mix of

academia, the practice field and the private sector), nationality (evaluators were not allowed to assess projects from their country of origin or employment) and gender. Each project was assessed on-line, independently and exclusively, by different experts. The evaluators did not know each other, or how the other evaluators had assessed the respective project.

22 -23 June 2021: In the second step, the Consensus Meeting, all evaluators came together to review and discuss the first available provisional ranking based on their individual scorings and possible discrepancies. Furthermore, they collectively decided on the Good Practice Certificate (GPC) winners and on the short-listed projects in each award category for the online validation meetings.

19 July to 13 September 2021: The third step entailed online validation meetings to validate and verify the results and recommendations of the previous two evaluation steps, i.e. to spot check whether the content of the application form of the project corresponded to the 'reality'; to find the answers to the un-answered questions raised by the evaluators, to detect possible inconsistencies and to

gather additional or missing information and data. EIPA representatives did not re(assess) the projects!

11 and 15 October 2021: The fourth and final step consisted of two Jury Meetings, where four high level jurors decided on the nominees and the award winners in each category.

2.3 Results

Green Public Administration

A total of 19 eligible projects from 8 different European countries were submitted to the EPSA 2021 green category (out of 126 total submissions). From these applications 4 nominee candidates (including the category winner) and 7 Good Practice Certificate recipients were identified through the evaluation process. Although the number of green applications compared to other categories is relatively low, these projects highlight the efforts of public administrations at all levels to make the ambitions of the Green Deal a reality.

EPSA 2021 Award Winner

EnerCoach – a digital energy accounting platform for municipalities to monitor energy consumption of public infrastructure	Luxembourg	SIGI - Syndicat Intercommunal de Gestion Informatique
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EPSA 2021 2nd Place Award

Smart infrastructure for smart public administration	Estonia	eu-LISA - European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
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EPSA 2021 3rd Place Award

Processing invasive alien plants into useful products and input material for industry	Slovenia	The City of Ljubljana
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EPSA 2021 Award Nominee

IRec	Portugal	Câmara Municipal de Cascais
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EPSA 2021 Good Practice Certificate

Green Port Initiative	Spain	Autoridad Portuaria de Málaga
Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources in Public School Buildings in the Municipality of Serres	Greece	Municipality of Serres
R&I Mobility Strategy	Austria	Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology
Greening of Budapest Metropolitan Area 6th district Terézváros Municipality	Hungary	Budapest Metro Area 6th Distr. Terézváros Municipality
Renewable Energy from Wastewater – Wastewater Treatment Plants as Local Energy Cells	Austria	Wasserverband Mürzverband
Green Supply Chains	Slovenia	Ljubljana Tourism

Digital Public Administration

A total of 54 eligible projects from 17 different European countries were submitted to the EPSA 2021 digital category (out of 126 total submissions). From these applications 7 nominee candidates (including the category winner) and 8 Good Practice Certificate recipients were identified through the

evaluation process. In addition, one of the projects received special recognition of responding to the COVID -19 crisis. The high number of applications shows that digitalization is at the heart of innovating public administration.

EPSA 2021 Award Winner

Vienna provides space	Austria	City of Vienna Municipal Department 65 - Legal Affairs: Transport and Traffic
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EPSA 2021 2nd Place Award

Justizonline	Austria	Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice
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EPSA 2021 3rd Place Award

Cross-border Fines	Belgium	Justitie (The Federal Public Service Justice)
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EPSA 2021 Award Nominee

Transparency at the service of health	Spain	Junta de Castilla y León (Governing Council of Castile-Leon)
The Electronic Documents Archive	Poland	Head Office of Polish State Archives
rEEYplace: Automatic Processing of Substitute Teacher Needs in Public Schools	Cyprus	Educational Service Commission (ESC)

Special recognition of responding to the COVID -19 crisis

Transparency at the service of health	Spain	Junta de Castilla y León (Governing Council of Castile-Leon)
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EPSA 2021 Good Practice Certificate

Relaunch of FinanzOnline and integration of chatbot "Fred"	Austria	Federal Ministry of Finance
Information-supported decision-making	The Netherlands	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
City Deal Zicht op Ondernijning	The Netherlands	Department of Internal Affairs in co-operation with ICTU
Municipality ASP 2.0 (Further development and nationwide extension of the Municipality ASP system)	Hungary	Ministry of Interior of Hungary
Id.gov.pt	Portugal	AMA – Administrative Modernization Agency
Consultas Covid Extremadura	Spain	Government Delegation in Extremadura
Digital for reconstruction grants	Italy	USRC
All-in 1 HR	Cyprus	Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)

Innovative Public Administration

A total of 60 eligible projects from 18 different European countries were submitted to the EPSA 2021 innovative category (out of 126 total submissions). From these applications 5 nominee candidates (including the category winner) and 11 Good Practice

Certificate recipients were identified through the evaluation process. In addition, one of the projects received special recognition of responding to the COVID -19 crisis.

EPSA 2021 Award Winner

LabX - Experimentation Laboratory for the Public Administration	Portugal	AMA - Administrative Modernization Agency
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EPSA 2021 2nd Place Award

Government Buys Innovation	Belgium	Nido
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EPSA 2021 Award Nominee

At a distance, but close to you	Romania	6 th District General Directorate for Social Care and Child Protection
Innovative Administration In Cyprus Prisons	Cyprus	Cyprus Prisons Department
My City, My Future!	Turkey	Nilufer Municipality

Special recognition of responding to the COVID -19 crisis

At a distance, but close to you	Romania	6 th District General Directorate for Social Care and Child Protection
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EPSA 2021 Good Practice Certificate

The Innovation Laboratory	Latvia	The State Chancellery
U25 – TOGETHER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN VIENNA	Austria	City of Vienna, Municipal Department for Social Welfare, Social and Public Health Law
Human Rights Go Local Vienna, the City of Human Rights	Austria	Vienna City Administration
Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence adoption	Belgium	Flanders Investment & Trade
Stay home – the Municipality of Serres stays at work for you	Greece	Municipality of Serres
Chivalry in Ljubljana: assisting citizens and improving their quality of life	Slovenia	The City of Ljubljana
Raising children's awareness of sustainable development	Slovenia	The City of Ljubljana
The public policy planning and evaluation area	Spain	Andalusian Institute of Public Administration

3. EPSA 2021: EVOLUTION AND ANALYSIS

Michael Burnett

Evolution of the EPSA award since 2009

In the six editions of EPSA prior to 2021 (every two years from 2009 to 2019) two key patterns have emerged i.e. both the continuing scale of the pressures on the public sector, and the continuing resilience and creativity of, the best performing public administrations at all levels of government in responding to those pressures.

The EPSA award has always sought to reflect the highest priorities for public administrations across Europe at all levels of government as defined by the needs of citizens.

Irrespective of the emerging priorities the aim of EPSA over time has been to encourage public sector bodies trying to address those priorities by showcasing and rewarding projects submitted by public administrations which have found new solutions in public service delivery especially where previously tried solutions are no longer effective in balancing the competing challenges of addressing both immediate needs and issues with important future consequences.

In rewarding effective solutions EPSA has also aimed to provide encouragement to all public administrations since these solutions, suitably adapted, have the potential to be used in other contexts where the conditions for successful application are present (potential for adaptability is a core evaluation criterion for successful EPSA projects).

The public sector has faced many challenges over this period such as historically low levels of growth, increasing competitive pressures from outside Europe, constraints in public finances, environmental challenges, security challenges (including cyber security), the need to promote economic growth,

increased levels of migration, pressures on demand for both services and social benefits (such as the demand for health care, social services, affordable social housing and welfare benefits) driven by economic circumstances, an ageing population, changes in household composition and difficulties in some cases in reducing levels of welfare dependency and the need to enhance equality of opportunity, inter-generational equity and social inclusion at a time of economic uncertainty.

The intensity and range of the challenges facing the public sector has been accompanied by challenges to both the ability and legitimacy of public sector entities at all levels to address them (and in institutions in general, including the private sector and other non-governmental bodies).

The relative importance of challenges facing the public sector has also evolved over the period since 2009 and the EPSA award has over time sought to highlight as the theme for each edition what its stakeholders have regarded as the highest priority of these challenges and how the public sector might respond to them.

EPSA 2013, for example, focused on the continuing impact for the public sector of financial constraints following the global financial crisis and the pressure to respond to the needs of citizens for public services.⁵

EPSA 2015 focused on the importance of the public sector's role in taking advantage of the opportunities of partnerships with its various stakeholders and the effective use of co-operation within entities, between entities at similar levels of government and between different levels of government to solve the complex challenges it faced.⁶

⁵ "Weathering the storm - Creative EPSA Solutions in a Time of Crisis", EIPA, 2013 https://epsa2019.eu/files/repository/20170126093027_EPSA_2013_PublicationWeb.pdf

⁶ "The Public Sector as Partner for a Better Society", EIPA, 2015 https://epsa2019.eu/files/repository/20181001115436_EPSA2015_Publication_updated.pdf

EPSA 2017 highlighted the need for innovative responses to challenges including the use of digital transformation though, as the report on EPSA 2017 noted⁷, OECD defined the challenge as “that what is needed is not to introduce digital technologies into public administrations (digitisation); it is more transformative: to integrate the use of digital technologies into public sector modernisation efforts (digital government)”.

EPSA 2019 recognised the continued presence and in some cases intensification of the challenges facing the public sector in earlier years (referring to fact that there was no respite from the pressures) and underpinning the need for creative innovation by the public sector, including both adaptive innovation and horizon scanning for future changes brought about by disruptive technologies which shorten the public sector planning horizon.⁸

In response to these challenges new tools have emerged to help address these challenges such as the use of robotics for services as diverse as social care and waste collection, the use of artificial intelligence in healthcare and other services, the remote management of infrastructure using intelligent sensors and drones, the use of autonomous vehicles, developments in distributed ledger technology, the availability of mass data and the tools to collate and analyse it such as machine learning and data analytics and the scope for text mining.

The availability of such tools has however challenged the public sector to show competence and leadership in their application to address the needs of citizens through, for example, effective policy-making and strategic and operational planning, ensuring that policies are actually delivered through effective performance management of service delivery and ensuring that policies can continue to be delivered (i.e. are sustainable), including when faced by the increased incidence and impact of unexpected events (i.e. are resilient and are agile in their application). It also calls, as the present author

has argued elsewhere, for appropriate scrutiny of their role in this task through effective audit and audit oversight.⁹

The public sector in addressing how to respond to these challenges has also faced the need to respond to alternative narratives - including but not restricted to social media - from parties who may have objectives which differ from those of focus on the priorities of citizens and in the distrust of “experts”, which challenges the idea of evidence-based policy-making.

EPSA 2021 - New EPSA for new challenges

Many of the challenges for the public sector highlighted in earlier EPSA editions continue to be challenging, such as significant financial, economic, social, environmental and security challenges, including cyber security and the maintenance of social security (i.e. the need to enhance social protection for vulnerable groups) at a time of technological change.

The challenges remain complex, difficult to address and often multi-dimensional and not susceptible to short term resolution.

Indeed, the pace of change (such as from digital disruption) and urgency (e.g. in the need to address climate change) has accelerated which has underlined the value of assistance for public sector bodies available from DG REFORM in providing support for public administrations within the EU to reform their administrations through the provision of structural reform support.¹⁰

However, the landscape for the public sector has been fundamentally changed by the need to respond to the COVID_19 pandemic which has impacted on all aspects of economic activity and public service delivery as well as on public sector finances and increased needs of citizens for support.

⁷ An Innovative Public Sector in 2017 New Solutions to Complex Challenges” EIPA, 2017 https://epsa2019.eu/files/repository/20171123095828_EPSA2017_Publication_web.pdf

⁸ “New solutions to complex challenges - A public sector citizen-centric, sustainable and fit for the future https://epsa2019.eu/files/repository/20191105092657_EPSA2019_publication_web.pdf

⁹ Burnett, M, “Redefining public sector audit scrutiny in a post-COVID 19 environment”, European Court of Auditors Journal No 1, 2021, P165-169 https://www.eca.europa.eu/lists/ecadocuments/journal21_01/journal21_01.pdf

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/structural-reform-support_en

These have included:

- A fundamental culture change associated with remote working and remote service delivery requiring the need for evolution of management practices (including human resource practices), flexibility at all levels of entities, reskilling of human resources (including digital skills)¹¹ and the provision of adequate digital infrastructure
- The need to shift operational priorities e.g. especially in the immediate term to prioritise spending on health and social care especially for vulnerable citizens and the provision of information to citizens about the progress of the virus and the practical consequences of it
- Dealing with the level of spending pressures such as for the provision of protective equipment, from the need to develop, procure and distribute vaccines and from the need for support to businesses and employees faced with economic disruption arising from the pandemic, including both fiscal and monetary policy responses¹²
- Securing value for money and continuing availability of supplies and services in public procurement - given the urgency of procurement needs, pressures on the financial stability and operational capability of suppliers to deliver existing contracts and scale up volumes where necessary, the need to diversify sources of supply, increased use of direct awards, for which there is a need for transparency about the value, subject matter and contracting partner and the contract terms to minimise the risk of fraud and corruption (especially in related party transactions) and effective contract management to ensure the quality, timeliness and quantity of what has been procured in the context of the impact of remote working on internal controls and the security of ICT systems.¹³

The range of responses needed and the wide range of policy responses developed to address the multiplicity of challenges in a time of uncertainty have been and continue to be monitored and assessed by OECD.¹⁴

The OECD's assessment emphasises the need for both short-term measures needed with a specific focus on the vulnerable sectors of society and the economy and the need for analysis of the longer-term consequences of COVID_19 leading to cross-territorial co-ordination of policy responses.¹⁵

Thus COVID 19 has therefore highlighted the importance of the three dimensions of the public sector's response to the needs of citizens in challenging times i.e. the need simultaneously to engage in **strategic foresight** (including enhancing scenario planning and the agility of organisations to respond to future shocks) and **emergency crisis response** (including more effective emergency planning and disaster recovery) as well as **delivery and improvement of current operations**.

The context of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been the need for co-ordinated action at EU level (including financial support for recovery)¹⁶ to sustain the trust of citizens in the capacity and legitimacy of the public sector at all levels of government to address the needs of citizens while recognising the need for effective state action.

This led to the decision to choose "Building a Better Europe for Citizens" as the overarching theme for EPSA 2021.

In the context of this theme EPSA 2021 has focused on three key priorities of the European Commission i.e. Digital Public Administration, Innovative Public Administration and Green Public Administration.

¹¹ One of the components of the EU's "Digital Europe Programme" https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/digital-europe-programme_en

¹² The scale and nature of the ECB's response to the crisis is set out at <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/home/search/coronavirus/html/index.en.html>

¹³ Key challenges for public procurement during the pandemic were set out in a report by the UK's National Audit Office (the UK's Supreme Audit Institution) "Investigation into government procurement during the COVID-19 pandemic", NAO, November 2020 <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/government-procurement-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

¹⁴ The range of policy responses analysed by OECD can be found at <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/en/policy-responses>

¹⁵ Including, for example, more effective use of collaborative procurement across different public sector bodies both within territories and cross-border, which can form the basis of effective needs-based equality of territorial distribution of supplies and services.

¹⁶ For example the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility - see "REGULATION (EU) 2021/241 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility" <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0241>

The EPSA 2021 categories – Digital, Innovative and Green Public Administration

The three categories for EPSA 2021 of Digital, Innovative and Green Public Administration, embrace a broad range of actions by the public sector.

These categories, linked to key European Commission's priorities, are:

- Digital Public Administration i.e. "A Europe fit for the digital age"¹⁷
- Innovative Public Administration via broadly defined structural reform¹⁸
- Green Public Administration i.e. "A European Green Deal"¹⁹

Consistent with the approach to EPSA over time, the categories were broadly drawn to enable projects to be eligible for submission rather than to exclude projects from being eligible to be submitted i.e. to maximise the number of projects which fit within the scope of the categories.

Digital Public Administration was defined as including projects **which are based on or facilitated by digital solutions**, such as ones which enable more effective policy-making and strategic and operational planning (including more evidence-based decisions), enable service delivery transformation (including service integration, shared services, platforms for inter-entity co-operation and cost reduction), reshape infrastructure design, delivery and management (including remote surveillance of difficult to access/critical infrastructure), facilitate effective financial and operational management, create opportunities for staff on-line learning to expand their competences, embed/enhance cyber security against current, emerging and potential future threats, enhance data privacy and facilitate changing working patterns arising from the COVID 19 pandemic.

The scope of digital public administration also potentially included projects enhancing citizens' experience through better information about, and better access to, services (including service provision using mobile apps or generating automatic or easy to access service entitlements for citizens), simplifying business interaction with the public sector, creating platforms for participatory democracy and facilitating communication/

engagement with internal and external stakeholders (such as platforms for stakeholder co-creation).

The scope of the category also potentially included projects which facilitated the integration of data from different sources, enhanced the effectiveness of data analysis (including trend analysis and comparison with other entities) and interpretation (including predictive capacity), enhanced data presentation, including using data visualisation, underpinned the quality of information necessary to sustain democracy (such as enhancing transparency about legislative outcomes and processes) and applied solutions based on new technologies using, for example, artificial intelligence, robotics, machine learning, data and text mining (for example to assess corporate social responsibility compliance and contract performance and identify related parties, corporate domicile, and tax and other legal compliance).

Innovative Public Administration is defined as including projects which involve both adaptive and disruptive innovation which are based on **innovation in the broader sense of organisational transformation in all areas of public administration including but not restricted to visioning how new technologies might be exploited** which effectively address societal challenges that are the highest priority for stakeholders and thus enhance public trust in the legitimacy and competence of the entity.

The category relates to innovation in the processes of the entity (**which may or may not involve digitalisation**) such as innovative responses to the COVID 19 pandemic, embedding innovation and self-learning in an entity's culture, promoting co-operation within and between entities, reshaping policy objectives and priorities, enhancing resilience through more effective emergency planning and disaster recovery and enhancing the entity's agility to respond to future shocks, reformulation of service targets, changing service delivery methods (including by delegation/reversal of delegation or shared services), more effective and transparent means of monitoring financial and/or operational outcomes and improving HR processes (including reskilling).

¹⁷ See https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age_en

¹⁸ See <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/ht0320308enn.pdf> - supported - see Note 6 - by DG REFORM

¹⁹ See https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

It also includes enhancing the effectiveness of public sector audit, enhancing the effectiveness of policy scrutiny by the legislature, regulators and civil society, better regulation for business and not-for profit entities, enhancing consumer protection, securing value for money and addressing fraud and corruption.

Green Public Administration included projects from public sector entities which relate to *integration of greening of public administration into policy formulation* (such as for net zero carbon emissions), *service design, service delivery planning and delivery and management of services*. They include in particular projects for reduction of emissions and other pollutants, use of renewable energy, promotion of efficient use of resources such as recycling and waste reduction, clearing up the effect of pollution and promoting investment in research and development, skills development and infrastructure.

It could also include projects from public sector entities which implement decisions in a wide range of sectors *where the public sector acts as a regulator of private sector activity* (including through taxation and licensing), such as in the manufacturing, construction, transport, agriculture and maritime sectors and to promote behaviour change or private sector investment in innovation and exploitation of new technologies.

Brief overview and thematic appraisal of applications (e.g. common themes, responses to address challenges)

This section of the report sets out some key characteristics of EPSA 2021 cases which were short listed projects and others which were awarded good practice certificates in all three application categories.^{20,21}

The approach here aims to draw together key characteristics common to projects across all three categories, projects which are analysed in more

detail in the later category chapters.

One main source of new solutions to challenges faced by the public sector demonstrated by EPSA 2021 cases has been responses to the COVID_19 pandemic.

However, higher-ranked projects submitted to EPSA 2021 also demonstrated a wide range of other solutions, some of which have been observed in higher-ranked projects in earlier EPSA editions, which are not directly related to recovery from the pandemic or linked directly to longer term consequences of it.

Responses to the COVID_19 pandemic

Projects based on responses to the COVID_19 pandemic included:

- **At a distance but close to you** (Innovative, Romania) - provision of remote support in a Romanian district for vulnerable children with disabilities where face to face contact was not possible during the pandemic
- **Transparency at the service of health** (Digital, Spain) - provision by the Junta de Castilla y León to citizens of a wide range of regularly updated information about COVID_19 from a wide range of sources and information on how to access services
- **Stay home - the Municipality of Serres stays at work for you** (Innovative, Greece) - including a project from the Greek municipality of Serres to help respond to the spread of COVID_19 through testing and provision of health services digitally and by provision of food, medicines and protective equipment, improved management in buildings, intensive cleaning of public places and on-line education to assist citizens to deal with the pandemic

²⁰ In analysing these applications, it should be noted that EPSA is a competition in which participation is voluntary. Thus EIPA makes no claim that the process represents a comprehensive survey of the application of elements relevant to the themes across the EU or that all the indicative means by which projects could, potentially, demonstrate fit with components of the call were represented in the applications actually received.

²¹ It should be noted that this section is not intended to be a detailed assessment of all the projects which were short listed or awarded good practice certificates and nor does it necessarily include all of the positive characteristics of the projects, or any limitations that they may have. It is thus not intended to be equated to a comprehensive assessment of the reasons why applicants were or were not successful in being short listed or being awarded good practice certificates

- **Chivalry in Ljubljana: assisting citizens and improving their quality of life** (Innovative, Slovenia) - assistance in provision of a wide range of supplies and services by the city of Ljubljana to mitigate the effect of the pandemic (including meals, transport and computers) to citizens, especially vulnerable citizens, with wide use of electric vehicles
 - **Consultas COVID Extremadura** (Digital, Spain) - provision by the Government Delegation in Extremadura of a service for rapid response to citizen requests for information about COVID_19 regulations requiring regular update of a wide range of information from different government ministries and from contact with sub-national authorities in the region.
- Key features of solutions in other higher-ranked EPSA 2021 projects**
- Wide ranging multi-stakeholder engagement and co-creation in design and implementation of strategies and policies, including:
 - **My City, My Future!** (Innovative, Turkey) - a wide ranging process of citizen consultation by the district of Nilüfer, including with the Youth Assembly and political leaders, to develop its strategic plan for 2020-2024 and foster a culture of participatory democracy
 - **Human Rights Go Local - Vienna, the City of Human Rights** (Innovative, Austria) - a wide-ranging process by the city administration of dialogue and co-operation with civil society for the better integration of human rights considerations into the provision of services to citizens
 - Co-operation within and between public sector entities, including:
 - **Casemates** (Digital, Luxembourg) - an open and transparent platform for access to national and European legislation, including its evolution during the legislative process, from the Ministry of State's Central Legislation Service in co-operation with other European countries
 - **EnerCoach - a digital energy accounting platform for municipalities to monitor energy consumption of public infrastructure** (Green, Luxembourg) - a platform to share and monitor energy consumption in municipal buildings across the country promoted by the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure
 - Further improvement by entities with a record of past improvements who recognise the need for continuous improvement, including:
 - **LabX - Experimentation Laboratory for the Public Administration** (Innovative, Portugal) - a project from the Administrative Modernisation Agency for developing and testing innovation, working with a network of innovators, which is further evolution of the culture created by the Simplex + project, the winner in the European and national category in EPSA 2019
 - **IRec** (Green, Portugal) - a project from the municipality of Cascais to facilitate and incentivise recycling of single use packaging by citizens, a municipality which has been recognised for environmentally friendly practice in EPSA 2017 and 2019
 - **id.gov.pt** (Digital, Portugal) - a mobile app providing citizens with a "digital wallet" to act as proof of identity, developed by the Administrative Modernisation Agency
 - **Relaunch of FinanzOnline for citizens and integration of chatbot "Fred"** (Digital, Austria) - the update and enhancement of a platform of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance (online since 2003) able to deal with significantly increased volumes of demand to assist citizens to interact with the tax authorities
 - Projects aiming to sustain and enhance trust in the competence and integrity of government at all levels, for example through greater transparency and improving quality of and access to services by citizens, evidence-based policy making and promotion of local economic growth, including:
 - **Justizonline** (Digital, Austria) - a Federal Ministry of Justice platform giving transparent access for citizens to documents in court proceedings and information on the state of the proceedings
 - **Green Supply Chains** (Green, Slovenia) - a programme to encourage and facilitate local production of food supplies for the local hospitality sector by the Tourism Department for Ljubljana
 - **City Deal 'Zicht op Ondernijning'** (Digital, the Netherlands) - a common platform to analyse patterns of serious crime supported by more than 20 public sector entities and to provide information for better targeting of action to respond to these patterns, co-ordinated by the ICTU

- **Digital for reconstruction grants** (Digital, Italy) - a common platform for application for, and processing and monitoring of, reconstruction grants to address the damage to buildings in the 2009 earthquake in the Italian region of Abruzzo
- Digitalisation of processes to improve service delivery, including:
 - **The Electronic Documents Archive** (Digital, Poland) - the creation of an accessible digital archive of government and other documents by the Head Office of the State Archive
 - **Vienna provides space** (Digital, Austria)
 - a platform based on broad co-operation between different departments of the city administration to co-ordinate the mapping and approval of the use of public space in Vienna and making it easier to address unauthorised uses
 - **rEEYplace: Automatic Processing of Substitute Teacher Needs in Public Schools** (Digital, Cyprus) - digitalisation leading to service improvement and cost reduction in allocation of substitute teachers in Cyprus by the Educational Service Commission
 - **The information-supported decision making (IOB) project** (Digital, the Netherlands)
 - a platform to increase efficiency in Schengen visa processing by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 - **Municipality ASP 2.0 (Further development and nationwide extension of the Municipality ASP system)** (Digital, Hungary) - roll out by the Ministry of the Interior of a common platform for municipal on-line services in Hungary
 - **All-in-One HR** (Digital, Cyprus)
 - digital transformation of HR processes at the Cyprus University of Technology
- Service improvement based on significant culture change including:
 - **Processing invasive alien plants into useful products and input material for industry** (Green, Slovenia) - a programme to manage the impact of invasive alien plants on biodiversity including citizen education, promotion of a co-operative approach to their management with citizens and recycling for other uses in the city of Ljubljana
 - **Innovative Administration In Cyprus Prisons** (Innovative, Cyprus) - a transformative approach to the culture of prisons by the Prisons Department to give much more emphasis to prisoner rehabilitation than previously to thus to contribute to reduced post release reoffending
- Giving practical effect to EU policies, including:
 - **Cross-Border Fines** (Digital, Belgium)
 - a platform principally developed to identify road traffic offenders from other EU Member States and collect fines from them more effectively and thus contribute to road safety
 - **Smart infrastructure for smart public administration** (Green, EU LISA Agency)
 - construction of a new building for the EU LISA Agency in Tallinn, Estonia using an environmentally friendly design based on co-operation with local and national government and integrating staff as key stakeholders in the process
 - Development of a self-learning and innovation ecosystem within entities, including:
 - **R&I Mobility Strategy** (Green, Austria)
 - a project led by the Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) with multiple stakeholders to create a forward looking research and innovation strategy for areas within its remit, to finance research and innovation, to test solutions in laboratory conditions and to develop new solutions in support of the EU Green Deal and a national commitment to mobility sector climate neutrality by 2040
 - **Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence adoption** (Innovative, Belgium) - a project working with a wide range of external and internal stakeholders to create a strategy and implementation roadmap for the use of AI at the Investment and Trade Agency in the Belgian region of Flanders
 - **The Innovation Laboratory** (Innovative, Latvia) - a cross-government programme led by the State Chancellery for fostering innovative thinking and creating a broadly based environment to test innovation in support of the public administration reform plan and based on promoting a user centric approach to service design
 - **The public policy planning and evaluation area** (Digital, Spain) - a project to encourage better ex ante and ex post evaluation of public policies in Andalusia using both internal and external resources and including development of evaluation skills and processes

- **Government Buys Innovation** (Innovation, Belgium) - a project from the innovation laboratory of the Federal Public Service to promote the search for innovative solutions for public sector needs
- Promotion of environmentally-friendly goals such as those related to energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy and reuse of resources, including:
 - **Green Port Initiative** (Green, Spain) - a project to optimise maritime movements, reduce energy use and promote the use of renewable energy by the Malaga Port Authority
 - **Renewable Energy from Wastewater - Wastewater Treatment Plants as Local Energy Cells** (Green, Austria) - a project from the Wasserverband Mürzverband in co-operation with a range of stakeholders to use energy recovered from waste water beyond that needed for the wastewater plant itself for energy generation to provide heat for other local buildings
 - **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources in Public School Buildings in the Municipality of Serres** (Green, Greece) - a project to use renewable energy sources and upgrade of buildings both to reduce energy consumption and reduce CO₂ emissions
- **Greening of Budapest Metropolitan Area 6th district Terézváros Municipality** (Green, Hungary) - a project to implement a wide range of environmentally friendly measures in a district of Budapest, including planting schemes, creation of a community garden, recycling schemes, community composting and the use of green procurement supported by a programme of staff training and awareness raising
- Projects based on the creation or fostering of policies designed to benefit children and young adults, including:
 - **U25 - Together for young people in Vienna** (Innovative, Austria) - a project by the city's Department for Social Welfare, Social and Public Health Law to provide a joint service centre for young adults offering employment, education and social welfare services
 - **Raising children's awareness of sustainable development** (innovative, Slovenia) - a programme of education in the city of Ljubljana for students at all ages in the school system (delivered for the public sector by NGOs) to raise their awareness of sustainable development issues using different methods appropriate to the age of the students, including practical workshops for students in older age brackets.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The 8th edition of the European Public Sector Award takes place in exceptional circumstances, but it is nevertheless important to remember that societies are facing challenges which will outlast the current crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is no coincidence that previous editions of EPSA have promoted green innovation, collaborative governance and the inclusion of stakeholders and citizens in the delivery of public services.

In the EPSA 2021 edition, the economic and social challenges related to climate change, environmental protection and digitalization are reflected in the three award categories of green, digital and innovative public administration. The three categories tie in with the current priorities of the Commission, in the form of the European Green Deal, Europe fit for the digital age, and the need to reform and innovate public administrations more generally. Given the nature of these challenges and the rapid technological developments, these categories are not only topical, they are also forward looking, because the need for reform and innovation will only be increasing in the future.

The projects submitted to EPSA 2021 highlight the creativity of public administrations at European, national, regional and local level in responding to these challenges. Drawing on the innovative responses of winners, nominees and Good Practice Certificate recipients, we can observe a number of trends.

In these conclusions, we present these trends and briefly reflect on their impact on policy making and public administration.

Several projects are based on responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. While these responses were geared towards the effects of a specific crisis, adapting to the pandemic has accelerated the debate about how public services should operate. Like societies at large, the years after the pandemic will bring about a 'new normal' and public administrations should draw lessons from how they adapted to the pandemic to remain fit for purpose.

In line with the EPSA 2021 award categories, a significant number of projects are based on digitalization and sustainability. In case of

digitalization, innovation strives for improving processes of service delivery by way of new technologies. This includes better access to information for citizens and enhanced means of communication between citizens and public administrations. In terms of sustainability, projects pursue objectives related to environmental protection, circular economy and renewable energy or energy efficiency. These projects indicate that green and digital mainstreaming is well under way in European public administration. As the EPSA 2021 publications indicated, these developments beg their own problems and challenges. To be prepared for these challenges, policy makers need to set regulatory frameworks capable of supporting technological developments while, at the same time, harness human rights challenges for instance. The green and digital mainstreaming also requires public administrations to invest in skills and capabilities of their staff to deliver services under fundamentally different conditions.

In a system of multilevel governance, national, regional and local authorities in Europe are bound to collaborate and work together to improve the delivery of public services. There are several projects with actual and potential cooperation within the public sector, national and cross-border. While such cooperation is (presumably) easier within national boundaries, policy makers at European and national level should continue working on facilitating cooperation and to foster exchange of knowledge and good practice.

Several projects are designed and implemented through wide-ranging participation of stakeholders. There is a great deal of evidence suggesting that stakeholder participation is essential for public sector reform and innovation. Moreover, citizens' trust in the public sector is not only based on the quality of service delivery, but also on the openness, transparency and inclusiveness of administrative processes. At the same time, stakeholder participation is also challenging due to different perceptions and expectations of public officials and citizens. Similar to green and digital mainstreaming, participatory administration requires support from policy makers as much as specific skill sets of public officials.

While innovation is often based on the immediate response to external events or disruptive technologies, public sector reform requires continuous improvements. In this sense, innovation lies between change and continuity. It is therefore promising that EPSA 2021 applications include projects with a record of past improvements.

In summary, EPSA 2021 demonstrates the resilience of the public sector in the face of external events, and it showcases the creativity of

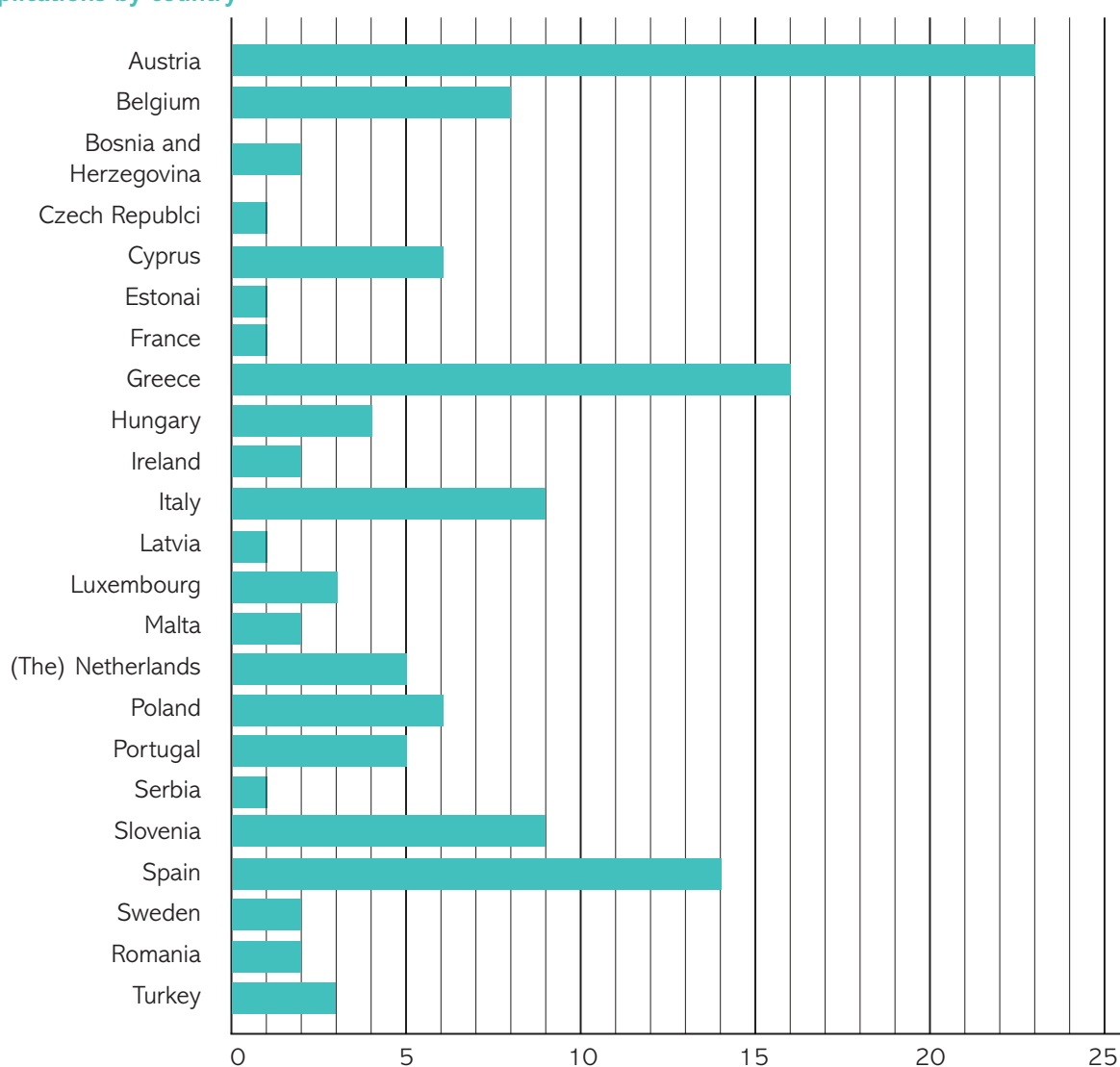
public administrations in Europe to respond and adapt. In the coming years, Europe will be engaged in an unprecedented programme for recovery and resilience. The ability to not only facilitate social and economic innovation, but to turn innovation into an integral part of public service delivery will be a key factor for the success of this programme. This will require fundamental changes of organisational culture, new skill sets for public officials and new ways of stakeholder involvement and citizens.

ANNEX: GOOD PRACTICES CATALOGUE

General Statistics

In total we have received 126 projects from 23 European countries and 1 EU Agency. The statistics below show the number of applications by country, the sectors covered, the distribution per award category, the size of the submitting organisations and the distribution of Good Practice Certificates (GPC) by country. We also show the applications by country and the distribution per award category specifically for EU-funded projects

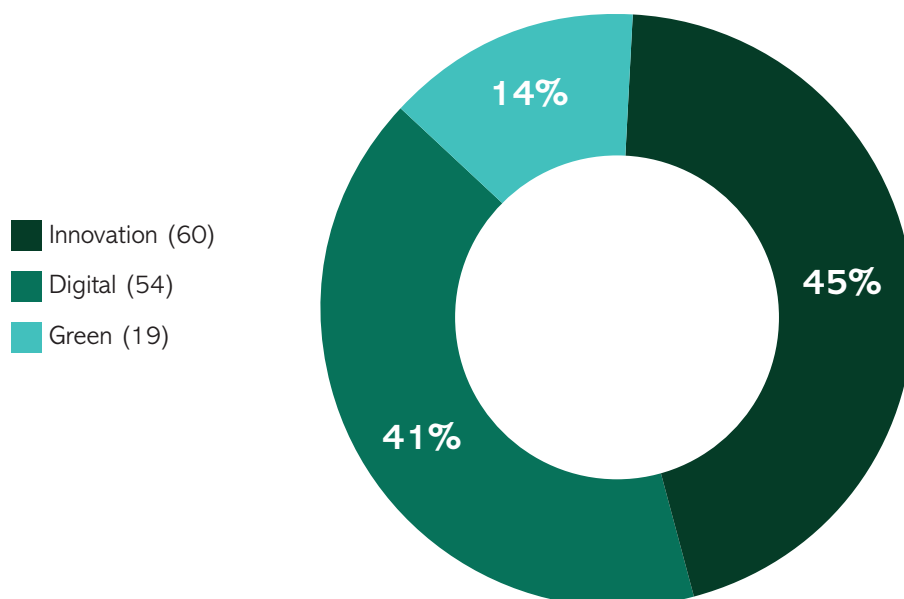
Applications by country



Sectors covered by all applications²²

Central and local administration	42%	54
Governance	37%	47
Digitalisation	32%	41
e-Government	29%	37
Research, innovation and digital economy	19%	24
Education & vocational training	14%	18
Management of human resources	11%	15
Energy and climate	11%	14
Healthcare and long-term care	9,5%	12
Labour market	9,5%	12
Natural resources	8%	10
Welfare system	7%	9
Crisis management	5,5%	7

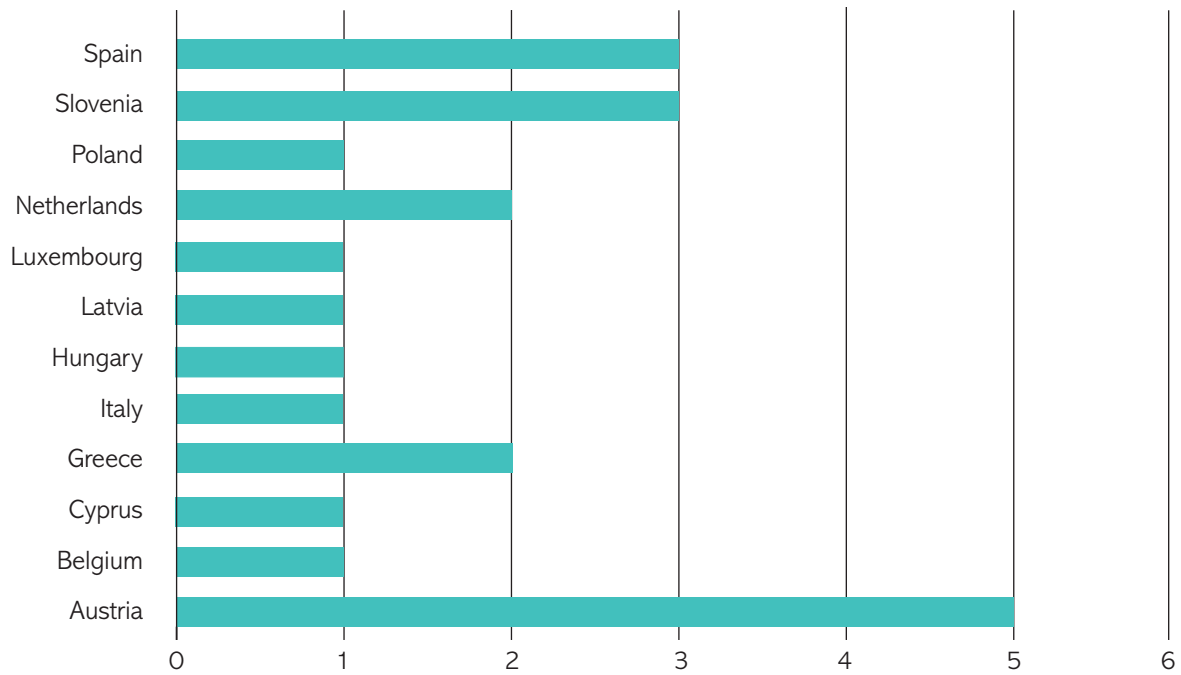
Applications by Award Category²³




²² This table shows the share of applications having been submitted under each of the given sectors. Please note that one application may fall under various sectors.

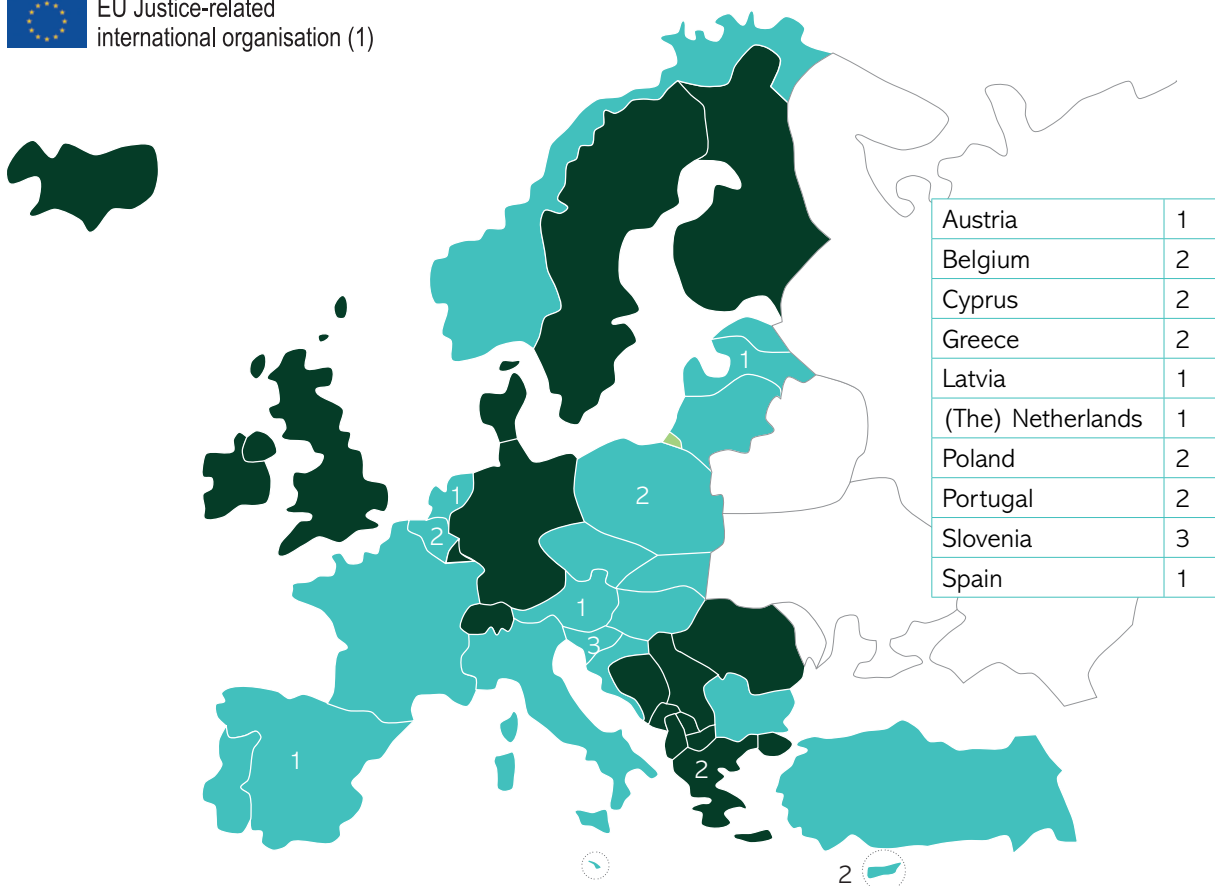
²³ Please note that one application may fall under more than one category and be counted twice

Good Practice Certificate (GPC) by country (30 of 126)

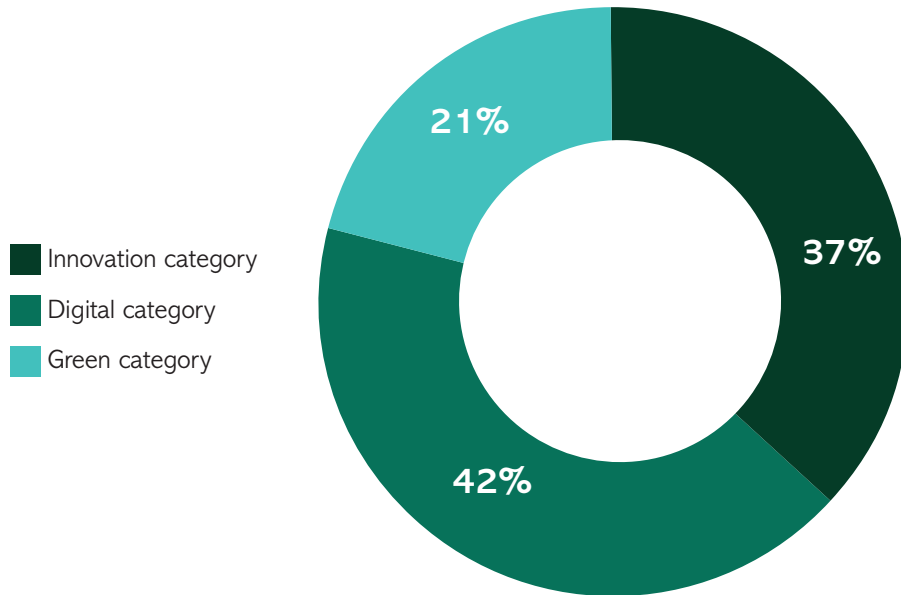


EU-funded applications by country

 EU Justice-related international organisation (1)



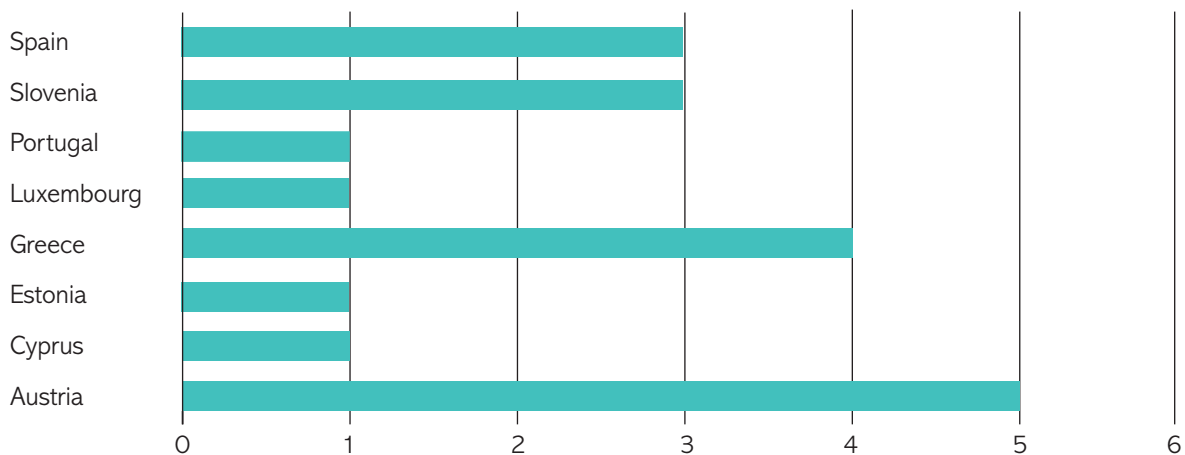
EU-funded applications by award category



Green Public Administration statistics

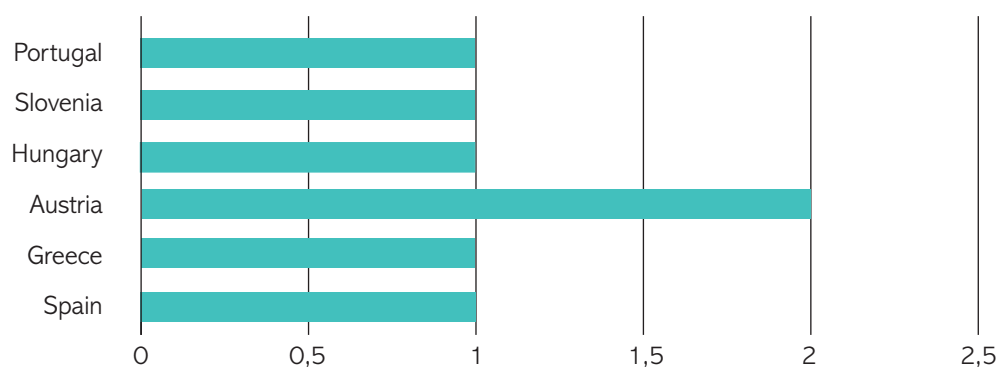
Out of a total of 126 projects received, 19 projects came from the Green category. In the statistics below you can see the number of applications by country, the sectors covered, the size of the submitting organisations and the distribution of Good Practice Certificate (GPC) by country.

Applications by country ²⁴



²⁴ Please note that one application may fall under more than one category and be counted twice

Good Practice Certificate (GPC) by country (7 of 19)



Sectors covered by all applications²⁵

Energy and climate	42%	8
Natural resources	26%	5
Labour market	15%	3
Transport, tourism, agriculture	15%	3
Central and local administration	10%	2
Education & vocational training	10%	2
Crisis management	10%	2
Welfare system	5%	1
Healthcare and long-term care	5%	1

²⁵ This table shows the share of applications having been submitted under each of the given sectors. Please note that one application may fall under various sectors

GREEN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

EnerCoach – a digital energy accounting platform for municipalities to monitor energy consumption of public infrastructure, Luxembourg, (First prize winner)

Project title

EnerCoach – a digital energy accounting platform for municipalities to monitor energy consumption of public infrastructure

Name of the lead organisation

SIGI – Syndicat Intercommunal de Gestion Informatique

Address

11, Rue Edmond Reuter L-5326 Contern, Luxembourg

Contact person details

Anne Hoffmann, Director of Communications, Member of the Board of Directors: anne.hoffmann@sigi.lu

Size of organisation

140

Type of sector

central and local administration, digitisation, energy and climate

Keywords of project

climate change, energy optimisation, energy consumption awareness

and exchange information through a common user-friendly platform, and allows automated and synchronised updates and secure, real-time data transfers and exchange of views between them. Moreover, this centralised approach allows a comparison of national benchmarks, providing exchange of viewpoints, feedback and knowledge-sharing with the aim of making decisions to achieve a more sustainable country.

An important innovation of this renovated platform is the newly developed export functionalities. Municipalities are now able to inform their citizens through individually generated energy reports on the local efforts made to reduce municipal energy consumption and CO2 emissions. These communication exchanges, based on transparent and graphically illustrated data, contribute to increasing awareness about energy topics and consumption among the citizens. The citizens are thus influenced and encouraged to make efforts to optimise their individual energy sources. Furthermore, the availability of transparent and reliable data on energy consumption helped the ministry and the government to grant municipal subsidies, supporting them in their energy optimisation efforts. Last but not least, the centralised approach subsequently resulted in a reduction of administrative workload and costs for all involved stakeholders.

The renewed EnerCoach platform is a useful and sustainable model for Luxembourg. It is a leading example of how the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), drafted by the Luxembourg government following the Paris Agreement, has been successfully transitioned into a national political government initiative. It has resulted in the Climate Pact 1.0, ultimately being accepted and implemented at a local political level by 102 municipalities. As a consequence, Climate Pact 2.0 was extended by the government from 2021 to 2030, and a more mature EnerCoach platform is again the central element of this new national government programme.

EnerCoach is a user-friendly, data driven, collaborative, inter-administrative energy accounting platform, hosted centrally. Its main objective is to further encourage political leaders to prioritise climate change and reduce energy consumption in their municipalities in Luxembourg. The first version of this energy accounting system was provided by the government office *myenergy* to the municipalities in 2013, and consisted of a complex, locally hosted offline Excel file with limits in programming and calculation.

In 2016 SIGI was in charge of developing the next generation of EnerCoach, and the platform was ready for deployment to all participating stakeholders in 2021. The new, redesigned energy accounting system has been created adopting a fully centralised approach and direct integration into the existing municipal business administration, ERP GESCOM. This enables all stakeholders to access

Smart infrastructure for smart public administration, Estonia (second prize winner)

Project title

Smart infrastructure for smart public administration

Name of the lead organisation

eu-LISA – European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

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Size of organisation

280

Type of sector

energy and climate, natural resources

Keywords of project

sustainability, green buildings, environmental impact reduction

The European Union Agency eu-LISA ensures the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice. Therefore, the Agency's activities are crucial for the functioning of the Schengen system and thus supporting the free movement of people and goods.

On the establishment of the Agency, one top priority was that its services are secured and developed by a modern, smart and green infrastructure. This motivated eu-LISA to design and implement the green and smart headquarters project for smart and innovative public services in Tallinn, Estonia. With this unique approach, the eu-LISA project aims to be a leading example project for the other EU and national public bodies.

The project is an innovative combination of sustainable green infrastructure, ergonomic working and modern collaboration space, which aims at a cultural change for greener public administration services. The ambitious objective of the project

was not only to build a new, modern and green building but also to encourage the development of capacities of its users – staff, stakeholders, visitors and the broader public, towards the sustainable use of resources. Smart and innovative solutions in construction, environmental protection, resources management, health and security of the work spaces and the wellbeing of the employees have also contributed to make this project represent a role model in public buildings construction and their management in Estonia and the rest of the EU.

The building was constructed with a clear objective to reduce the environmental impact to the maximum while offering the best ergonomic spaces to its employees. The Agency used innovative solutions that allow energy efficiency and energy savings wherever possible. For example, one of the most striking is the air quality provided by more than 200 plants systematically placed throughout the building so that no additional humidifiers and air cleaners are needed. To minimise water consumption, the Agency introduced two-system flushing in the toilets; all room controller manuals are in a video format and are accessible using the QR code, so no paper copies are used or necessary. There is an innovative floor heating system supported by exhausting hot air from the server room via heat exchangers, also used to preheat the fresh air for inflow. Lighting, including external lighting, is based on LED technology and connected to the BMS, enabling control and programming according to needs.

Finally, the project of smart and green infrastructure for smart and innovative public administration in an environment was realised in an EU Agency, where due to the sensitivity and confidentiality of data, there was a need to respect the highest standards of security in all aspects. Despite the stringent security requirements, the project is an example of open coordination and transparency, together with the highest inclusion of the latest innovation and green technology.

Processing invasive alien plants into useful products and input material for industry, Slovenia (third prize winner)

Project title

Processing invasive alien plants into useful products and input material for industry

Name of the lead organisation

The city of Ljubljana

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Size of organisation

573

Type of sector

governance, labour market, capital market development, natural resources, budget preparation and execution

Keywords of project

circular economy, ecology, citizenship participation, new business model

In Slovenia, about 150 alien plant species can be found in nature, of which at least a third are invasive or potentially invasive. These are the so-called invasive alien plant species (IAPS), which have been recognised for several decades as one of the most important reasons for the decline of biodiversity. They can also cause economic and environmental damage, and some are even harmful to human health. Around 20% of land in the city of Ljubljana is protected with natural environment status, so it is very important that the citizens know how to recognise and eradicate IAPS, but at the same time, these plants can be taken into account for their potential without encouraging their systematic cultivation.

At this regard, the city of Ljubljana decided to address the issue in an innovative way and introduced a citizen involvement participative model. This is based on education and cooperation, and built on three levels of engagement according to citizens' interests and motivations. The residents of Ljubljana are encouraged to recognise and process IAPS on their own, or they can access four locations where they can be educated and trained on how to

do it. They can also simply hand over the biomass at the collection points.

The project objectives are raising awareness and cooperating with citizens on the identification, collection and use of IAPS. They include the development of new tools for the identification and inventory of invasive alien plant sites, and the establishment of a public information platform for the identification and control of IAPS. As well as this is the analysis of biomass suitability and development of new IAPS products such as paper and wood products, food, dyes and hybrid coatings. Up to date, the project has developed 67 ways of processing IAPS into useful products and input materials for industry and published four catalogues on these products. The platform for the identification and lifelong monitoring of IAPS was introduced, and five separate standalone circular business models have been implemented. Thanks to the creation of different possibilities about IAPS reuse, 375 undergraduate and postgraduate students so far have gained new knowledge. This will improve their employment possibilities, and new business models development and implementation.

In contrast to the past, the main objective of new IAPS management system in the city of Ljubljana is to bring a paradigm shift to the specific IAPS management. It also introduces a more general conservation management approach. Therefore, the new management system recognises the potential of setting up a systematic participatory model which uses IAPS biomass to develop new sustainable products. Instead of burning the collected IAPS in incinerators or composting, the new approach focuses on controlling the IAPS population by developing a circular production process. In this way, it reduces CO₂ emissions in the city and increases the resilience of local economies and ecologies. With contemporary technologies and traditional craft making, all parts of IAPS directly serve as input material for production of paper, wooden and other bio-based products, which serve as ambassadors of new management values.

Initiative Green Port

Autoridad Portuaria de Málaga, Spain

Project title

Green port Initiative

Name of the lead organization

Autoridad Portuaria de Málaga

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Size of organisation

163

Type of sector

Energy and climate

Key words of project

Green Deal, SDGs, Greenhouse gas emissions,
Ports role in environmental protection

The European Union, with the Green Deal, adopted clear commitments regarding the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and, in this context, ports play an important role as they are an essential component within merchant shipping and passenger global flows. Being aware of this, the Port Authority of Málaga has launched the **Initiative Green Port**, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fight against climate change and global warming. The project aims to achieve significant improvements: lower the use of fossil fuels to have better air quality towards the port environment, energy efficiency and use of renewable energy: using sustainable energy sources generated on-site, and tree barriers to be placed in transition areas between the port and the city. This commitment is framed within the SDGs and, in particular, the Sustainable Transport Strategy in Ports.

The main challenge that the Port Authority of Malaga has to face is that its programmes and activities are intended to a permanent development, which brings growth to the city and its environment, but on the other hand, this is only possible in a sustainable way, generating benefits to the port community, the society and the environment. Therefore, the Port Authority focuses its management approach on sustainability objectives such as:

- the integration of the port with the city of Malaga, bringing the port closer to the citizens and providing additional value to tourism and culture;
- monitoring the different harbour traffic to offer a clean port to its users;
- the prevention of environmental pollution within the port to protect the environment that surrounds it. The Port wants to contribute to reducing CO₂ emissions through the implementation of significant improvements, becoming the lighthouse of renewable energy.

The *Initiative Green Port* project has a relevant social impact because it raises social awareness among the port community and the citizens on sustainable issues and allows the transfer of knowledge to other port communities. It has also an evident environment impact, because of the pursued objective related to the port environment, and an important economic impact, improving the quality of energy balance to provide a better response to the emissions monitoring mechanism.

Concluding, the project is characterised by an innovative environment. It implies the application of advanced and innovative technologies and is ready for commercial deployment, digitising the port operation in different areas and lowering emissions by the integration of renewable energies.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources in Public School Buildings in the Municipality of Serres

MUNICIPALITY OF SERRES, Greece

Project title

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources in Public School Buildings in the Municipality of Serres

Name of the lead organization

Municipality of Serres

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Size of organisation

350

Type of sector

Energy and climate

Key words of project

Covenant of Mayors, CO₂ emissions, Environmental protection, Building awareness

The Municipality of Serres is committed to achieving the EU climate and energy targets reducing CO₂ emissions. In this context, it complied with the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy in 2015 and later, developed a Sustainable Energy Action Plan. This forms the backdrop to the measures for increasing renewable energy sources (RES) and energy efficiency, to mitigate climate change effects. The Municipality of Serres' approach towards environmental protection consists of the introduction of RES systems in public school buildings and the overall upgrade in energy efficiency.

The idea of introducing renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures in public school buildings is a flagship project for the municipality, because it is considered to be the first major step towards fulfilling the European and national energy objectives at municipal level.

The interventions in school buildings refer to the installation of photovoltaic panels on rooftops, the use of geothermal energy or biomass heaters, the replacement of window frames, the conversion of light fixtures to LEDs and, the most innovative, the installation of smart energy meters to monitoring the energy consumption in real time.

Prior to these interventions, energy consumption consisted of diesel oil for heating and electricity for the remaining needs; energy efficiency was low because of oil burners, the lack of thermal insulation and the use of conventional lighting. As a result, the carbon footprint of the schools was problematic, leading to high energy costs to deal with and to a consequent financial pressure on the schools' budget: being the largest cost at municipal level, it caused cuts in other expenditure such as maintenance and the funding of activities.

The innovative interventions pursued by the project brought to a range of benefits. Not only did the use of RES and the subsequent increase of energy efficiency meet the strategic priority of environmental protection, for example, upgrading the examined buildings' energy ranking from Z to B or higher, but it has also resulted in reduction of time and cost in energy management and increased awareness of green culture among students. From thermal comfort to indoor air quality to security, the effect on the educational process is undisputable, providing students with important information regarding the footprint of their actions and leading to a long-term positive environmental behaviour.

The savings in the municipal budget derived from these interventions are redirected to other educational and operational activities, thus offering better services to the students involved.

R&I Mobility Strategy

Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK), Austria

Project title

R&I Mobility Strategy

Name of the lead organization

Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK)

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Size of organisation

3400

Type of sector

Governance, Labour market, Welfare system, Healthcare and long-term care, Education and vocational training, Budget preparation and execution

Key words of project

Climate neutrality, Energy efficiency, Innovation ecosystem, Urban mobility

The Austrian Federal Government has set the ambitious goal of achieving climate neutrality in Austria by 2040, and becoming a European pioneer in climate protection. The area which Austria decided to focus on to pursue its objective is mobility. Over the past three decades, thanks to its longstanding tradition of mission-oriented research, technology and innovation promotion in the field of mobility, Austria has built up a wide network of actors and a broad research base for the transformation of the mobility sector. The new R&I Mobility Strategy aims to set the course for future research and innovation policy measures in the mobility sector, supporting Austria's successful positioning in mobility-relevant areas of the future EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon Europe.

The ambitious objective pursued by BMK, outlined in the 2030 Mobility Master Plan, intends to endorse the paradigm 'Avoid-Shift-Improve'. The project,

R&I Mobility Strategy, drafted under the direction of BMK, wants to ride the wave of the current decreasing of energy and mobility consumption imposed by the pandemic. The aim is to identify ways to avoid traffic and shift it towards public transport and active mobility. This would trace a path to climate neutrality in 2040 for the mobility sector, by increasing energy efficiency and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources.

The *R&I Mobility strategy* represents the first strategic document of broad extent, derived from the cooperation of all stakeholders and addressing the necessary transformation of the mobility system in all its dimensions. The intention is to transform to innovation ecosystems and collaborative networks by linking policymaking with administration, science, business and civil society.

The project approach has a clear structure with four mission areas, two of which are defined geographically: *Cities: Promoting climate-neutral urban mobility and Regions: mobilising and sustainably connecting rural areas*, focused on the spatial dimension with its social and economic relationships driving the need and demand for mobility. On the other side, the other two are technology based: *Digitisation: efficient and climate-friendly operation of infrastructure, mobility, and Logistics services and technology: developing environmentally friendly transport technologies*. These address the potential offered by digitisation and other technological developments in achieving a climate-neutral mobility system.

BMK also defined four R&I measures within the strategy framework, which will ensure the four mission areas to be implemented will consider gender and diversity aspects in all processes. This will address the urgent need to define more stimulating frameworks for the use of female potential in mobility. The measures are R&I funding, experimental rooms, alliances and European/international positioning.

Greening of Budapest Metropolitan Area 6th district Terézváros Municipality

Budapest Metro Area 6th Distr. Terézváros Municipality, Hungary

Project title

Greening of Budapest Metropolitan Area 6th district Terézváros Municipality

Name of the lead organization

Budapest Metro Area 6th Distr. Terézváros Municipality

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Size of organisation

230

Type of sector

Energy and climate

Key words of project

Greening of urban environment, Environmental protection, Building awareness, Citizen participation

Terézváros Municipality is one of the densest districts in Budapest. The proportion of paved surfaces is extremely high, while cooler green surfaces are scarce and this causes increasing concerns with respect to the lives of citizens and climate change: very high temperatures, heat waves, flooding during to summer thunderstorms (due to climate change) and other extreme weather conditions are threatening the health of citizens.

To tackle the climate crisis and improve the lives of its citizens, the new Terézváros Municipality administration decided to prioritise environmental protection and greening of the district. They are implementing measures such as increasing green surfaces, planting trees, endorsing decarbonisation and promoting awareness about environment and sustainability among the residents. The core of

the project is that each initiative promoted aims to recycle waste as material and the mitigation objectives, aimed to decrease the effects of climate change, come with adaptation propositions aimed to defend the district against climate change.

In this mission, the communication towards the citizens is of utmost importance as well as their involvement, which is done mainly through a biweekly district magazine, a website and social media. The initiatives proposed include the following:

- The system of community composting leads a reduction of waste disposal costs and emissions.
- The office greening project aims to make the municipality building plastic-free.
- The organisation of a 'green procurement' course. Green procurement is a tool by which purchasers pay special attention to environmental aspects and the effects of the given product during its lifecycle.
- Planting trees and reducing traffic levels is a step forward.
- Community gardens: 30 cm-high raised beds, and gardening on the balconies of the buildings is very popular and has a significant role in greening the district.
- Glass recycling is one of the most popular projects.
- The collection of used cooking oil enables cooking oil to be recycled as biofuel.
- The inner courtyard greening project helps in greening the district and, at the same time, it represents community spaces.
- The **Green Library** programme: the municipality believes it is very important that schools and nurseries also have knowledge on sustainability, environmental protection and climate change. Therefore it provides funds for schools and nurseries to buy books on these subjects.

Renewable Energy from Wastewater – Wastewater Treatment Plants as Local Energy Cells

Wasserverband Mürzverband, Austria

Project title

Renewable Energy from Wastewater –
Wastewater Treatment Plants as Local Energy
Cells

Name of the lead organization

Wasserverband Mürzverband

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Size of organisation

22

Type of sector

Natural resources, Energy and climate

Key words of project

Energy self-sufficiency, Environmental protection,
Fossil-free energy future

The supply of heating and hot water implies large amounts of energy, which to date come mostly from fossil sources. To counteract climate change and pursue the decarbonisation of cities, renewable heat sources such as wastewater have been increasingly coming into focus in recent years. Wastewater contains large amounts of chemicals and thermal energy, and is produced wherever human activities take place; this means that it is not only a renewable but also a constant and reliable source of energy and heat.

The submitted project, starting from the Kapfenberg wastewater treatment plant, investigated possible innovative approaches on whether and how energy (heat) recovery from wastewater could contribute to the public heat supply.

So far, the only energy-related aim of wastewater treatment plants has been self-sufficiency but usually, the energy produced by this type of plant may far exceed its self-supply needs. Consequently, a wastewater treatment plant could also be re-imagined and developed as a local energy/heat cell and this is possible with same kind of plants across Europe, making the heating and the hot water supply local, climate-friendly, renewable and sustainable. The investigations confirmed the technical feasibility of the selected implementation scenario. It can develop both available heat sources at the wastewater treatment plant, therefore it satisfies two types of heat demand – the wastewater treatment plant internal demand, and external ones.

Consequently, the project supports the exploitation of what is so far an unused heat potential (the wastewater heat from the wastewater treatment plant's effluent), and the more efficient use of the available energy sources. Wastewater heat specifically used for (internal) low-temperature applications (e.g. digester heating) makes the high energy from the sewage gas/biogas combustion available for other (external) uses.

This project has not only an evident environmental impact but also an economic one, since the use of wastewater as a renewable and constant local source of energy further decreases energy dependence. Moreover, it relieves the burden on biomass, which will also play an increasing role in the fossil-free energy future, and it constitute a surplus of energy to be sold, providing an additional income for the water board.

Concluding, the wastewater treatment plant as a local, renewable and reliable energy/heat cell represents a key element for the ongoing intent of an energetic transition and can thus play an essential role in the sustainable energy supply of the future.

Green Supply Chains

Ljubljana Tourism, Slovenia

Project title

Green Supply Chains

Name of the lead organization

Ljubljana Tourism

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Size of organisation

20-49

Type of sector

Transport, tourism, agriculture, Investment and PPPs, Energy and climate

Key words of project

Sustainable development of tourism, Shortening supply chains, Healthy and local food, Purchasing platform

The project *Green Supply Chains falls* in the sector of sustainable development of tourism. It aims to pursue this mission by raising awareness on the importance of consuming fresh, locally produced food to stimulate the local economy and reduce the carbon footprint. It is focused on environment protection, achieving sustainable effects by shortening supply chains and so reducing emissions, and on economic development by reducing the use of fertilisers and other chemicals, and fostering the local economy.

The project enables easy access of the tourism industry (hotels, restaurants) to local farmers and vice versa via a rural development cooperative, which acts as a linkage and facilitates the communication between the parts involved. An innovative purchasing platform was also set up as a one-stop shop, displaying current offers, prices and producers.

The *Green Supply Chains* project links and puts in contact local food producers – including small ones – with hotels and restaurants, bringing fresh, top-quality and environmentally friendly local ingredients to the tables around the city. This new cooperation model sees the public body as the main partner and financier, the private cooperative as the main facilitator, the restaurants and hotels as consumers and the farmers as suppliers. In this framework, prices are negotiated on behalf of more clients and larger quantities are purchased, making the products' cost, quality and quantity acceptable both for farmers and businesses. In this way, no imported goods are sold in the project.

In addition to connecting the various parties involved, the role of Tourism Ljubljana is also to raise awareness on the importance of locally produced food and the tradition of Ljubljana and Slovenian food. This is being achieved through a series of culinary thematic guided tours and experiences. Tourism Ljubljana have developed a website where new recipes, novelties in the city and the promotion of local culinary offers are regularly posted. It has designed further activities and initiatives to promote the project and pursue its mission, such as a culinary calendar, distributed to hotels and restaurants via newsletter on a monthly basis, with three recipes based on seasonal, local ingredients and the list of the farms that produce these ingredients. Ljubljana Breakfast has been launched, encouraging restaurants to serve locally sourced breakfast ingredients instead of croissant and juice, and finally, also a 'Yummy Market', a walking tour where visitors get the chance to taste seasonal products from local farmers and growers, which ends with a fresh, tasty, locally produced breakfast in one of the cafés and restaurants in the market's neighbourhood.

IRec

Câmara Municipal de Cascais, Portugal

Project title

IRec

Name of the lead organization

Câmara Municipal de Cascais

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Size of organisation

2300

Type of sector

Central and local administration, Energy and climate

Key words of project

Citizen participation, Building awareness, Recycling efficiency

The project *IRec (Innovate in Recycling)*, represents the commitment of Cascais Municipality towards the future in terms of preservation of the environment and achievement of SDGs.

The municipality's intent to preserve the ecosystem is based on an awareness that availability of resources on the planet is not unlimited and is not inexhaustible. As we are already in deficit with the planet, new measures are needed for the transition from a linear economy to a circular economy, and this process passes through recycling improvement.

In this context, IRec wants to define recycling targets but also to face several challenges, such as the involvement of society in recycling activities that is of utmost importance to increase the recycling rate. The *IRec* project aims to change behaviours and will reward the right ones, thus anticipating the recycling targets that European legislation will increase by 2025. The conviction that underpins Cascais' commitment is that everyone's involvement is fundamental for the transition from a linear economy to a circular economy.

As well as an impact on awareness and knowledge, and obviously on the environment (reducing the

amount of waste that is not collected and processed properly), IRec also achieved results from an economic point of view. The projects will reduce the cost of waste collection and separation. The equipment provided – the collection machines called reverse vending machines (RVM) – allow a more efficient collection of waste that is already separated. The innovation is the approach to the management of single-use packaging, bringing together an experienced team of retailers, collection services, research centres and companies in the waste sector. The RVM represents the incentive that was missing to attract citizens to recycle more and to change their behaviour regarding the consumption of drinks in single-use containers, because of the impact on the environment.

The RVMs are attractive because when citizens return single-use containers made of glass, plastic or metal they know that, in the nearly future, this waste material will be reintroduced into the economy as new products, thus promoting the circular economy. For each glass, plastic and metal package returned to RVM, participants receive points that will be converted into prizes.

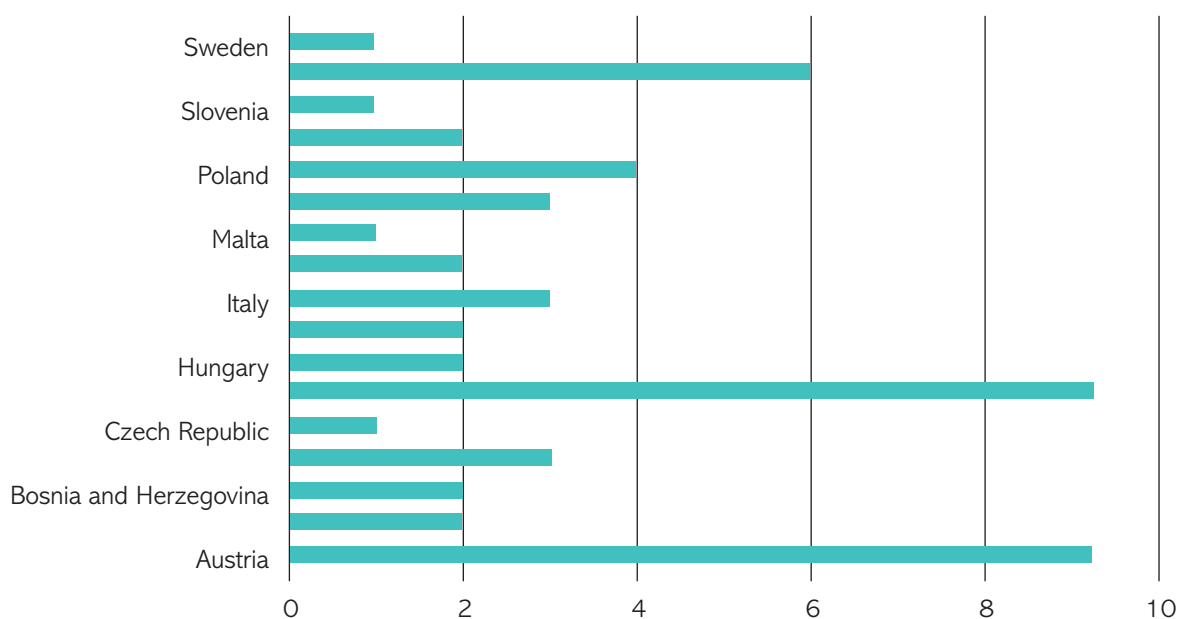
Finally, there is another fundamental goal for the future pursued by IRec and that is the collection of data, which will enable Cascais' City Hall to assess the environmental and economic impact of the project. In this way, they will be able to provide detailed information for more informed decision-making on how to progress the transition to a new recycling system that will be mandatory in 2022. It is estimated that this initiative collects one million packages per month and reaches a population of 206,000 inhabitants and 1.2 million tourists per year.

DIGITAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STATISTICS

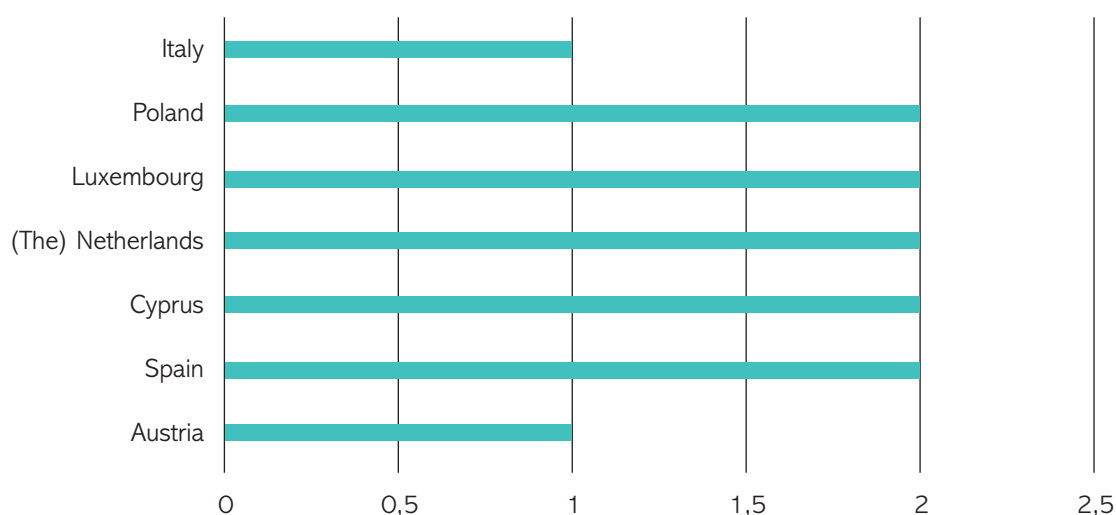
Digital Public Administration statistics

Out of a total of 126 projects received, 54 projects came from the Digital category. In the statistics below you can see the number of applications by country, the sectors covered, the size of the submitting organisations and the distribution of Good Practice Certificates (GPC) by country.

Applications by country²⁶



Good Practice Certificate (GPC) by country (12 of 54)



²⁶ Please note that one application may fall under more than one category and be counted twice

Sectors covered by all applications²⁷

e-Government	51%	28
Digitalisation	51%	28
Central and local administration	38%	21
Governance	27%	15
Research, innovation and digital economy	27%	15
Management of human resources	14%	8
Tax related sector	11%	6
Education & vocational training	11%	6
Labour market	9%	5
Healthcare and long-term care	9%	5
Crisis management	9%	5

²⁷ This table shows the share of applications having been submitted under each of the given sectors. Please note that one application may fall under various sectors.

DIGITAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Vienna provides space (Wien gibt Raum), Austria (First place, Digital)

Project title

Vienna provides space (Wien gibt Raum)

Name of the lead organisation

The city of Vienna

Address

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Size of organisation

50

Type of sector

governance, central and local administration,
e-government, research, innovation and digital
economy, digitisation, better regulation

Keywords of project

data management, public spaces management,
geodata

The *Vienna provides* space project rethinks the use of public spaces by citizens and businesses. It is based on the principle that public spaces are the flagship of a modern city, where different interests and needs come together but resources are limited. In addition, a paradigm shift is apparent: while public spaces used to be perceived primarily as transit space, in many European cities there is a noticeable trend towards more diverse and intensified use. This has resulted in increased pressure on public space; in Vienna, there are more than 300,000 objects in the public space in addition to events, markets and construction uses. This results in more than 725,000 approval procedures for different types of use carried out per year – a quantity that represents an effective lever for innovation and optimisation.

The desire for higher service orientation and more effective coordination had emerged out of the administration itself. With 'Vienna provides space', the city of Vienna has developed a target-oriented digitisation strategy that makes it easier for citizens to apply for permits and for the responsible departments to cooperate more efficiently. Here, digitisation acts as a catalyst for legal and procedural simplifications as well as for the development of a new approach to customer communication. The programme 'Vienna provides space' has set itself the goal of a complete digitisation of procedures for the use of public spaces by 2022. Citizens and businesses can find the information and application options that suit them in just a few steps. Their concerns are dealt with more quickly and they will eventually receive digital feedback.

The main goals of the project have been the use of data as basis for digitisation ('mobile mapping' campaign – data is used to create geoinformation on public space), which is reshaping customer relations. Therefore, the digital one-stop shop for the use of public space has been developed in an agile and demand-oriented manner for the implementation of new processes, and the improvement of people's lives via digitisation.

The programme 'Vienna provides space' is based on three fully integrated pillars, to create a seamless end-to-end digitised process for customers and the administrative staff. Therefore, the quality and efficiency of public space management as well as the transparency and service quality of the administration are increased due to the digitisation of public space. The fully integrated ICT solution and a digital one-stop shop constitute a holistic approach that integrates process design, ICT solutions and legal aspects in a prototype for the digital administration of the 21st century.

JustizOnline, Austria (Second prize winner)

Project title

JustizOnline

Name of the lead organisation

Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice

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Size of organisation

12,105

Type of sector

central and local administration, e-government

Keywords of the project

digital justice, transparency, legal certainty

The project *JustizOnline* originated in 2018 following a ministerial proposal to digitise the judiciary of Federal Minister Josef Moser. The objectives were the creation of a digital access channel to judicial proceedings on a citizen platform. This enabled the location and time-independent inspection of files and information on the state of the proceedings, with the availability of an overview of defined trial dates and immediate information in case of any delays or cancellations. A modern and mobile useable publication platform was also developed with the possibility to register creditors in bankruptcy proceedings. A broad range of citizens were involved on site at the court to test the developed prototypes. Within the implementation project, several internal user-friendly reviews were conducted on use-case-oriented workshop basis with judges and secretaries.

Nowadays, JustizOnline is the digital public service platform of the independent Austrian courts and public prosecution offices, which provides digital access to judicial proceedings. Its goal is to enhance trust in the judiciary, eliminate existing barriers and ensure easy access to justice for the public. Each

citizen will be able to interact with the judiciary in a simple, digital way and submit personal judicial matters quickly and with less administrative burden. The services offered include selected online court procedures, 24 hours a day and without local restrictions, from any desktop or smartphone. JustizOnline extends the independent courts and public prosecution offices' services to include cutting-edge, charge-free and transparent digital services.

JustizOnline is in continuous expansion with plans to offer several more services, therefore the team is still working to enhance the platform and implement new features to address various target groups. At the core of the project, the task of the judiciary – the creation of legal certainty and peace – remains unchanged and it is considered essential how these services arrive at the citizen. This is exactly where this new service comes into play and creates considerable benefits for all citizens and companies in Austria through the fundamental redesign of the accompanying value-added processes. Moreover, people no longer have to engage a lawyer for having the opportunity to benefit from the electronic file inspection, which has been available for lawyers for many years.

A homogenous and modern appearance of the judiciary is ensured by integrating previously isolated services: this is an essential factor in the public perception of the judiciary as a modern, easily accessible, citizen-oriented and professional public institution. With the creation of this platform, the Austrian judiciary provides state-of-the-art and citizen-friendly access to the judicial services, and becomes more transparent and comprehensible to citizens and businesses. In this way, there is an increase of confidence in the judiciary as the third pillar of the rule of law, and it contributes to building a better Europe, enhancing legal certainty and peace.

Crossborder Fines, Belgium (Third prize winner)

Project title

Crossborder Fines

Name of the lead organisation

Justitie (The Federal Public Service Justice)

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Size of organisation

25,079. In-house Crossborder team: 70

Type of sector

research, innovation and digital economy, e-government, digitisation, judicial reform

Keywords of the project

digital fight against crime, automation in public administration, transparent communication

a role in restoring public confidence in the police and the judiciary. Road safety is a European issue that can only succeed through extensive national and European cooperation. Crossborder Fines is therefore taking a pioneering role in this with the implementation of the eCODEX platform in Belgium, which enables Member States to digitally exchange any unpaid fines issued to foreign offenders.

The objectives of the project are combating impunity by creating the Crossborder Fines platform and a central management to enrich all the data from various national and international partners. This simplifies and digitises access to information to achieving better road safety by stricter enforcement to reduce fatal traffic accidents. It also raises awareness among citizens of the dangers and consequences of risky behaviour, and is why awareness sheets are sent out with the fines processed by the Crossborder platform.

Crossborder Fines is an innovative digitisation and automation project that arises from the need, common to every EU country, to identify and effectively prosecute foreign traffic offenders. In this regard, a digitisation and centralisation of the national processes and systems for the management and processing of fines is crucial. The Crossborder Fines project was launched in 2017 as a collaboration and co-creation between the public sector and private partners. It is based on the European Directive 2015/413, which imposes a uniform framework on the Member States to harmonise the international systems to facilitate the exchange of information at a European level. The core business of Crossborder consists of centralising and digitising the management and processing of traffic fines.

Since 2020, Crossborder Fines has also been digitising the processes for other criminal offences, including violations of the coronavirus measures, shoplifting and drugs. By ensuring an effective and consistent criminal law enforcement and execution of (financial) penalties, Crossborder aims to play

Crossborder also aims to provide a better service to citizens and enterprises and to do this, the project relies on three main pillars. First, a focus on clearer communication – for example, templates of traffic fines have been updated and they are now sent out in 23 languages. Second, to digitise and expand services to provide the offender with the best possible guidance in dealing with the fines. To this end, a website was set up where the offender can consult, follow up and manage their fines digitally. Third, the optimisation of the customer journey for enterprises – the project team has adapted the content and functionalities on the website to the needs and wishes of enterprises, including transparent and clear communication.

Furthermore, this far-reaching digitisation and automation also resulted in a reduction of the administrative workload for 350 FTEs. This has allowed police and judiciary staff to spend more time on core tasks where human intervention is essential, resulting in an overall increase of security, efficiency and better HR management.

Relaunch of FinanzOnline for citizens and integration of the chatbot *Fred*

Austria

Project title

Relaunch of FinanzOnline for citizens and integration of the chatbot Fred

Name of the lead organization

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Size of organisation

11000

Type of sector

Digitalisation, Research, Innovation and Digital
economy, Tax administration efficiency, Tax
compliance

Key words of project

E-government application, Software agent, Tax
assessment

As the number of staff decreases and calls and requests for assistance keep increasing, it becomes increasingly difficult to deal with it in a satisfactory time. Accordingly, another winning idea was a chatbot – *Fred* – to answer all the questions about employee assessment. It quickly became clear that such a chatbot would take the strain off the telephone lines in the medium term, and customers could also be offered a new, 24/7 service.

For the first time in the tax administration, and in the public administration in Austria, the further development of FinanzOnline was carried out with a very strong involvement of the future user group and *Fred* was one of the first chatbots deployed in the country. The way information is provided to the citizens was new to the public administration and required a change of culture since traditionally, the users had to search static websites for tax-related information. With *Fred*, the citizen can enter a dialogue with a software agent by describing their request and the algorithm of the bot delivers short, easy-to-understand answers, which the citizen can explore further by asking more questions. This contrasts with many public administration websites that often comprise exhaustive texts to cover every legal detail, which is not even relevant for the majority of cases and therefore, for most of the time is not efficient. Because of the size restrictions and the dialogue-oriented character of the communication with a chatbot, this channel of information had to be structured and formulated in a very different and innovative way. The administration editorial team, which used to work with website content, received special training for this.

FinanzOnline was the first transactional portal of the Austrian public administration in 2003 and it still represents the flagship of e-government applications in Austria. However, it recently became clear that a significant revision was needed, especially for the large portion of users who only rarely use the portal, such as citizens who want to process their employee tax assessment or applications for family allowances via FinanzOnline; this represents 86% of all users. A steering group consisting of technical and IT members was set up in addition to a steering committee to implement the necessary changes. The main goals were the reduction of direct contacts (physical and by telephone) and errors in the back-office process, and an increase in the online quota and FinanzOnline popularity, plus faster processing for users.

Information-supported Decision-making

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands

Project title

Information-supported Decision-making

Name of the lead organization

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Size of organisation

2448

Type of sector

Digitalisation

Key words of project

Visa applications, Information platform,
Automation in public administration

The information-supported decision-making (IOB) project was introduced to ensure that decisions on Schengen visa applications, under the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, could be taken more efficiently and more objectively. More specifically, thanks to this initiative, the applications are processed in the shortest time possible allowing visas to be issued and, on the other side, officers can focus on more complex applications that may involve risks.

The main focus of the project has been the development and deployment of a technical application, the Application Assessment Database

(BAO) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while visa officers process visa applications in the New Visa Information System (NVIS). The BAO makes it possible to automatically provide all known and useful information for visa officers to issue short-stay visa applications. NVIS consults the information held in its own system as well as information held on the applicant/host in the BAO. The BAO checks what is known about the application by comparing the visa application with information on the applicant in the migration system, and with profiles and local information.

Once the visa application has been checked by the officer, they will be advised on how to process the application concerned: with a 'fast track', an 'intensive track' or a 'regular' procedure. A visa application that generates a fast-track process will require less attention than an intensive track process. However, the information from the BAO will never result in the automatic acceptance (or refusal) of a short-stay visa application as it is the visa officers who decide whether extra steps are needed, such as interviewing the applicant or verifying a document.

Furthermore, the project also envisages the development of an information platform called the Country Wizard (CW). The CW ensures access to all background knowledge of a country, its society and the visa population, necessary to place the visa application in the right context. This information is laid down in a uniform way per country to guarantee easy access and the information is factual, up-to-date, validated and non-discriminatory.

City Deal Zicht op Ondernijning

Department of Internal Affairs in co-operation with ICTU, the Netherlands

Project title

City Deal Zicht op Ondernijning

Name of the lead organization

Department of Internal Affairs
in co-operation with ICTU

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Size of organisation

500

Type of sector

Governance, Central and local administration,
Tax evasion and fraud, Tax compliance,
Financial sector supervision, Better regulation,
Digitalization, Anti-corruption & anti-fraud
strategies, Anti-money laundering strategies

Key words of project

Subversive crime data analysis, Public
dashboard, Knowledge sharing

way, the governments can implement measures more targeted to those areas or features, where the data indicates significant and inexplicable deviations. That helps governments who often have limited capacity to carry out all their tasks at this regard.

The method applied in this project meets all the privacy standards; all data used is anonymised before it is used in analysis and no disclosure of people or companies takes place. The insights that are developed are shown and explained on a transparent and public dashboard. These are discussed with experts from all relevant fields and the outcome is used for preventive policies and operations. The dashboard displays the outcome too, so that all organisations can use the results from analyses and consequent outputs, and focus on the areas where they have scarce capacity. It is used by local governments, police, and also by the Regional and National Information and Expertise Centres, banks and electricity suppliers, for example. All the activities, processes, designs, algorithms and more are described, verified and validated by experts and checked by the Central Bureau of Statistics, so that all the lessons learned, and the developed method can be transferred to relevant organisations to continue this method.

The project 'City Deal Zicht op Ondernijning' ('View on Undermining'), carried out by ICTU, stems from the need of several Dutch governments, between central and local, to better understand subversive crime via the means of data analyses.

The analyses were conducted using data from the Central Bureau of Statistics and subsequently insights were developed. Sets or combinations of indicators and search areas, for themes such as property fraud and drugs, were narrowed; in this

The verification, validation and controls aspects of the method aim to ensure caution and reliability; the subversive crime issues were addressed and analysed with data science methods on mass data by data scientists.

The innovation of 'City Deal Zicht op Ondernijning' project lies in the fact that the method itself has never been used before. It is also suitable for other social issues such as poverty and social unrest.

Municipality ASP 2.0

(Further development and nationwide extension of the Municipality ASP system) Hungary
Governmental Information-Technology Development Agency (GITDA), Hungary

Project title

Municipality ASP 2.0

Name of the lead organization

Governmental Information-Technology
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Size of organisation

1000

Type of sector

Tax administration efficiency, Tax compliance,
Digitalisation, Spending reviews, Public
accounting

Key words of project

Standardized digitalization, Application service
providing, e-Government service, Digitalization
of municipalities

chosen to promote local government digitisation in Hungary.

The Municipality ASP is a centralised shared IT service that has standardised the internal operation of local governments with the main goal to provide modern, integrated and cost-effective state-of-the-art IT services in a software-as-a-service (SaaS) model for local governments. The idea behind this tool was to provide integrated back-office software for local governments for their functions, and a common platform for e-government service provision at the local level for the end users, so they can use a unified local e-service all over the country. Thanks to this, the main issue of the differences in levels of digitisation of municipalities and local silo solutions have been solved.

The advantage and main innovation of the ASP model revealed its success particularly during the pandemic because the users (citizens, businesses, organisations) can access the SaaS provided by a remote service provider online via a simple web browser following the necessary authentication. On the other side, the employees of the municipalities could easily work remotely and carry out the wide range of their functions (such as local financial management, tax administration, industry and trade management). Thanks to this project, it has become possible to provide e-government services of the same quality through a single portal by the municipalities, making easier for the citizens and the businesses to interact with the local public administrations.

The *Municipality ASP 2.0* project arises from the need of the Hungarian central government to overcome the former differences in levels of digitisation in local governments around Hungary, improve their efficiency in public accounting and local taxation, and be able to monitor in real time the anonymised financial management and taxation data of the local municipalities. The reason behind the latter, was that the central government had to find a way to consolidate local governments' debts taken on between 2011 and 2014.

The central government's main needs were to introduce a solution for the local government sector to ensure their standardised operation and up-to-date financial data monitoring opportunities. In other words, it had to develop and spread unified technical quality standards and ensure an optimal use of investment and operational resources. A centralised application service providing (ASP) model has been

The project also introduced an innovative data warehouse that is automatically loaded with anonymised data from the sector-specific systems of the service portfolio, so that automated business intelligence (BI) analysis can be done to prevent local governments from indebtedness in time, and to avoid situations such as the one that occurred between 2011 and 2014.

ID.GOV.PT

AMA – Administrative Modernisation Agency, Portugal

Project title

ID.GOV.PT

Name of the lead organization

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Size of organisation

269

Type of sector

Governance, Central and local administration,
e-Government, Digitalisation

Key words of project

Digital identification documents, E-wallet,
Digital transition

ID.GOV.PT is an app for mobile phones (Android, iOS, HarmonyOS) that allows citizens to create, access and share legally valid digital versions of personal identification documents such as a national ID card, healthcare, tax and social security cards and a driving licence. This project aims to help citizens in managing the numerous personal documents they need to access services, engage in public initiatives and interact with the authorities. An unambiguous citizen identification is key to guarantee an effective, high-quality delivery of services and, from the citizen's perspective, accessing and using different legal documents through their own smartphones brings convenience, ease of administrative burden and saves time.

Nowadays in a fast-paced changing world, a ready-to-go e-wallet benefits both citizens and the state, as having such information digitally available allows easier, more secure and trusted interactions between

them. The ID.GOV.PT app is a pioneer project when it comes to a digital wallet for mobile phones and furthermore, it includes a strong authentication via an eIDAS-compliant mechanism, the Portuguese mobile eID solution Digital Mobile Key (DMK), which is noted in the OJEU with a high level of assurance.

This project is even more innovative considering the needs that have arisen during the pandemic, during which the handling of physical documents began to be associated with a certain degree of risk. At the same time, the increasing demand for user-friendly mobile solutions by citizens experienced an exponential surge. In this context, the eID wallet represents a safer and more convenient option, also because in this way credit cards and other identification documents can be left at home so only smartphones need to be carried.

The ID.GOV app provides the citizen with an unequivocal proof of their identity with both public and private authorities, in a very easy way. It aims to simplify the citizen's relationship with the state, responding to their needs through the convenience of a mobile device. On the other hand, from the authorities' point of view it represents a reliable and quick mechanism to check and validate personal IDs. The app allows online and real-time validation of the digital documents through a simple and secure process that uses an official European eIDAS regulation-compliant authentication mechanism, the DMK – digital mobile key.

The ID.GOV app may contribute to reducing fraud for both customers and businesses (traders and retailers) – it represents an innovative step forward in the digital sector for public administration, taking advantage of strong political support as well as solid infrastructures, and it is an example of Portuguese investment in the digital transition.

Consultas Covid Extremadura

The Government Delegation in Extremadura, Spain

Project title

Consultas Covid Extremadura

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Size of organisation

100

Type of sector

Governance, Central and local administration,
Welfare system, e-Government, Healthcare and
long-term care, Digitalisation, Crisis management

Key words of project

Consultation mailbox, Digital technology,
Teleworking, Public health crisis, COVID-19

manage the mailbox and implement a completely new working method – highly agile and with unprecedented timing and response coordination, through teleworking and digital technology. The team was responsible for answering citizens' enquiries received 24 hours a day, seven days a week and within a maximum of 24 hours; the most urgent questions were prioritised and needed to be answered immediately.

The existence of the mailbox and the working team have been promoted widely among public administrations in Extremadura, citizens and institutions. The very quick and efficient response rate to the enquiries was immediately perceived as very positive from the citizens. These two elements allow many people to reach out the service so the demand for information from the society was unexpectedly high. Within three days from the creation of the mailbox, the demand increased so much that five additional civil servants had to be assigned to deal with it. The new adaptation was solved efficiently to a large extent thanks to the great commitment of the public employees in the face of the situation that society was going through due to the public health crisis.

The cost of the project implementation has been low, as it was set up and run by public employees of the Government Delegation. Moreover, such a system of communication between the public and the citizens may be highly appropriate for any other type of situation that may arise from a governmental action, whether due to a crisis of any kind or the adoption of a normative or regulatory measure that may involve a high demand for information from the public regarding its content and scope.

In the context of Covid-19 breakout, from the first declaration of a state of alarm in Spain, the Government Delegation in Extramadura decided to create a consultation mailbox, consultascovid19.extremadura@correo.gob.es. The aim was to answer citizens' questions and doubts, in writing, regarding the measures that were being adopted by the Spanish Government and different public administrations in Spain because of the state of alarm, accompanying the applicable legislation for each consultation.

The project also envisaged the creation of the Covid Extremadura Consultation Working Group to

Digital for Reconstruction Grants

USRC, Italy

Project title

Digital for Reconstruction Grants

Name of the lead organization

USRC (Special Office for the Reconstruction of the municipalities of the "Seismic Crater")

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Size of organisation

101

Type of sector

Central and local administration, Digitalization

Key words of project

Reconstruction, Seismic crater, Applications for grants, Digital platform

The project *Digital for Reconstruction Grants* presented here has been developed in the context of the reconstruction of private buildings and historical centres of the municipalities damaged by the Abruzzo region earthquakes, which occurred from 2009 onwards (the so-called seismic crater). It relates specifically to the applications for grants and details of work progress in the overall reconstruction. To date, thousands of applications for grants have been submitted and, with reference to the standard grant application procedure of the Special Office for the Reconstruction of the municipalities of the seismic crater (USRC), all the documentation required had to be submitted either in person in printed form or via PEC (Posta elettronica certificata), with relevant impacts on both the applicant and the receiving administration.

The USRC reached the conclusion that was necessary to develop and implement a method to make the system simpler and more accessible, to avoid wasting time and human resources, to

reduce issues for external users and to improve its efficiency, effectiveness and transparency. In short, effort was needed to modernise and upgrade the service.

The Office decided to broaden an existing tool, a digital platform dedicated to contracts chosen for the post-seismic interventions, and to include within it the submission of applications for grants, details of work progress and any related documentation.

The procedure for digitisation has allowed the creation of the first shared interface between the applicants, the designers and the public administrations where each stakeholder can consult, access and upload information or documentation. The information that before required human resources to be physically uploaded and elaborated are now automatically processed in real time by the digital system and can be visible on the platform by everyone.

The sustainability of this digital platform over time is based on the high rate of utilisation from external users, on their positive feedback, on the free-of-charge and straight-away implementation. It is completely managed in-house, therefore the Office did not need to invest in any extra staff or train its employees because they were already used to the platform before its extension. Such a digital tool could represent a benchmark for those public administrations who have to deal with complex procedures that require high levels of coordination and monitoring, or that involve significant amounts of documentation. It is also suitable for those administrations with very low budget or limited human resources.

The platform is relatively recent therefore it can be much improved, for example, it could be broadened to include other procedures the Office has to deal with such as the evaluation of the post-seismic level of usability of the buildings.

All-in-One HR

Cyprus University of Technology (CUT), Cyprus

Project title

All-in-One HR

Name of the lead organization

Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)

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Size of organisation

415

Type of sector

Management of human resources

Key words of project

Public administration modernization, Digital transformation, Smart management system

The project *All-in-One HR* was born as result of multiple changes in legislation, and subsequent effects in the public sector required by the financial crisis and imposed by the intervention of country's lenders. One of the major reforms was the modernisation of the public administration by proceeding with horizontal changes in human resources management, to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. In this context, the leadership of the University of Technology (CUT) was aligned to the Government's efforts and the digital transformation was placed at the top of the agenda, to make CUT more students and citizens focused. A plan to automate and digitise internal processes was approved and started to roll out project by project.

This transformation envisaged the transition from a traditional, manual time and attendance management system of the CUT employees to a fully automated, digital and smart system, developed 100% in-house

and designed using existing HR knowledge and IT infrastructure. The system is managed digitally in its entirety, improving accuracy, speed and ease of use, while also providing detailed reports for the employees, management and the HR department. The main goal of the project was to introduce a new and evolved approach to adapt to the growing demands of the organisation and the macro-environment, so that CUT could focus its resources on the numerous HR issues related to organising a university from zero and dealing with continuous change.

More specifically, the aims of the system were digitisation, to shift to paperless administrative procedures; the creation of a tool for managers, enabling them to easily monitor their employees' working hours, late arrivals, early departures, overtime, time off and absenteeism; improved quality of HR services provided to employees and managers, promoting self-service options and flexibility; the incorporation of applicable legislation provisions; and the ability to serve as the flagship of internal processes automation projects and build upon its positive impact for further digitisation.

The project succeeded and this encouraged the HR department to consider the option of extend the same platform to other departments such as training and development. It is possible to extend the system to other functions internally and at the same time to replicate it for other public administration organisations, which need a new and useful approach to an overhauling process with the use of technology. In conclusion, the digital reinvention of public administration is not just about incorporating technology, but also about new approaches in work processes, culture and mindset, which primarily serve citizens.

Casemates

Ministry of State – Central Legislation Service, Luxembourg

Project title

Casemates

Name of the lead organization

Ministry of State - Central Legislation Service

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Size of organisation

20

Type of sector

Governance, Central and local administration,
e-Government, Better regulation

Key words of project

Legislative Open Data, Web technology, Open
source, Knowledge sharing

Nowadays the legislation is not researched and read exclusively by lawyers, but also the non-legal public may need to look for a legislative act in force in its consolidated version and without having to consult multiple amendments. Moreover, the number of legislative and regulatory acts continues to increase, and this complexity affects economic activity and generates additional burdens for citizens, businesses and municipalities, complicating the overall monitoring of government work. Until recently, Luxembourg's legislation was based on a paper version and having access to it and was very difficult for citizens, businesses and civil servants, and sometimes it also created issues for ministries. However, today's world is characterised by a new paradigm: access, sharing and enrichment of legislative information. In this context a change was necessary, in the direction of digitisation.

In January 2017, a full set of new applications and websites was implemented, based on semantic web technologies, a new ontology JOLUX and controlled vocabulary among others. This ecosystem sets the grounds for sharing and interconnecting legal information between different applications and providing better access to legislation for citizens and businesses.

The major objectives behind this initiative were the modernisation of publishing the Official Journal, facilitated accessibility and participation, access to public information, and a new Legislative Open Data for more transparency and efficiency, and to better reflect the needs of users.

Therefore, a new portal for Luxembourg legislation – legilux.lu – was set up. Access to and the exchange of information were facilitated, the publication process was fully digitised and legislative complexity reduced, the texts introduced into the legislative procedures were standardised and the administrative costs were reduced. An ecosystem was created around legal data where each application will access the same data, compared to a silo approach; better search results were provided either on the portal or via search engines such as Google to provide users with search facilities that could access legislation in force as it stands now.

The novelty of this project is its innovative approach, addressing the issue of governments spending a huge amount of time and budget to develop their own publishing systems and databases.

The idea of creating an open source project among governments has never been done before for legal publishing. Not only will each country benefit from shared knowledge, ideas, experience and economy of scale in the field of the Official Journals, but also benefit from each other's technical developments.

The Electronic Documents Archive

Head Office of Polish State Archives, Poland

Project title

The Electronic Documents Archive

Name of the lead organization

Head Office of Polish State Archives

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Size of organisation

77

Type of sector

Central & local administration, e-Government

Key words of project

Digitisation, Electronic documents, E-service, Digital archive

The *electronic documents archive* system (ade.gov.pl) answers the need to preserve archival material of great historical value for future generations, securing this part of the national archive collection and then making it available to the public.

In more depth, the project aimed at storing electronic documents in a secure manner, transferring archival materials in electronic form from institutions and individuals to state archives, ensuring easy access to information on the resources stored in the system and adapting the state archives to the needs of modern society. In other words, the operations of the Polish national archives have been adjusted to the needs of a modern society and a knowledge-based economy.

The ADE project is an easy to use, but also a novel and innovative tool on a European scale, which completes the missing link in Poland's digitisation

chain. It was addressed to all state archives and entities comprising the public administration, the non-state sector and individuals. Thanks to its implementation, the level of computerisation was increased, not only regarding digitisation of the overall public administration, but also undertaking such activities in the private sector. This initiative allowed widespread availability and high quality of services for all citizens.

The archival material made available in electronic form is created both within and outside the public sector: the basic source is the IT systems used by public administration bodies around Poland, but the system also enables the acquisition and preservation of documents from the non-public sector and from individuals, storing and securing them in electronic document form.

There are two main innovations of the project: one is procedural, with a process of taking over electronic documentation, securing it and making it available to all interested parties, and the second is product related. It refers to the creation of a nationwide platform providing e-services for receiving, storing and making electronic documentation available, the construction of an archive private cloud used for the purposes of the ADE system, the integration of servers and network communication in a single hardware architecture implementation of a threat database, which allows for thwarting cyber-attack attempts before they become a real threat, and a solution to store system logs with the use of block chain technology that guarantees the invariability of historical data.

The ADE system is one of the essential components of the state's IT architecture and is necessary for its continued operation. The new services offered should contribute to the development of modern fields of economy and science.

Transparency in the Health Service

Junta de Castilla y León (Governing Council of Castile and León), Spain

Project title

Transparency at the service of health

Name of the lead organization

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Size of organisation

93,769

Type of sector

Governance, e-Government, Research, Innovation
and digital economy, Healthcare and long-term
care, Digitalisation

Key words of project

Transparency, Information channel, Web portal,
COVID-19

The *Transparency in the Health Service* project was born in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic with the purpose of informing the citizenship as much as possible about what was happening. The administrations had to offer them the maximum possible amount of data to produce an accurate account of reality, since media and public officials were demanding reliable, abundant, timely and clear information. Junta de Castilla y León met these requests by creating a web portal where it would report daily on the coronavirus situation in the region, so that all health information on the impact of the pandemic could be offered.

Thanks to the project, the information was structured into sections that have grown in number and data as the situation evolves. The web portal includes tables, visualisations and explanatory notes that everyone can easily understand the methodology used to

obtain the data, and the policies carried out. The final download section allows downloading the data of the visualisations in different format, together with a query API that lets anyone search and download records with various criteria. In this way, the most specialised users could use the data in different ways.

The web portal data needed to be updated daily, including weekends and holidays. Being a living project in continuous evolution and increasingly popular, it kept growing, becoming the most visited portal of the Junta de Castilla y León in all its history. It is being promoted by Spanish media as the best and highest quality public information project on the pandemic thanks to the information it offers, its detail, clarity, updating and making data sets available. The limited resources, the need to obtain complex data from different sources and the speed in the execution of the project that the situation demanded, have made this initiative unique. This not only applies in the Castilla y León administration but also at worldwide level, because no Spanish database and only a few around the world come close to such a wealth of information and datasets.

The coordination between several ministers and departments responsible for the sources of information, many users to process data from multiple sources and a huge effort made by the administration, were essential for the project's success. It has been developed with its own resources and using a technological platform that was already available before the pandemic, therefore it did not result in any additional costs.

The main principles behind the project were openness and transparency, which permeated all levels of the administration and makes it much more resilient and solid in the face of changes that may occur from an organisational point of view or in political leadership.

rEEYplace: Automatic Processing of Substitute Teacher Needs in Public Schools

Junta Educational Service Commission (ESC), Cyprus

Project title

“rEEYplace”: Automatic Processing of Substitute Teacher Needs in Public Schools

Name of the lead organization

Educational Service Commission (ESC)

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Size of organisation

45

Type of sector

Labour market, e-Government, Management of human resources, Digitalisation

Key words of project

Schools modernization, Public educational System, Schools digitalisation

The project *rEEYplace* was created to overcome the daily demands of absentee permanent staff and teachers in the Cyprus public educational system; permanent employees may fall ill, take maternity/paternity leave, take leave of absence or other absences. Until recently this duty, among the competences of the Educational Service Commission (ESC), was carried out via a very time-consuming process, inefficient and stressful for both the ESC staff and the candidates. It was supposed to replace the absentees, with no impact on the operation of public schools.

The main goal of the project was to maintain the smooth operational flow of public schools, ensuring they would have the substitute teachers they required as soon as possible, within a more efficient, flexible and transparent framework. Therefore, rEEYplace, *the Internet Application for the Automatic Processing of Substitute Teacher Needs in Public Schools*, was developed in-house by the ESC IT department to modernise and optimise the procedures followed by the ESC. This new system enables each candidate to see, daily, all the requirements for substitutes in their specialisation and these are initially posted on the ESC website. Then, through the Government Portal Ariadne,

candidates can submit an application selecting only the schools that interest them, in order of preference.

The ESC IT department has conceived, implemented and deployed software that distributes the substitutions automatically, based on the candidates' selection order and their ranking on the Table of Appointees of their specialisation. The result of this distribution is sent immediately to candidates via SMS and email, and they also have access to the whole applications and preferences history. Since a significantly larger number of replacement candidates are allowed to participate in the process, their chances of employment are increased too.

As a result, all the manual heavy workload that was previously required is now handled more efficiently by a single person, allowing for the reorganisation, acceleration and optimisation in other areas of ESC's functions, enhancing productivity and allowing employees to deal with other, pending issues. The new process does not require waste of paper or printer ink and, being developed in-house, is also cost-free.

The project has an even more significant role if we consider that the operation of rEEYplace coincided with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to a rapid increase in the number of replacements needed in public schools. While the needs of the schools skyrocketed, at the same time the ESC operated with 80% of its staff working remotely. Without rEEYplace, hundreds of students would have been deprived of the presence of a teacher in their classroom. This is the strongest indication of rEEYplace's operational acuteness, success and endurance.

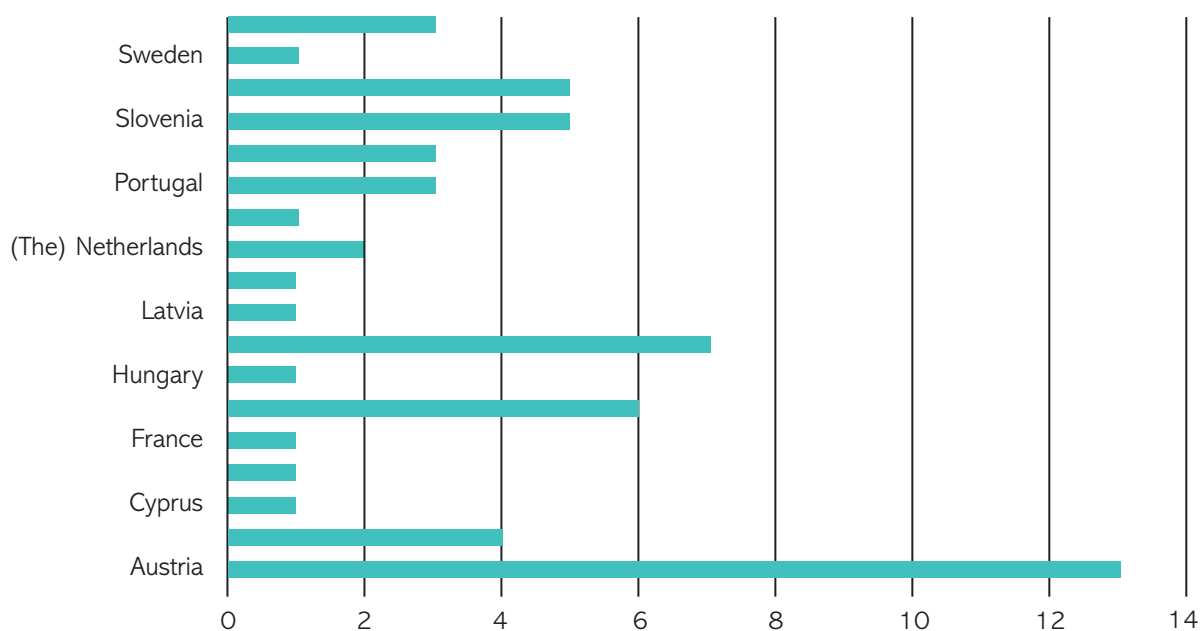
In conclusion, rEEYplace serves as a valuable example of how governments and organisations may set up programmes and take advantage of digitisation to improve their efficiency, without burdening their finances with further costs and with a medium to long-term return on budget, year after year.

INNOVATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STATISTICS

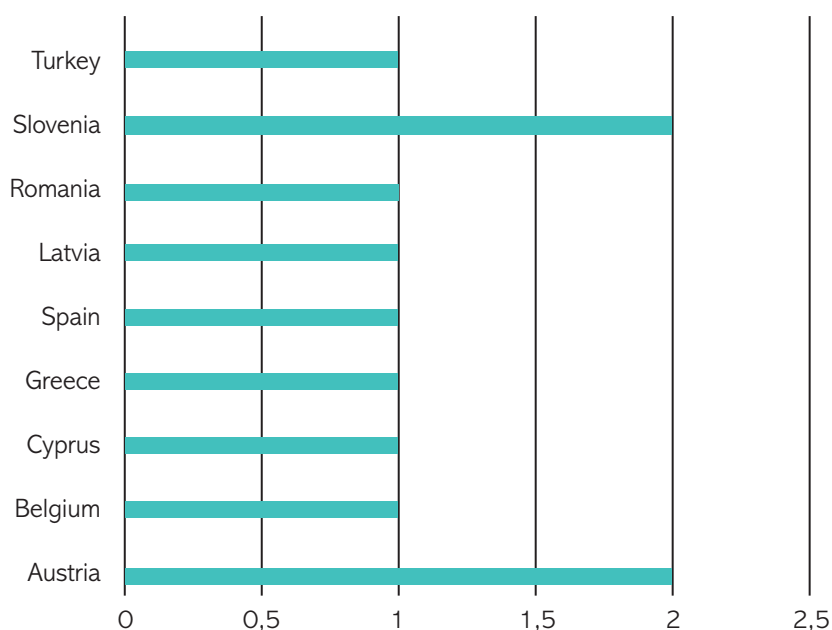
Innovative Public Administration statistics

Out of a total of 126 projects received, 60 projects came from the Digital category. In the statistics below you can see the number of applications by country, the sectors covered, the size of the submitting organisations and the distribution of Good Practice Certificates (GPC) by country.

Applications by country²⁸



Good Practice Certificate (GPC) by country (11 of 60)



²⁸ Please note that one application may fall under more than one category and be counted twice

Sectors covered by all applications²⁹

Governance	51%	32
Central and local administration	51%	31
Management of human resources	25%	15
Digitalisation	21%	13
Education & vocational training	16%	10
Research, innovation and digital economy	15%	9
Welfare system	13%	8
e-Government	11%	7
Healthcare and long-term care	10%	6
Energy and climate	10%	6
Natural resources	8%	5
Labour market	6%	4
Spending reviews, public accounting	6%	4

²⁹ This table shows the share of applications having been submitted under each of the given sectors. Please note that one application may fall under various sectors.

INNOVATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

LabX - Experimentation Laboratory for the Public Administration, Portugal

(First prize winner)

Project title

LabX – Experimentation Laboratory for the Public Administration

Name of the lead organisation

AMA – Administrative Modernisation Agency

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Size of organisation

250

Type of sector

research, innovation and digital economy, central and local administration, digitisation, education and vocational training

Keywords of the project

holistic approach, citizen-oriented public administration, prototyping of public services

of shared services, and prototyping solutions to ensure their viability. All this makes the LabX a space to test and prototype quickly and at low cost, thus stimulating a culture of creativity and experimentation.

LabX fosters better communication and the involvement of all parties, contributing to the co-creation of accountable public services that ease the interactions of citizens and businesses with the public administration. So far, LabX has concluded 25 experimentation projects successfully across government and set up several enabling sessions for public employees. It has further created network-based initiatives to bridge the existing capacity and expertise within both the public sector and the innovation ecosystem. An example is the Network of Innovators, a community of practice with 675 members from public administration to promote collaborative work sessions. The Network disseminates guides, best practices, working tools and innovative projects that show potential, which can be replicated by other entities.

The *LabX* project was created for testing innovative projects in the public administration because nowadays, innovation in public administration is still challenging. This is due to a culture of not questioning set procedures, the fear of failing, the inflexibility of the legislation and the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of public administration itself. In this context, the Portuguese government set up the LabX project which has proved to be valid and fruitful, and is today a solid pillar in the Portuguese innovation landscape. It is focused on improving the Portuguese public administration's way of working, based on the core principles of innovation in the public sector.

The project aims to provide the public administration with strategic thinking that, through experimentation and the prototyping of public services, would lead to the simplification of processes. One of LabX's main goals was also to foster capacity building in public servants and to stimulate the dissemination of best practices in the public administration. Ultimately, LabX's most significant objectives are to redesign services, improve access to public services and optimise ICT applications and all interaction processes. This focuses on the co-creation and implementation of new concepts and models

Some of the most innovative projects led by LabX are first, the development of an 'anticipatory innovation' kit, in partnership with OPSI (OECD) to foster foresight within governments. Second, an assessment of the virtual assistant of the Tax and Customs Authority in a systemic approach, based on multidimensional readiness, users' needs, expectations, interaction between humans and machines, and metrics. Third, InovX – the Innovation Panel for Public Sector, with the purpose of mapping innovation strategies used in the Portuguese public administration. At the same time, it has been building a prototype for a navigation tool based on empirical data, which supports decision-making processes in public organisations.

Recently, the demand for more user-centric public services has increased exponentially and consequently, also the governments' awareness that equally satisfying services for all citizens are essential. For these to come to fruition a holistic, collaborative approach that promotes the elimination of preconceived notions, encourages experimentation and fosters innovation was considered the most effective.

Government Buys Innovation, Belgium (second prize winner)

Project title

Government Buys Innovation

Name of the lead organisation

NIDO

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Size of organisation

5

Type of sector

digitisation, research, innovation and digital economy, SME and competition policy, governance

Keywords of the project

innovative public procurement, start-ups, out-of-the-box thinking

NIDO's core business consists of enabling innovation within governments, public services and public administrations by supporting civil servants in their quest for change.

Its new project *Government Buys Innovation* is a modern version of public procurement, focused on the active search for innovative solutions available on the market. By reconsidering the way of interaction between the public and the private sector, NIDO aims to transform public entities into pioneers for new creative ideas, modernising countries in the benefit of companies and citizens.

Nowadays, public procurement is usually designed to search for specific results described by public administrations themselves. There is no possibility to introduce tenders that might differ from the vision of the public administration that sometimes is not aware of all existing solutions to a problem.

Moreover, the classic public procurement commonly entails a great administrative burden for participating businesses, therefore often it is only big companies

with enough resources that participate, and public administration rarely receives innovative tenders. In this context, NIDO wants to work with a different approach. This is specifically developed to channel and encourage innovation and assist any public sector entity, accompanying it in a market consultation prior to the challenge.

To gather the broadest possible range of solutions, NIDO makes public tenders accessible and easy to process for all types of businesses. NIDO also tries to reach all possible candidates by contacting as many hubs, networks and groups channelling specific categories of providers, as well as specific companies, and inviting them to participate in the current project. After every round all solutions are evaluated and graded, and businesses receive extensive feedback on how their idea was perceived. NIDO's procedure allows businesses of all sizes and resources to formulate a tender, because they do not need the in-house capability to produce their offering on a large scale. Tested solutions can be further developed and eventually be implemented if information gathered during experimentation proves to be successful. NIDO's platform can also be used as a marketplace for meaningful dialogues between civil servants and creative businesses in a direct and transparent way. NIDO's main ambition is to assist companies willing to help the government in innovating, and providing their innovative solutions.

Concluding, Government Buys Innovation is innovative on many levels. Its novelty consists of not only making the goal of a more modern public sector feasible, but also in changing the principles of the classic public procurement. It provides assistance and the possibility of improvement to any public sector entity. NIDO's work consists of support and expertise to find the best and most innovative result for every specific project. Its expertise consists of asking the right questions, helping to formulate and frame the problem. It guides civil servants in the process of open mindedness and creativity, and tries to engage businesses that might offer out-of-the-box approaches.

U25 – Together for Young People in Vienna

City of Vienna, Municipal Department for Social Welfare, Social and Public Health Law, Austria

Project title

U25 – Together for young people in Vienna

Name of the lead organization

City of Vienna, Municipal Department for Social Welfare, Social and Public Health Law

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Size of organisation

1900

Type of sector

Governance, Labour market, Central and local administration, Welfare system, Education and vocational training

Key words of project

Young generations, Unemployment, Work advisors, Labour market integration

The aim of this project of the City of Vienna is to tackle the significant increase registered in the number of young, unemployed recipients of means-tested minimum income and, therefore, to minimise the risk of people needing long-term financial support.

The thinking behind this initiative is that enabling as many people as possible to permanently provide for their living on their own is not only of personal interest, but something that concerns the society as a whole and that has to start from the younger generation. It is crucial to provide young people with early and effective support to help them find their way into the labour market, should such support be needed.

The two main challenges that the Municipality of Vienna had to face pursuing this project were: at the starting phase, the different administrative

competences and responsibilities; then, in the concept development phase, to overcome obstacles resulting from different organisational logics, cultures and requirements.

Regarding the main goals, at the strategic short-term level the new support scheme aims to reduce the period in which young people are unemployed and therefore in need of a minimum income. Also, it aims to increase the target group's long-term integration in training and employment, and improve the matching of the target group to available training and integration services. From a longer-term perspective, the strategic goal is the consolidation of expenses for the target group's labour market integration and means-tested minimum income payments. Finally, at the operational level, the main objective is to provide personalised support to young people, by assigning them an advisor who could help them to find their way into the labour market.

The joint service centre for issues of employment, education, career orientation and social matters is available to young unemployed people from 15 to 24 years old.

In this pioneering project, the innovation lies in the federal and provincial authorities having found a way to collaborate and join forces when it comes to face pressing socio-politically issues such as youth unemployment. They are providing highly effective modern support services to the disadvantaged target group, despite different organisational and decision-making structures. The success of the project is evident when looking at the numbers: today, the U25 service centre has a client base of 28,600 people, the number of jointly supported clients is about 10,000 and, at staff level, it has 365 employees, 240 of which are employees of the public employment service, 110 are staff members of the social welfare department and 15 employees work in the field of training or disability support.

Human Rights Go Local Vienna, the City of Human Rights

Vienna City Administration, Austria

Project title

Human Rights Go Local Vienna,
the City of Human Rights

Name of the lead organization

Vienna City Administration

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Size of organisation

1900

Type of sector

Governance, Central & local administration,
Education & vocational training,
Natural Resources

Key words of project

SDGs, International networking,
Human rights in public administration

Nowadays most of the global population lives in urban areas, which puts the cities at centre stage for their role in promoting human rights, innovation and progress in the society.

Goal 11 of the SDGs states 'make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'. The role of the cities in this context is tackling poverty, and providing equality measures for social justice and education.

There is not yet a clear guideline at local level regarding human rights, although cities such as Vienna are committed to helping the design and implementation of a human rights centred approach across a wide range of policy areas, to improve people's lives. With the declaration of Vienna as the 'City of Human Rights', the city administration commits to respect and protect human rights in all areas of its competence and wants to serve as a role model at the local, national and international levels. It is a unique example of a city that has established a 'Human Rights Office' for coordination of this subject.

The Human Rights Office of Vienna's main goal is to implement Vienna's Declaration for all areas of action of the city administration. To pursue this aim,

the good governance and the holistic cooperation among political and administrative decision makers, the scientific community and civil society are essential; those are the elements that make the Human Rights City innovative.

The Vienna Declaration sets five strategic areas:

- The human rights approach, which is based on four pillars: transparency, accountability, non-discrimination and participation. The City of Vienna has a cross-cutting commitment to human rights in all its areas of competence, including the management of the Covid-19 crisis. The Human Rights Office acts as a connecting link between departments of the city administration, human rights organisations, NGOs and civil society.
- International cooperation and networking: the Human Rights Office is member of international networks. It hosts delegations, participates in international sessions, cooperates globally with the Human Rights Cities Network to exchange good practices and advise the ones who want to become members. It provides mutual support for capacity building in administrations and has an active role at global level in cooperation with the UN, the EU and the Council of Europe.
- Human rights is promoted through learning activities such as conferences, events, training for city administration employees and cooperation with schools to build awareness among the younger generation.
- Dialogue with the civil society: the HR Office promotes activities and new forms of participation which aim to shape an urban culture on human rights, such as round tables.
- Institutional provisions, action plans and monitoring include a steering group that has been established, 'Human Rights City', that acts as an advisory board and provides strategic advice on the implementation of the declaration.

The outcomes of round tables, panel discussions, recommendations of the NGOs and civil society and other exchanges have been documented in policy papers and an action plan will be developed as a guideline for future activities.

Stay home – the Municipality of Serres stays at work for you

MUNICIPALITY OF SERRES, Greece

Project title

«Stay home – the Municipality of Serres stays at work for you»

Name of the lead organization

Municipality of Serres

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Size of organisation

350

Type of sector

Central and local administration, Management
of human resources, e-Government

Key words of project

COVID-19, Digital democracy,
Service-oriented culture, Leadership

psychological assistance, organising online lessons of any kind for children and not only this, but providing critical interaction.

The most innovative initiatives have been the new feature *e-demotis*, added to the existing application 'click 'n' spot'. More than 4,300 certificate requests have been processed online; the pilot operation run by the Ministry of Digital Government offers online appointment requests at the Municipal Citizens' Service Centres (KEP). Virtual meetings are also available on YouTube for live and recorded streaming held by the Municipal Council, ensuring that the pandemic has not imposed a gap between policymakers and citizens and that transparency and engagement are safeguarded. With the Covid-19 outbreak, a new benchmark has been set for intermunicipal cooperation, aiming at the development of services to relieve the impact of the crisis that people are facing.

Since March 2020 the Municipality of Serres has implemented an innovative service-oriented culture to protect its citizens during the Covid-19 pandemic, accelerating the digital democracy it was already embracing, and launching an integrated set of health, educational and social initiatives addressed to all ages, from children to older people.

The administration has acted quickly to establish a strong response to the crisis and let people stay at home as much as possible, but without depriving them of essential services. The main measures implemented are a door-to-door food and medicine distribution system, the *Assistance at Home* programme for older people offering a range of certificates that had to be obtained in person otherwise, offering online appointments, holding virtual meetings that are also available on YouTube, supporting the National Health Care System, offering

The Municipality of Serres has been showing an unprecedented level of leadership, which in such a context is of utmost importance, promoting so many activities for the protection and the resilience of its citizens. Safeguarding the Municipality of Serres during the pandemic has been a challenging process. However it has succeeded in remaining accountable, efficient and effective in these difficult times, mainly by improving digital technology but also adopting an integrated approach to citizen engagement. On an unprecedented scale, the municipality has been able to bring together the citizens and facilitate the development of civil engagement in the form of volunteering to assist the community during the stay-at-home order. The empathy, the motivation and the commitment of the administration employees have been essential in the overall response to the Covid-19 crisis.

The Innovation Laboratory

The State Chancellery, Latvia

Project title

The Innovation Laboratory

Name of the lead organization

The State Chancellery

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Size of organisation

117

Type of sector

Governance, Central and local administration,
Management of human resources,
Better regulation

Key words of project

Structural Reform Support Service,
Zero bureaucracy approach, Modern human
resource, User-centric approach, Public
administration efficiency

The State Chancellery of Latvia, with the support of the European Commission Structural Reform Support Service, has launched the *Innovation Laboratory* project. This initiative stems from the need to raise the overall efficiency and effectiveness of public administration by promoting good governance and improving the level of staff competence.

The key priorities of the project are the reduction of unnecessary bureaucracy and therefore the introduction of a zero bureaucracy approach. This includes increasing the value of public administration services, developing modern human resources and developing a national strategic communication system. The overall goal was to introduce innovative approaches and methods in public administration, to make it faster and more efficient. In this way it would address topical or old problems, conceive the necessary solutions, and develop and test prototypes.

The novelties of the project are the aim to identify the most suitable innovative approach for sustaining and operating innovation labs in the Latvian context. This is achieved through learning by doing, and exploring the different ways in which problem solving is carried out. The involvement of participants from public administration institutions and experts from other sectors change regularly, depending on the issues to be faced. These new approaches and ideas allow flexibility and improve cross-sector, cross-institution and cross-department collaboration, as well as introducing experimentation in the process, which is currently lacking.

The vision of the Innovation Laboratory is based on the driving force to change the thinking, attitude and behaviour of public administration in the way of working. It is about encouraging experimentation to develop useable solutions to existing problems and to meet new needs, with the aim to represent an example of innovation management for other institutions of public administration.

The highlights of the project *Innovation Laboratory* can be summarised as the following.

- It is a driver of public administration transformation and introduces innovation.
- It is an example of change in collaboration culture. To improve the collaboration approach, it is essential to expand the contact network and ensure that the most relevant representatives are involved in the work of the laboratory.
- A user-centric approach has been introduced focusing on the needs of the client, making the best-suited solution for the user or constantly 'stepping into the user or client's shoes'.
- The Innovation Laboratory has been promoted via communication initiatives, to a wider audience. For example, a webpage has been set up, some social media activities have taken place from the profiles of state institutions (e.g. Cabinet of Ministers, Ministry of Economics) and from private profiles of involved participants.

Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence Adoption

Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), Belgium

Project title

Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence adoption

Name of the lead organization

Flanders Investment & Trade

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Contact person details

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Size of organisation

325

Type of sector

Foreign investment and trade policy, Central and local administration, Management of human resources, Digitalisation

Key words of project

AI technology implementation, DG Reform, Public sector digitalisation, socio-economic development

Currently, there are no frameworks, guidelines, studies or deployment strategies developed for artificial intelligence (AI) in the specific sector of trade and investment promotion. In particular, this affects delivering expertise outside the Union for businesses to discover new economic opportunities within the EU, and assisting in the international growth of companies within the single market through cross-border investment and trade stimulation. However, some pilot projects have been developed with the support of the European Regional Development and the Hermes Funds. These have proved the added value of AI and its impact, and have urged the Flanders Investment & Trade agency (FIT) to find an ethical, sustainable and structural approach to start implementing AI technologies.

The main goal of the project *Blueprint for artificial intelligence adoption* is to provide an answer to the urgent need of developing a concise methodology and creating a strategy that FIT can use for the deployment of AI technologies. FIT promotes international entrepreneurship in the Flanders region in a sustainable way as a key element in the region's socio-economic development. It has a specific

mission: to support Flanders-based companies in their international activities, and attract foreign investors to Flanders.

The project was supported by experts from the European Commission and, in particular, by the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) of DG Reform. The joint forces of these six experts and an internal taskforce have resulted in a series of innovative outputs.

- There has been progress in the digitalisation of the public sector, which is a pressing need as stressed by the European Political Strategy Centre in their note *The Age of Artificial Intelligence*.
- A new framework has been created for AI adoption in the context of international trade and investment promotion, using the design principles of an enterprise architecture.
- The project is transferable to other public sector organisations as a best practice and methodology for AI adoption, thanks to the new framework.
- The performance capacity of the FIT agency has increased from strategic, practical and human resources related points of view, which also helped to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on international trade and investment figures in the region.
- A road map has been implemented, to provide clear next steps to internal stakeholders, far beyond the project's closing date.
- External stakeholders from political, private sector and public organisations, e.g. sector federations (Agoria), government agencies (Ministry of Education), and solution providers (Microsoft) have shown great interest in helping and learning. They have shared knowledge, data and good practices on AI, strengthening the AI ecosystem with their network; for instance, FIT shares its knowledge with other government agencies in Flanders by integrating their data systems more closely.

Chivalry in Ljubljana: Assisting Citizens and Improving Their Quality of Life

City of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Project title

Chivalry in Ljubljana: assisting citizens and improving their quality of life

Name of the lead organization

City of Ljubljana

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Size of organisation

580

Type of sector

Governance, Central and local administration, Welfare system, Transport, tourism, agriculture, Healthcare and long-term care, Better regulation, Crisis management, Energy and climate

Key words of project

Kavalir Service, COVID-19, Assistance to citizen, Electric transport

individual, free, on-demand transport system using small electric vehicles named *Kavalir*: in the context of Covid-19 the service was made available for many purposes.

During the cessation of public transport, and certain economic activities and services during lockdown, many were left without access to work, goods and services. The city's response was provision of assistance to the vulnerable groups and organisation of aid in various forms. The City of Ljubljana established a crisis headquarters under the leadership of the mayor which engaged with various stakeholders, organisations, and individuals so they could reach the highest number of people in need in the shortest possible time. The initiatives undertaken ranged from delivering free hot meals and other necessities, providing free transport to and from work to nursing staff and to those in need of hospital services or dispensaries, and free accommodation. The employees carrying out these services used electric vehicles from the city's public company Ljubljana Passenger Transport (LPP).

The *Chivalry Programme* of the city of Ljubljana stems from the previous Kavalir service, active in 2009, and aims to upgrade the assistance to citizens in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. To cope with the new urgent needs due to the pandemic, the project intends to be an improvement of a previously existing service and represents an innovative up-scaling of this. It has been designed for disadvantaged people and most vulnerable groups, such as older people, poor families, people with disabilities and the homeless. The city has been facilitating this category with an

The key success factor of the project *Chivalry Programme* was using a gradual, step-by-step, inclusive approach to improve the basic activities. Starting with developing demand-responsive services, the city is adapting more to citizens' needs and, with the pandemic, which is a new situation for everybody, finding solutions to help the highest number of citizens in the shortest time possible was the priority. This has been thanks to new approaches and combination of different activities, stakeholders and teams to achieve a common goal.

Raising Children's Awareness of Sustainable Development

Mestna občina Ljubljana (City of Ljubljana), Slovenia

Project title

Raising children's awareness of sustainable development

Name of the lead organization

Mestna občina Ljubljana (City of Ljubljana)

Address

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Size of organisation

500

Type of sector

Education and vocational training

Key words of project

Building renovation, Sustainable development, Building awareness, Climate change

In collaboration with teachers and headteachers, the city of Ljubljana has developed a project where savings from the energy efficiency of renovated buildings are invested in educational programmes with a specific purpose. This is aimed at building awareness among the younger generation around sustainable development, environmental protection and alternative resources. This should encourage their creativity and innovativeness and equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary nowadays to cope with environmental challenges.

The younger generation increasingly feels the burden of environmental issues such as limited resources, climate change and the need for renewable sources of energy. The programme *Raising children's awareness of sustainable development* aims to enrich the educational process in primary schools and kindergartens. This provides content and innovative teaching methods that directly contribute

towards higher awareness among children about the need for higher energy efficiency, rational use of resources and sustainable development. In this way, the pupils are provided with the tools needed to cope with certain pressing issues, for example, strategies for saving resources and consequences of such efforts.

The project goes beyond this and aspires to training future generations on the rational use of energy, water and other resources. This is done through direct experience on natural sciences, scientific research, technical professions and manual skills so their innovativeness and creativity are stimulated. This can finally develop their capacity for self-initiated tackling of challenges and exploring the opportunities in school, local and global spaces.

The innovation of this programme lies in the role and contribution of local authorities towards awareness of sustainable development among children, and in the choice of including NGOs for the implementation of the model. This enables professionals in promoting energy efficiency and sustainable thinking and action to bring materials, ideas and knowledge to schools and kindergartens. One remarkable aspect is that, these resources, which are usually not at the disposal of teachers, come from another innovative and green project that have the same goal: sustainable development.

The project also envisages training programmes for teachers around ecology, sustainability and alternative resources to provide them with more practical knowledge. This will enable them, depending on the school grade, to implement new educational activities with innovative teaching approaches. The regular teaching process in schools will be enriched, and developing and using the educational games and experiments will introduce pre-school children to the field of ecology.

The Public Policy Planning and Evaluation Area

Andalusian Institute of Public Administration, Spain

Project title

The public policy planning and evaluation area

Name of the lead organization

Andalusian Institute of Public Administration

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Size of organisation

109

Type of sector

Spending reviews, public accounting

Key words of project

Citizen participation, Public policies impact, Evaluators network

In 2016 the Public Policy Evaluation Area was created as part of the Andalusian Institute of Public Administration (IAAP). It was given the role of a directive unit responsible for the establishment of a public policy planning and evaluation system in Andalusia. Research, training and promotion of actions in planning and evaluation of public policies were the envisaged means.

The creation of the Public Policy Evaluation Area and its main goal have been designed to improve the impact that public policies achieve on the lives of citizens. This might be carried out on the basis of established scientific knowledge, thorough the participation of public employees and, fundamentally, the participation of citizens. To implement this overall objective, three main priorities have been set: the promotion of a culture of evaluation in the organisation, the articulation of the means to develop and put into practice the evaluation system and evaluation of public policies.

The Public Policy Evaluation Area influences all the work areas of the Andalusian Administration, since it is an innovation project that wants to improve policy planning and evaluation in all sectors, including education, employment, health, justice and finance. It relies mainly on three different structures, which assist in the achievement of its goals: OTEVAL – Technical Evaluation Office, the promoters of the Junta de Andalucía, and the network of public policy evaluators made up of a group of around 40 people belonging to different bodies of the Junta de Andalucía. With a visionary and democratic leadership style, the PPE area leads the work of the promoters of planning and evaluation activities and that of the evaluators' network, to organise the projects to be carried out each year and to be presented to the IAAP.

The innovative aspects of the work carried out by the PPA area are: the choice to change the way in which public policies are designed, so they start from a better diagnosis of their needs, set their objectives and activities in a more scientific way, and whose plans and strategies can be evaluated; the project works from the bottom up, because public employees are the ones who push the improvement of the planning and evaluation of public policies. Furthermore, the employees are trained so they can participate in real projects, depending on the subject, and promote the change process. They learn by doing and become experts in evaluation and this is the basis of the project's success – the training and participation of workers, so that ideas and start-up of initiatives can be derived from them. Finally, this project promotes not only the improvement of the citizens' living conditions, but also the raising of their awareness and their active participation in the design and evaluation of the public policies that concern them.

Innovative Administration in Cyprus Prisons

Cyprus Prisons Department, Cyprus

Project title

Innovative Administration In Cyprus Prisons

Name of the lead organization

Cyprus Prisons Department

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Size of organisation

>100

Type of sector

Central and local administration, Management of human resources, Anti-corruption & anti-fraud strategies, Spending reviews, public accounting, Natural resources, Budget preparation and execution, Energy and climate

Key words of project

Humanitarian treatment, Education and rehabilitation, Learning environment, Management model

The main purpose of the **Innovative Administration in Cyprus Prisons** is to raise awareness and to spread the knowledge about all the innovative and positive changes that, since 2015, have taken place at the Cyprus Prisons Department. This is thanks to the initiatives of the new leadership, willing to make reforms that could have an impact on the individual but also on a collective level, regarding prisoners and staff. This moves away from the previous old-fashioned punitive approach that governed the management of the prison. These changes have made a huge difference by fighting corruption, as well as improving the living conditions of the inmates.

The policy of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order of the Republic of Cyprus and, by extension, the Prison Department is based upon four major principles: safety, humanitarian treatment,

education and rehabilitation. Therefore, the Prison Department's overall mission has to follow these main concepts to carry out its duties. These include securing and safeguarding the detention of individuals, guaranteeing the respect of human rights and human dignity, avoiding discrimination of any kind and encouraging self-esteem and a sense of responsibility. Among other things, this objective is also pursued through education, creative entertainment, therapeutic programmes, self-criticism and self-confidence awareness. The Prison department has understood that guidance and assistance are what is needed for the detainees to begin a new life one day and to reintegrate in the society.

It is in this spirit that the punitive model has been completely abandoned, and prisons now focus on the anthropocentric and rehabilitative approach. This includes helping incarcerated people to understand their mistakes and follow the appropriate programmes (educational and psychological) and not putting them in a daily struggle for survival accompanied by violence and oppression. The building facilities have been significantly improved to allow prisoners to live in dignity and the serious problem of overcrowding has been reduced: new modern buildings for accommodation have been constructed. New systems of education and professional training have been applied and the food and nourishment of detainees have improved qualitatively.

All the changes and innovation, and the overall implementation of the management model was not an easy task, especially in the beginning. The learning organisation and the creation of a learning environment in the area of prisons, prisoners and staff, intending to change the mentality, culture, attitudes and behaviours through learning, were also a challenge. Enough time had to be devoted to arrange a system that had never been applied before in other prisons for both prisoners and staff, but this is what makes this pilot a ground-breaking project.

At a Distance, but Close to You

6th District General Directorate for Social Care and Child Protection, Romania

Project title

At a distance, but close to you

Name of the lead organization

6th District General Directorate for Social Care and Child Protection

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Size of organisation

1172

Type of sector

Central and local administration, Digitalisation

Key words of project

COVID-19, Online therapeutic sessions, Healthcare, Mental Health

The leading organisation of this project is a Day Recovery Centre for Children with Disabilities. For this institute, **Orșova**, at the 6th District General Directorate for Social Care and Child Protection, the breakout of the pandemic and the consequent social distancing was unknown terrain. This has been explored and used very little in the past, as an alternative weekend activity or an auxiliary to the classic type of treatment. The specialists within the department had to develop a new methodology and new working tool to continue the therapeutic programme for the children through online communication, within a programme entitled 'At a distance, but close to you'.

The new situation created by the pandemic has made children, parents and the staff of the centre face new challenges. The biggest one was the prevention of regressions and overcoming the obstacles generated by the relative isolation of the

child in the family. Several ways of interaction and intervention were urgently outlined and made even more pressing by the reactions and preoccupation of the parents and the specialists.

The goal was to continue the activity in the centre and minimise the negative effects of isolation and interruption of in-presence activity. It required online interventions and sessions, creation of tools outside the usual standards, new approaches for communication with children and a new member of the team: the family of the child. Phone, email and programs such as WhatsApp or Zoom have brought beneficiaries and specialists closer to each other.

All these were put into practice as an innovation, on the basis of a plan with concrete objectives and activities, including the component of monitoring and analysis of results. Specifically, the reorganisation of the therapeutic activity in a new environment – the homes of the children involved – was put into practice through means of distance communication: new individualised intervention plans were designed for each child, depending on the specific situation; weekly activities and recommendations were drawn up for parents together with the children; all activities were videotaped and transmitted to the specialists who performed the analysis of the videos and, in general, gave the feedback to parents and children. The transmission of written materials was made through the same means of communication – audio or video sent to the parents – with physical exercises to improve coordination, concentration and body awareness. Digital communication platforms have made the live intervention of specialists in therapeutic activity possible.

Teamworking and trust were essential in the smooth running of this programme. A new and closer collaboration has been established between specialists, in the implementation team and between specialists and families.

My City, My Future!

Nilüfer Municipality, Turkey

Project title

My City, My Future!

Name of the lead organization

Nilufer Municipality

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Size of organisation

2121

Type of sector

Governance, Central and local administration,

Key words of project

Citizen participation, Corporate Development,
Urban and Rural Development, Social
Development, Ecological Balance and Economic
Development

The overall aim of the project *My City, My Future* is to encourage and implement active participation of all citizens and stakeholders in Nilüfer City. A sustainable mechanism is envisaged where resources are managed effectively and transparently, with innovative methods to meet public needs. More specifically, the administration wants to take into consideration the point of view of the younger generation because they represent the future of society but also today's partners. In this spirit, workshops for children and idea-sharing meetings were organised with the slogan *My Neighbourhood is My Future*, and a new principle was developed regarding the administration of the municipality: 'New Generation Nilüfer'. This concept refers to structuring a city by looking at the world through the eyes of a child or a young person.

Nilüfer Municipality aims to create its next strategic plans with the participation of its stakeholders, and to design a participatory process with the understanding of joint governance; this is the most important novel feature of the project. In this context, during the strategic plan studies, activities

such as neighbourhood workshops were planned to bring people closer to municipal decision makers, and the children's workshops. The needs and priorities of the city were determined following stakeholder perception surveys by ensuring the participation of all citizens in the process.

As a result of this participatory process, the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan was designed under five main strategic aims: corporate development, urban and rural development, social development, ecological balance and economic development.

Nilüfer municipality has been the only one where the decisions were made by discussing its visions, missions, values, strategies and projects directly with citizens. This was conducted in the workshops held in all neighbourhoods during the strategic planning process in Turkey. It is aimed to reach children of all ages with their own workshops where they can draw their dreams and mark them on the city map. Later, the framework of the strategic plan was shaped by collecting and analysing the feedback received from all stakeholders.

After all these studies, the strategic plan was initially presented to a public audience and explained in detail, and later presented to the city council. In this framework, the road map consisting of 15 steps in a one-year period was implemented with comprehensive participatory studies, and a new generation strategic plan covering the years 2020–2024 was created.

Local, national and international studies were carried out to reflect the perspective of youth in the strategic plan and to include project ideas that will make life easier for young people in the city. As a result of these studies, a national model has been created to ensure the participation of young people in the strategic plans of local governments. With the implementation of this model, a Youth Commission consisting of young elected members of the City Council and representatives of the Nilüfer Community Council Youth Assembly was formed. One female and one male young representatives were included in the higher commission, where the strategic plan was finalised by the mayor and deputy mayors.

