

# Taking the Pulse of European Public Administrations

*Key Findings of the European Public Sector Award 2009*



**Edited by**  
Marga Pröhl  
Alexander Heichlinger

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**Peter Ehn  
Melanie Pissarius & Tony Bass  
Michael Burnett & Alexander Heichlinger  
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# Glossary

<b>CAF</b>	Common Assessment Framework
<b>CBM</b>	Competency-Based Management
<b>CS</b>	Civil Servants
<b>DG</b>	Directorate General
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IT systems</b>	Information Technology Systems
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>HRM</b>	Human Resource Management
<b>NPM</b>	New Public Management
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PA</b>	Public Administration
<b>PPP</b>	Private-Public-Partnership
<b>RFO</b>	Regional Framework Operation
<b>SAB</b>	Scientific Advisory Board
<b>SC</b>	Steering Committee
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Related
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-Sized Companies
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
<b>TPM</b>	Top Public Management

## Country codes

<b>AT</b> Austria	<b>ES</b> Spain	<b>MT</b> Malta
<b>BE</b> Belgium	<b>FI</b> Finland	<b>NL</b> The Netherlands
<b>BG</b> Bulgaria	<b>FR</b> France	<b>PL</b> Poland
<b>CZ</b> Czech Republic	<b>HU</b> Hungary	<b>PT</b> Portugal
<b>CY</b> Cyprus	<b>IE</b> Ireland	<b>RO</b> Romania
<b>DE</b> Germany	<b>IT</b> Italy	<b>SE</b> Sweden
<b>DK</b> Denmark	<b>LT</b> Lithuania	<b>SI</b> Slovenia
<b>EE</b> Estonia	<b>LU</b> Luxembourg	<b>SK</b> Slovakia
<b>EL</b> Greece	<b>LV</b> Latvia	<b>UK</b> United Kingdom



# Introduction

*By Alexander Heichlinger & Marga Pröhl*

During the last 15-20 years the public sector has faced a number of challenges connected to changing socio-economic, environmental and political factors, including among others:

- **Demographic changes** such as an ageing population, a diminishing working population and increased immigration;
- **Environmental changes**, such as climate changes and shortage of space;
- **Urbanisation** including pressure on metropolitan areas, commuting and citizens' demand for housing;
- **Globalisation**, internationalisation and Europeanisation;
- Diminishing "**social capital**", including participation in elections and mistrust towards public administration and public services;
- The emergence of complex **social issues**, arising from social fragmentation, not susceptible to single agency action and/or one dimensional responses;
- Less willingness to increase **resources to the public sector**, despite higher demands and expectations of citizens for better services.

These issues are strong drivers for change in Europe's public administrations and generally cut across traditional boundaries of government departments, and in some cases of the responsibilities of different levels of government; this presents challenges to public administrations in the way they deliver their public services. Consequently, a number of profound reforms have taken place and continue to do so at all levels of public administration. The (ultimate) purpose of the different reforms is to make governments more responsive to society's changing needs and demands.

In light of the above, EIPA's faculty staff, with the assistance of the EPSA Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), has identified, formulated and finally recommended to the EPSA Steering Committee (SC) a total number of 11 topic groups addressing Europe's most pressing current public concerns. The members of the SC – who are high-level public servants representing 15 European countries, thus different cultural spheres, but with similar or common interests – agreed in their meeting in September 2008 to select four topical themes in order to allow the various solutions proposed by the European administrations to be identified.

In general, projects submitted to the EPSA 2009, whilst aiming to resolve the challenges facing the public sector, were assessed under a set of general criteria that were applied to all applications:

- **Innovation:** assessing the novelty of the solution and the degree to which the case shows a leap of creativity in public administration progress;
- **Public concern:** considering the degree to which the project addresses a pressing need or important problem of public concern;
- **Significance/relevance:** the project deals with a sufficient number of public sector bodies; a critical mass of actors is tackling the issue;
- **Impact:** evaluating the realisation of planned objectives and activities; providing and illustrating proven evidence and results of the projects;
- **Learning capacity and transferability:** assessing the potential successful replication by other governments, administrations and sectors; the lessons of potential value to other entities.

Here, we will only briefly highlight and explain the selection and importance of the four thematic areas as well as refer to some of the respective specific theme criteria used to assess the submitted applications. As a general notion, the best projects commended in the EPSA 2009 scheme offered a sound overview of the application performance against the set of criteria; the “key enablers” which make the project a success have also been identified and demonstrated. A detailed description and state-of-the-art analysis of the themes and the submitted EPSA applications will be provided to the reader in the subsequent parts.

## **Performance Improvement in Public Service Delivery (THEME I)**

Public administration is being reformed in order to provide better, faster and sometimes more services. However, quality, quantity and speed are not the only competences that society asks of its government. Since the pace of societal change is accelerating, government should likewise be able to respond to changing demands with new solutions. Reform is thus the process of preparing or adapting governments towards a new role in a changing society. This theme was looking for projects showcasing how public administrations are meeting this new role in society by displaying performance improvement in service delivery.

Projects under Theme I should have contained elements of proven evidence on one of the following subtopics:

- Increased efficiency and effectiveness of public service provision;
- Increased productivity by adapting processes of service production and delivery;
- Shared service centres;
- Reducing bureaucracy and cutting red tape for the benefit of citizens, clients and business;
- High quality control of public service delivery (related to outcome);
- Customer satisfaction measurement and management;
- Impact assessment of service delivery.

**Theme I** was led and steered by Tore Malterud, in cooperation with Peter Ehn who was writing the research report for this first theme.

## **Citizen Involvement (THEME II)**

Citizen involvement is necessary to provide differentiated answers to the growing complexity of social demands, to cope with the need for continuous cuts in public investment (especially in the most ‘sensitive’ areas of intervention, such as social care etc.), and to rebuild citizens’ trust in politics. Building effective participative partnerships between government, citizens and civil society organisations is at the heart of this theme and is demonstrated by various processes and systems designed to:

- **Enhance** *openness, transparency and accountability* of government and administrations;
- **Share** *information*, knowledge and experience;
- **Enable** *dialogue* and consultation between administrations and citizens (and civil society);
- **Create** measures for *feedback and evaluation* on governmental and public administrative decision-making;
- **Facilitate** citizen involvement in debating, discussing and deciding within *decision-making processes*.

In effect, we were looking at showcase projects that attempt to adapt private sector models of consumer involvement in business planning and delivery, but which also build on concepts of “open government” and “active citizenship”, ultimately allowing citizens to engage in the planning and delivery of public services. As will be shown in this part, public administrations all over Europe have developed institutional and policy frameworks to promote trust and transparency in governments, to enhance and facilitate access to information, to create spheres of public consultation and to ultimately engage citizens in making policy decisions.

To evaluate the applications received for this particular thematic area, some more specific questions on the planning and implementation of the projects had to be addressed. How and to what extent are citizens, civil society, administrators and politicians in the process and/or system involved? How can their satisfaction with the process and/or system be measured? What balance is there between process efficiency and governmental effectiveness? What is the level of actual efficiency achieved compared to the level of effectiveness accomplished throughout the project implementation? What are the costs versus the benefits of a new approach compared to any traditional methods/processes?

Tony Bass as **Theme II** Leader and Melanie Pissarius addressed these questions from a multi-faceted angle in their analysis, supported by EPSA best practices.

## **New Forms of Partnership Working (THEME III)**

The Partnership Working theme was broadly drawn in an attempt to be inclusive and reflect the different kinds of partnerships which are known to exist in Europe, and in particular, the different types of entity likely to enter into partnerships; the different purposes for which partnerships are entered into; the different type of partners which they might choose; and variation in the significance of partnerships to the activities of different entities.

Specifically, its scope included:

- Public-public partnerships, public-private partnerships and public-third sector relationships;
- Collaboration between administrations (including inter- or cross-administrative), shared and collaborative responsibility;
- Cross-territorial collaboration (including interregional, cross-border and/or transnational cooperation);
- Innovative cooperation or cluster-related processes.

Projects submitted in the Partnership Working theme were assessed under the general criteria and, in addition, under the specific criteria for the theme, which follow from (see below) some of the key observed challenges for successfully implementing partnerships in Europe, i.e. the need to show:

- Demonstrated benefits of the partnership when compared to the alternatives, i.e. with;
  - Clear evidence of the matching of the partnership objectives with those of the entity (to justify why a partnership has been entered into at all);
  - Described evidence that the partnership contributes tangibly to the corporate/ service delivery objectives in order to justify the financial and human resources devoted to them;
  - Described evidence that the partnership is better than the alternative means of realising those objectives e.g. in better dealing with complex issues;
  - Described evidence that the partnership justifies the opportunity cost of the resources devoted to the partnership.
- Appropriateness of partner selection process, i.e. described evidence of an actual selection process;
- Effective governance arrangements, including the structure of the partnership, the management of risks and clarity of responsibilities for the partners.

Partnership working is one way of delivering services differently, so public servants need to understand when different partnership models work and how to make them work effectively. These are the objectives pursued by Michael Burnett and Alexander Heichlinger, co-sharing the leadership of **Theme III**.

## Leadership and Management for Change (THEME IV)

Leadership plays an important role in the public sector reform process as it involves two of the most important aspects of reform: change and people. In fact, changing organisations is about changing people's behaviour. Good leaders have to inspire people. Leaders can help to diffuse and maintain the new values that are necessary for successful public sector reform. In order to do that, they need to be able to guide people and to focus their efforts on a common cause.

This topic was looking for showcase projects based on how public organisations meet the new challenges facing their organisations by displaying improvement and leadership development of the top public managers<sup>1</sup>.

Projects under the theme should have contained elements of proven evidence of:

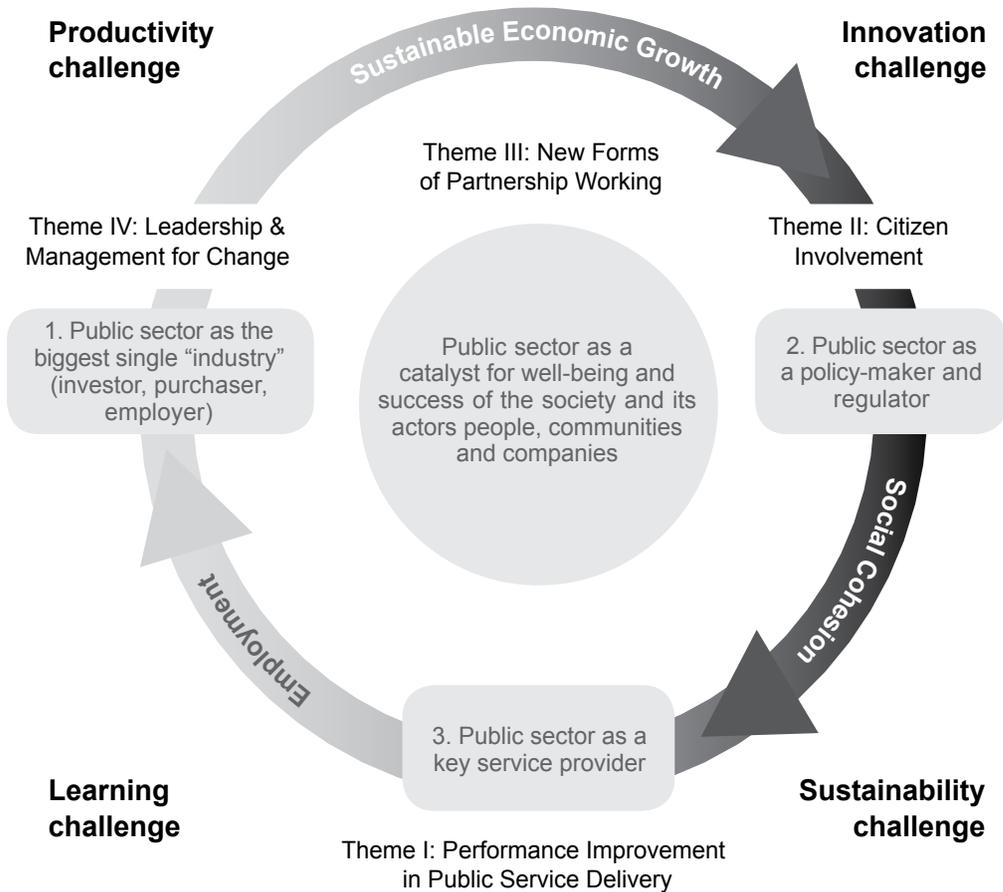
- Increased *efficiency and effectiveness* of leadership by training/development activities for individuals and/or teams (measured);
- *Innovative pilots* to improve methods for self-reflection, development and improvement of top managers in public organisations;
- *Increased motivation* for (permanent) change by good leadership;
- *Inclusion of diversity*, ethics and the European/international dimension in the top management;
- The impact on leadership performance of *working as a complementary team*;
- The proven advantage of top management creating a strategy, *shared vision* and *shared values* by a common process in the organisation;
- *Employees' satisfaction* with leadership and change measured, and results successfully implemented.

Finally, **Theme IV** was led by Herma Kuperus. She and Anita Rode provide a good indication of the current trends in this area as well as the emerging good practices from the EPSA exercise.

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<sup>1</sup> Important note: the focus was not on the best leader as such, but on ways to improve leadership in the organisation.

Figure 1: Graphical illustration of the general public sector roles and challenges in the 21st Century mirrored against the four EPSA 2009 Themes.



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This publication seeks to “take the pulse” of European public administrations within four highly topical thematic fields. In order to do so, a common structure of conduct has been followed by the experts involved. Firstly, each report will take stock of the state of affairs of the theme in both today’s literature and from practical experiences, outlining and discussing the current trends and tendencies in the respective areas. This part is completed with recommendations for further reading.

Subsequently, an exhaustive overview and analysis of all EPSA 2009 applications received under each of the four themes are provided, as well as describing several best practices in terms of the quality of what the case has achieved and the lessons learnt.

By way of conclusion, each thematic section will sketch out some key findings from the EPSA 2009 and recommendations to provide an insight into the future work of public administrations:

- When performing their public service delivery in a better, more efficient and effective, thus rentable way;
- When accepting citizens as equal partners in this process and developing mechanisms and arenas to enable effective participation and involvement;
- When refreshing and opening mind-sets on cooperations with other stakeholders and constructing partnership-based integrated architectures (issue-driven networks) for public policy implementation; and
- When strong leadership and often a personal level commitment, combined with new formulas of working conditions, perpetuate a system in public organisations and increase its attractiveness and integrity on the labour market.

To summarise, the EPSA 2009 has clearly brought to light the fact that in today's public administrations in Europe, (more) actions are taking place rather than mere talks. It is therefore imperative for EIPA and the EPSA team to also contribute in the future towards identifying the best, most innovative and efficient initiatives, and making these available to a larger community of public excellence.



# Performance Improvement in Public Service Delivery

By Peter Ehm

## 1. Specific context of the topic

In a rapidly changing society the public administration of today is facing a lot of challenges and is also being reformed in order to meet those challenges. The administration needs to provide better, faster and sometimes even more services; it often also needs to find new solutions in order to accomplish this. This theme focuses on *performance improvement in public service delivery*. This chapter will present projects with elements of increased efficiency and effectiveness, reduced bureaucracy and increased quality of the public services provided.

## 2. State of affairs

### 2.1 Forces that challenge the public sector

During the last 15-20 years the public sector has faced a number of challenges connected to changing socio-economic, environmental and political factors. We will briefly outline here some of the more important among these.

#### Socio-economic and environmental changes

##### *Demographic changes*

How does the public sector deal with the challenges attributable to changes in the life patterns of millions of European citizens? An example is increased life expectancy, which has resulted in a higher proportion of the population being in the retirement bracket and a consequently lower proportion that is in the labour force. Thus, only a small proportion of the population is contributing to the public pension expenditure through taxation. A rise in the number of elderly people also means increased pressure on the healthcare system.

One factor that can counteract the negative consequences of the ageing population is the considerable and increasing scale of international migration. The average migrant population is younger than the total population in general. That means – at least theoretically – that immigrants could contribute to the expenditures of the welfare systems – for example the public pensions – to a proportionally greater extent than the total population. On the other hand, even if this movement of persons into Europe may bring a range of individual and collective benefits, it can also lead to political, economic and cultural tensions.

Studies show that changes in the patterns of family life, with more single-parent and single-person households, also puts pressure on the public sector in different ways. In many countries there is an opinion that the creation of single-parent households leads to problems such as increased rates of poverty, poor health and social exclusion.

Finally we have seen an alarming rise in the level of unemployment in the last few decades compared to the golden years around the 1960s and early 70s. The nature of both employment and unemployment has also changed. Part-time employment has grown almost everywhere and there has been a shift in employment away from older men and younger persons. When a large number of the population is employed part-time or unemployed it is a challenge to the political system and the public sector, both in economic and social terms.

### ***Globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation***

Globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation are concepts, although not very precisely defined, which represent the growing interconnections and interdependences between markets, nations, organisations and finally also citizens around the world. These concepts are also related in different ways to restrictions on ways governments can act. For example it is often said that the globalisation of capital markets and the growth of multinational corporations and international trade have weakened the national governments' control over their economic policies. The intensification of international competition has also obliged governments to give greater attention than before to the competitiveness of their national companies; this in turn means a pressure on governments to reduce taxes and red tape bureaucracy. In this way globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation are challenges for all governments.

A special challenge for the political and administrative system in Europe is the influence of European integration on national policy and rule-making. The EU has drastically changed the conditions for national policy in the Member States and candidate countries. For Member States, their decision-making competences in many areas is now shared with, or even delegated to, EU institutions. For candidate countries the scope for manoeuvre is limited, while the obligations for governments and administrations are increased in order to meet the requirements to become members of the European Union. The regulations governing everyday conditions for citizens, companies and organisations have become less national; to a greater extent, governments and administrations have become rule followers rather than rule setters. Of course this does not mean that the role of the state has been played out, but it is definitely a challenge for the national political and administrative systems.

### ***Environmental changes***

The global threats due to climate changes are now evident for political leaders and citizens all around the globe. Climate change is putting great pressure on the political and administrative systems in more or less all countries. Thinking in terms of sustainable development has therefore become necessary for almost every politician and public servant. Another environmental challenge facing politicians and public servants is the continuing and escalating urbanisation. This challenge is of course most demanding for the levels of government responsible for metropolitan areas.

### **Political changes**

The political factors behind the challenges do not evolve in a vacuum; they are closely interplaying with socio-economic factors. It is in this interplay that management reforms emerge. Three of the more important political changes will be briefly described below.

#### ***Less willingness to increase resources to the public sector***

For several reasons there has been a downward pressure on public expenditures in recent decades. One frequently mentioned reason is that the reluctance to put more money into the public sector is an indirect consequence of the globalisation mentioned above. The argument is that the globalisation of capital markets and the growth of multinational companies make it very difficult for a government to sustain a long-term level of public spending that the global market and the multinational corporations find too high. National and local governments are today also more restricted than they used to be when it comes to implementing costly welfare programmes. At the same time, citizens' demands seem to be higher than ever; this is a challenge for every government and also an incentive for administrative reforms.

#### ***Pressure from citizens***

Politicians' reluctance to implement reforms and their cuts on public spending, for example by reshaping social programmes that they find can no longer be afforded, is often regarded as one factor behind the growing mistrust towards the political and administrative systems. Nonetheless, whilst we can notice a growing mistrust we can also see that citizens are still turning to the political level and the public administration with different kinds of proposals and pressures for change. The mistrust has generally not led to people turning away from the political and administrative system. Changes in the private sector, such as more customer friendly services, can also lead to pressure from citizens to change old fashioned and bureaucratic ways of working in public administration. Of course a stronger demand for change occurs if citizens believe that public servants are corrupt.

### ***New management ideas***

Perhaps it is wrong to call it a challenge for the public sector, but the growth of new management ideas over the last two decades is definitely one factor to consider when trying to understand the reasons behind the public sector reforms that have taken place during this period. Many of these ideas come from the private sector and have spread around the world with the help of organisations like OECD and the World Bank (*Pollit & Bouckaert, 2004*). Equally, there can be little doubt that these ideas have influenced politicians and public servants in many countries.

## **2.2 Public sector reforms as an answer to the challenges**

Over the last two decades a huge number of public management reforms have taken place. Ideas about administrative change and remodelling the state seem to be more popular than ever before. However, the question as to why all these reforms are just occurring now and what the driving forces behind them are, is not that simple to answer. Of course, the factors mentioned above are, although not exclusively, important driving forces behind public sector reforms; the socio-economic changes are particularly important. Greater economic inter-dependence, the opening-up of societies and the growing importance of international structures and agreements make these external pressures more complex and multi-dimensional. External forces place pressure on governments to serve the public; however, other “pushing” factors can also be seen. One is that governments need to keep up with society. The purpose of reform in this respect is to make governments more responsive to society’s needs and demands.

Governments also reform with the purpose of re-establishing trust in themselves and the public administration. Governments need to provide more choice, democracy and transparency. The public service therefore needs to walk closely alongside the political sphere; a strengthened communication and connection with the citizens is equally important.

European countries have reacted to the challenges of today’s world in different ways. The purpose of this EPSA 2009 theme is to demonstrate the variety of reforms proposed in order to meet these challenges. These reforms can be found at all levels – state, regional and local – of public administration.

## 2.3 Trends in public sector reforms

### New Public Management

For the past two decades most of the public administration reforms that had taken place around the globe could have been labelled as New Public Management (NPM). NPM is not a concept invented by the reformers themselves, but a label that scientists put on what they regarded as an important reform trend. That means that the concept is quite complex and that there is no common authorised definition of NPM. Still, it is possible to find some characteristics for this reform movement that most scientists and practitioners agree on. We have listed the most important below:

- Inspiration from private sector and from economical theories, like rational choice and principal/agent theories. Differences between private and public sector is regarded as less important. Therefore public organisations should be steered more like private ones;
- A preference for private ownership. Open up state monopolies for competition, but also privatisation and outsourcing. Stronger focus on procurement procedures for the purpose of opening up for private sector competition;
- From input to output/outcome control, from processes to result. Stronger focus on quantified performance goals. Introduction of performance management models for steering public sector;
- Stronger emphasis on management and general qualities of leadership. Imitation of some private management ideas, such as short-term employment contracts, business plans, performance contracts, performance based compensation systems, and goal documents;
- Delegation of management and structural devolution. Transferring of authority to agencies and state-owned companies, in combination with stronger emphasis on monitoring, supervision and accountability;
- Splitting up of the integrated organisational model and establishment of separate autonomous bodies – “single-purpose organisations” – for various purposes, such as ownership, control, regulation, policy advice, service production, and purchasing;
- From long-term and less specified contracts to short-term much more specified contracts in public sector;
- A preference for monetary incentives over non-monetary incentives, such as values and ethics;
- Greater emphasis on savings, economical efficiency and cost control.

At the core of NPM is performance management. NPM has forced governments to be more focused on performance against targets. The demand for performance has perhaps been the most characteristic theme for the public sector since the 1990s and it shows no sign of abating. Today almost no public administration escapes from the measuring of performance. If the demand for performance has been at the centre of NPM, effectiveness is the primary dimension of performance. Outcomes and the related effectiveness are in fact the ultimate purpose of public service delivery (*Bouckaert & Halligan, 2008*). Performance measuring is focused on measuring

outputs, but outputs are never ends in themselves in the public sector; it is the outcomes that are important. This gap between what is measured and what is important to know is a major – perhaps insuperable – gap to bridge in traditional performance management. Performance management has its believers and sceptics among scientists and practitioners, but this is not the place to discuss its pros and cons. However, one thing that is obvious is that performance management has increased the formalisation of the policy process. The practise of performance management now involves more formalised planning, steering, output reporting and control. The amount of output control has especially grown enormously. The title of Michael Powers' well known book "The Audit Society" is more to the fore than ever.

### **Whole-of-Government**

As we have mentioned above NPM has been the leading public sector reform movement during the last two decades. As a result, vertical accountabilities within and between public sector organisations have been clarified and strengthened. This has improved the efficiency of government operations, but has also increased the challenge of collaboration and integration across governments. NPM has focused public sector organisations on delivering outputs for their individual organisation. Outputs shared across organisations have been more difficult to deal with and have often been given a lower priority. The focus of public sector reforms has now turned more to improving the effectiveness of the public sector by focusing on outcomes for the citizens. This change of focus has emphasised the tension of collaborating across organisational boundaries and forced governments to consider ways to encourage cross-sector collaboration.

For around ten years a slow change has been taking place in public administration reforms. The reform efforts are moving away from structural devolution, disaggregation and single-purpose organisations, towards a more holistic view on government with stronger focus on coordination and integration (*Christensen & Lægveid, 2007*). It is open to discussion whether this whole-of-government or joined-up government approach is really new. Coordination has been a problem for government for as long as they have existed. Even if the whole-of-government approach is not a real break with NPM and more of a re-balancing, it still appears that the need for improved coordination is more manifest today than in the past. So why is this so?

It is difficult not to see whole-of-government as a reaction to some aspects of NPM as it has developed over the years. In particular, performance management systems have encouraged public servants and their organisations to focus on their own performance targets, which is one reason behind the fragmentation of the public sector. The advocates for whole-of-government and joined-up government strongly criticised what they called the "siloesation or "pillarisation" of the public sector. For them a vertical tightening combined with increased horizontal coordination and collaboration was not just a cure for the fragmented political system, but also a more efficient model for the whole political system, compared to a system mainly focused on efficiency

in service delivery. It is also possible to find a technological factor behind whole-of-government. The progress in ICT technology has reduced the cost of horizontal coordination and ICT development has been an important part of joined-up government (*Christensen & Lægreid 2007*).

So then, what is “whole-of-government” and “joined-up government”? We have already described what these approaches want to cure, but how exactly are they supposed to do this? As already mentioned, the slogans “whole-of-government” and “joined-up government” are merely new labels for old policies of coordination. Joined-up government was first introduced in 1997 by the new UK Blair government. A central idea in the joined-up government concept is to improve both horizontal and vertical coordination in order to avoid situations when different policies undermine each other, and to create synergies by bringing together different stakeholders in a particular policy area. The UK strategy has very much focused on strengthening the role of central government (*Christensen & Lægreid 2007*). That has been done through establishing structures as strategic units and task forces. The joined-up government approach has also been characterised by the use of special coordinators and clearance systems.

Issues are becoming increasingly “cross-cutting”, and do not fit the ministerial boxes into which governments tend to place policies. Many such areas are structured around client groups such as elderly, immigrants etc., or other types of cross-sector areas such as climate change and regional development. Initiatives have been launched in these areas under the umbrella of joined-up government and whole-of-government. In fact, coordinating cross-cutting areas like the ones mentioned is at the heart of the whole-of-government approach.

Compared to the first phase of the NPM reforms, whole-of-government focuses more on building unified values for the public sector and more on team-building and collaboration (*Christensen & Lægreid 2007*).

### **Service delivery reforms**

So far we have described reform efforts aiming at improving the “back-offices” of the public administration. Of course the final goal of these reforms is also to improve the “front-offices”: that is, to provide better services to citizens and business. Nevertheless there are some initiatives that are especially addressed to the front-office and to improving the performance of the delivery. One such initiative is the use of one-stop-shops. In literature, one-stop-shops are often mentioned as one of many reform initiatives, under the umbrella of the abovementioned whole-of-government reform agenda. The difference between one-stop-shops and many other whole-of-government reforms is that one-stop-shops strongly focus on the front office. The aim is to improve service delivery by joining-up services. This is often done on the Web either by joining-up services around “life events” (e.g. giving birth, retiring), or around distinct client groups (e.g. unemployed people) (*Perri 6, 2005*).

The one-stop-shop is not a new tool in the reform tool box, but it has been increasingly popular during the last decade. One reason for that is obvious: the technological development of ICT. New online technologies enable an interactive communication between public administration and citizens and enterprises in a way that was not possible ten years ago. To a great extent, one-stop-shops have moved from the physical world to the internet. The basic idea behind one-stop-shops is to organise services according to people's needs rather than (which is still common) what is most convenient for the service producer. Although, when it comes to introducing one-stop-shops, concern about citizens' privacy has been a curbing factor in many countries. Is the privacy of citizens sufficiently protected when services are integrated and personal information is shared between different public bodies? Countries have treated this problem through different types of data protection laws.

Over the past few years service delivery reforms have taken a step beyond just pure "delivery"; the focus has moved to *empowerment of citizens*. This reform trend is very much stimulated by the new online technologies. It has been described as a revolution in the use and re-use of information which gives citizens a more active role in relations with public administration; they are no longer only receivers of the (service) deliveries (*Cabinet Office, 2009*). The new technology will also break down government monopolies on information presentation and use by making it easier for people to analyse information themselves.

Empowerment is not just a technical change; it must also include a cultural change in the way public administration works. It means more joint working by professional public servants and citizens. Governments on all levels have to open up dialogues with citizens and thereby give citizens the opportunity to participate more deeply in the decision-making process.

One aspect of empowerment is the use of entitlements. The introduction of different types of entitlements has been a growing reform trend during recent years. Strong entitlements embed key standards of access and quality to core services. They also embed equity and clarify accountability, for example through national entitlements to childcare and high-quality health care.

To summarise: focus in the reform process has, *firstly*, shifted from a producer perspective to a perspective where the needs of the citizens and the enterprises are the centre of attention. *Secondly*, the front offices are increasingly moving from the physical world to cyberspace, and being joined-up there.

### 3. Overview of applications

In total, 128 eligible applications were received for the Performance Improvement in Public Service Delivery theme. These applications are presented in tables 1 to 4 below by country of origin, level of government, size of entity and by sector.

#### 3.1 Geographical distribution

There is an impressive distribution of applications from all over Europe; applications were received from 22 countries. Amongst all of these, 50 out of 128 applications came from three countries – Romania (21), Italy (16) and Spain (13). Poland and Austria also submitted more than 10 applications (12 and 11 respectively). The other 17 countries had between 1 and 7 applications each. It is difficult to connect the range of the applications with administrative culture, geography or the length of the EU-membership. It is also difficult to connect it to how well developed, or “modern” the public administration is in a specific country. It is more likely that the strongest factor affecting the number of applications from a country is due to how well the information about the EPSA competition was distributed among the public administration on all levels.

*Table 1: Applications by country of origin*

Austria	11
Belgium	6
Bulgaria	6
Cyprus	5
Finland	3
France	3
Germany	7
Hungary	1
Ireland	2
Italy	16
Lithuania	5
Luxembourg	1
Netherlands	7
Norway	2
Pan-European	1
Poland	12
Portugal	2
Romania	21
Spain	13
Sweden	2
Switzerland	1
United Kingdom	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>

#### 3.2 Levels of government

*Table 2: Applications by level of government*

Local	59
Regional	24
National	42
Pan-European	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>

Table 2 shows that projects aiming for performance improvement are taking place at different levels of government i.e. national, regional, local and also at pan-European level. It is worth noting that almost 50% of the applications came from the local level.

### 3.3 Size of entity

The dominating size of the entities applying were those with over 100 employed staff. A small number had fewer than 50 employees. This might indicate that a certain size of organisation is required in order to have the necessary resources and capability to run innovative projects in the public service.

Table 3: Applications by size of entity

1-25 employees	2
26-50 employees	8
51-100 employees	19
>100 employees	99
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>

### 3.4 Policy area

Table 4: Sectoral analysis of applications

Information society, technology, media and audiovisual	3
Education (higher and lower), training and learning	8
Sports, youth, culture and art	3
Science, research, innovation	2
Environment, climate change, agriculture (including food safety) and fishery	5
Employment, labour related affairs and gender equality	3
Public health and social welfare/affairs	12
Public administration, modernisation, institutional affairs, reform	65
Economic affairs, competition, SME	6
Justice, police, human rights and security	4
Regional policy and development, decentralisation	1
Taxation, customs, finances	7
Transport and infrastructure	1
Other	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>

More than half of the applications fall into the category “Public administration, modernisation, institutional affairs, reform”, which is quite expected in a theme designed for projects in the area of performance improvement in public sector delivery.

What we cannot read directly from table 4 is that around one third of the applications are projects that in one way or another are connected to ICT. Among the top ranked projects, the technological aspect appears in more than half of the applications submitted.

#### **4. Performance Improvement in Public Service Delivery – best practices among the applicants**

This section analyses emerging best practice amongst the applications for the Performance Improvement theme in two categories, i.e. the elements of best practice demonstrated by applications which were awarded best practice certificates (including those nominated for the theme trophy)<sup>1</sup>, and elements of good practice identified amongst applicants who did not, overall, qualify for best practice certificates.

In addition to the general criteria already mentioned in the first part of this report, projects under this theme should contain elements of proven evidence on one of the following subtopics:

- Increased efficiency and effectiveness of public service provision;
- Increased productivity by adapting processes of service production and delivery;
- Shared service centres;
- Reducing bureaucracy and cutting red tape for the benefit of the citizens, clients and business;
- High quality control of public service delivery (related to outcome);
- Customer satisfaction measurement and management;
- Impact assessment of service delivery.

Projects under the theme of Performance Improvement in Public Service Delivery are also assessed under some specific criteria for the theme. These criteria are:

- Impact on society;
- Citizens' acceptance;
- Involvement of citizens in the processes;
- Outcome orientation;
- Balance between economy and quality.

#### **4.1 Strengths displayed by best practice certificate holders**

##### **ICT – an important instrument**

As already mentioned above, ICT is a very common instrument among the applications for improving the performance in public sector delivery. In total 24 projects were rewarded for best practices; 15 of those use **ICT as the main tool for improvement**. It is important to stress here that ICT is mainly an instrument for achieving other goals, but as we have seen, it is an increasingly important and common tool.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this section does not include all of the strengths of the applicants. It is thus not intended to be equated to a comprehensive assessment of the reasons why applicants were or were not successful in achieving best practice certificates.

In the projects ICT is mainly used to “open up” the administration and give the users of the services easier access to and better control over the services and the information they need. **New online technologies are used to minimise the administrative procedures and improve the service delivery to citizens and business.** It is an instrument for creating a more efficient and effective public administration, but quite often also to strengthen the economy in general in the municipality, region or nation.

### **Performance improvement to improve service delivery to citizens in general**

This includes:

- 1) **One-stop-shops to provide multiple services**, for example, healthcare, birth certificates, driving licenses, identity cards etc. One-stop-shops are created **either as decentralised public service centres in a specific geographic area or as a single point of contact on the internet.** In one Cypriot project (*One-stop-shops at the service of citizens*) one-stop-shops are built all over the island. These one-stop-shops offer more than 60 different high impact services. In an Italian project (*AIDA 2009*) the one-stop-shop includes most of the cities in a whole region. A national project from Luxemburg (*Guichet.lu*) allows citizens to complete their administrative tasks online, to create an electronic identity and make secure electronic exchanges. Another project from Bulgaria (*National Health Portal and Electronic Personal Ambulatory Books*) provides up-to-date health information, as well as registers of all health professionals, hospitals, pharmacies, medical services and health forms. It enables professionals to exchange information effectively (with privacy protection) regardless of their physical location. Introducing one-stop-shops can be a way to save time, costs and **improve service delivery** for both citizens and business.
- 2) A **reform of the emergency medical system** through new legislation, communication procedures and better systems for financing and management is introduced in a Romanian project (*Time is... life*). This project is part of a national health reform process. One interesting feature with this project is its **holistic** aspect, using new legislation, new procedures and new partnerships.

### **Performance improvement to improve service delivery to specific groups of citizens**

This includes:

- 1) The project (*C!You*) from the city of Hamburg uses the internet to enable school leavers who are interested in working for public administration to experience potential careers for themselves and to judge their own suitability, by means of a anonymous **self-assessment programme** that is configured as a digital role play. At the end, the programme produces a standardised evaluation of the user’s answers and performances in the role play exercises. Based on the user input it

produces a recommendation on whether or not the user should apply for a traineeship. Demographic data reveals that with the decline in young age groups, **public sector will have great difficulties in the forthcoming years to replace employees** who leave for retirement. In addition to that there is a general public ambivalence towards civil service careers. Using **new technologies to interest young people** in a public sector career could be one way to improve the situation.

- 2) An **internet-based system** that provides a large amount of data on higher education, **facilitating comparison** between universities, is introduced in a national Austrian project (*Interactive Statistical Pocketbook 2008*). The interactive system provides access to the latest numbers and facts about universities at a touch of a button. The system also allows users to link information and export for further treatment and information analysis. **Projects which use ICT to bring together data, so that citizens or specific groups of citizens can compare services and make an informed decision** about the services they want to use could be an important step in improving the public service delivery.
- 3) In an Austrian project from the city of Graz (*The Baby-Document-Service*) **new ways to improve the services** for parents with newborn babies are introduced. Parents are able to go through all administrative registration matters directly during the postnatal period at the hospital. The project allows time and money to be saved by the administration as well as the parents, and in the end for the whole society. This is a clear example of **citizen orientation** without using advanced (and often expensive) technologies. It is also an example of successful **cross-sector coordination**, where public servants from various departments and levels of public administration work together.

### **Performance improvement to improve service delivery to business society**

This includes:

- 1) A project in the city of Düsseldorf (*Integrated online portal for SMEs*) introduces an advanced internet-based system that offers small and medium-sized enterprises a **single point of contact for support and services**. However, the project aims at more than that. It has modernised the administration for companies and thus **reduced the administrative burdens** for them. The simplification of the administrative procedures saves time and costs and can also **strengthen the competitiveness** in the global economy. This is a project that **can be easily transferred** to other cities and regions and also to other services for citizens.



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- 2) *e-bourgogne* is an internet-based system that **offers enterprises access to public markets**. All public bodies use a single platform that offers access to all public markets and also functions as a one-stop-shop for all public aids dedicated to small and medium-sized enterprises. The project has proven to **save time and money** for the business society. It is an example of successful **horizontal and vertical coordination** where actors from different levels of government and from a large number of different sized local bodies are working together.
- 3) *The Italian Public Administration eMarketplace (MEPA)* is a national project in which a **virtual market** is created where any **public administration can buy goods and services offered by suppliers**, for purchases below the European threshold (ca. €200 000). Opening up the public markets for private competition could be one way to improve **the performance** of the public administration, but also to **strengthen the economy** in general.
- 4) The municipality of Spijkenisse in the Netherlands has introduced a project for an **internet-based reversed auction** of household assistance for contracted suppliers (*Individual auctions of applications for support*). Price mechanics is used here in a sector where normally such a method is not used. This is another **way to open up the public sector for various suppliers** instead of one monopolist. Considering that **demographic change will put pressure on financing the health system** this could be one way to work.
- 5) A Belgian national project (*WebDIV: Online vehicle registration*) introduces an internet-based system to **simplify registration** of vehicles, offered to insurance companies, agents, brokers and leasing companies. The aim is to **improve the quality** of service by strongly **reduce the waiting times** and the movements necessary for obtaining a registration.
- 6) A national German project (*Promotion Programme for On-Site Energy Audits*) uses an internet-based system to **minimise the administrative procedures for energy audits** for residential buildings and also to reduce the time for granting the subsidies to the applicants. The system is part of a programme to reduce CO2 emissions and energy consumption for residential buildings. This project is of special interest considering the **pressure of global climate change** on public administration.

## **Performance improvement to make public administrations' work more efficient, effective and citizen oriented**

This includes:

- 1) Projects aiming to **improve the efficiency, effectiveness and service orientation** of the whole public administration at local level through **fundamental change of organisation, management and culture**. One local Bulgarian project (*Targovishte Municipality on the Way of Excellence*) includes the building of a one-stop-shop. Another local project from the United Kingdom (*Transformation of the Revenue and Benefits Service in Basildon*) is introduced in accordance with the principles of Lean processing, to provide a leaner structure in which **public servants are empowered** to make decisions at the lowest possible levels. **Giving front-line professionals enhanced freedoms** in order to respond better to service users is in line with the latest developments in public administrations round Europe.
- 2) One project from the Netherlands (*Conflicts between citizens and government: towards a pro-active, solution driven approach*) **initiates and support a pro-active, open, solution driven and citizen oriented approach for handling complaints**, objections and appeal procedures against government decisions. The public servants in this project use communication techniques derived from mediation when communicating with concerned citizens. Considering the large amount of time and money that citizens, businesses and public administrations spend on handling conflicts, this can be a **time and cost saving way to work**. This way of working has improved the quality of the public service and thus **increased customer satisfaction** among citizens and business, and also the **job satisfaction** among the involved public servants.
- 3) Two projects – one from Poland (*The Rybnik Spatial Information System (RSIP)*) and one from Spain (*SIGPAC: Improving the effectiveness of agricultural and land management through technology*) – introduce **internet-based systems for presenting spatial information** in a simple and accessible manner (*GIS technology*). Important goals for both projects are to **improve the effectiveness** in public administration and make the administration more **citizen oriented**.
- 4) A regional German project (*KiBiz.web*) has introduced an **internet-based system** for supporting the promotion of child day care, directed at actors from all levels of public administration. It is a fully interactive workflow system. Through the project, the subsidy funding can be distributed **quickly, efficiently and transparently**. The system can be a model for further developments in cross level e-Government.
- 5) The national Austrian project (*DYONIPOS (DYnamic ONtology based Integrated Process Optimi Sation)*) introduces an internet-based system for **knowledge management**, which continually and pro-actively provides knowledge for the public servant based on individual user context. **Managing of knowledge as a resource is a factor for increasing efficiency and effectiveness** in an organisation. This especially holds true for public administrations which could

be seen as knowledge work par excellence. Knowledge acquisition and application, knowledge creation and transfer are main tasks for public servants. Through this system, knowledge is shared automatically, which hopefully could **lead to a culture of knowledge sharing**.

### **Performance improvement to address social, economic and environmental issues which are often difficult to effectively address by public administrations**

This includes:

- 1) One project from Vienna (*The EcoBusinessPlan Vienna*) which tries to **stimulate business community to reduce the adverse environmental impact** of economic activity and to **use resources more efficient**, through the creation of ecological management and a project database. One advantage of this project is that is easily **transferable** and thus can be implemented in other regions or countries.
- 2) A local project from Rome (*The mobile counter for disabled and elderly people*) **offers services at home to disabled and elderly people** and also creates **opportunities for professional and skill growth for disabled personnel** by taking part in the project. The project also aims at reducing the administrative work and streamlining the services. The most innovative aspect of this project is the **involvement of disabled people in the project** itself.
- 3) The city of Vienna has introduced a project with the purpose of **establishing gender mainstreaming** and creating acceptance for the equal treatment of women and men in all levels of a local administration (*Gender Mainstreaming in the Vienna City Administration*). Another aim of this project is to build adequate know-how for practical application and to initiate systematic integration within the system in order to **ensure a sustainable establishment of the principle**. It is worth noting that **gender issues** are one of the **main priorities in EU**.

## **4.2 Elements of good practice displayed by other applicants**

The following examples of good practice in the Performance Improvement in Public Service Delivery theme were identified amongst applicants who did not, overall, qualify for best practice certificates. They have been included in the report, both to ensure that the lessons of these projects are not lost simply because the projects did not happen to be prize winners, and also to recognise what the projects referred to have achieved.

Not surprisingly, even in this non-certificate group, internet-based systems are still the most common instrument for improving service delivery. We can also recognise other elements from the schemes used to distinguish the strengths of the certificate award winners.

One interesting and potentially replicable project in this group is a pan-European project (*EASY – Energy Actions and Systems for Mediterranean Local Communities*) to define and **spread local based energy systems** for small and medium scale decentralised urban areas (islands, tourist settlements etc.). It involves municipalities in Italy, Greece, Spain and Croatia. The project can be a model for other local authorities, but it is still too early to assess the results.

Another local project also dealing with environmental questions is an Italian project for environmental risk prevention (*Si.Mo.R.A.*). It is based on an ICT platform developed over a longer period of time. It has **increased efficiency and security** in the public servants' work of **controlling air pollution levels**, industrial water outputs and waste management, working environment security levels and food hygiene conditions.

A local Spanish project (*iSAC Terrassa: a solution for local entities in Europe*) has adopted what they call **Citizens' Attention Service**. The project uses ICT to process different **linguistic registers**, such as colloquialism or administrative jargon in Catalan and Spanish, and also answers open questions. The ICT tool can extract information from existing data bases. The aim of iSAC's is to considerably enhance the public administrations' capability to meet citizens' information requirements. The online service is available 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. In a second stage, iSAC will become pan-European and involves seven EU countries in a consortium. The project is not yet fully implemented.

A Swedish national project is (*The Court Introduction*). This is an advanced web-based introduction to what happens before, during and after **court proceedings**. It is available to anyone with internet access, but the main target group is persons who have been the subject of crime and subsequently been summoned to give evidence at court. The objective is to promote confidence among those having to attend court. The Court Introduction contains images, photographs, short movies, 3D-animations and texts. It also includes a 45-minute film depicting a court proceeding.

A national Cypriot project (*Cyprus Price Level Monitoring Project*) aims at improving the service delivery through **continuous and systematic monitoring** and assessment of the **retail prices of basic consumer products**. The project is in line with the European Union Strategy on Consumer Policy 2007-2013. An interactive ICT platform is used to increase competition, inform consumers about prices and to protect their rights. The project covers approximately 80-85% of the Cypriot retail market.

A national project from Lithuania (*The System of Evaluation of Customer Satisfaction in Statistics Lithuania to Enhance Statistical Services*) is operationalising a system to survey consumers' satisfaction with the nationally produced statistics. The aim is to **improve the quality** of the **statistical services**. Instruments that have been developed in the project are “customer satisfaction level” and “customer satisfaction index”. So far the level of satisfaction is growing, but it is still at quite a low level (66%).

One local Dutch project (*Service guarantees*) is using **service guarantees** to improve the level of public service delivery. The guarantees are stated in a charter and communicated to the citizens. Like the Lithuanian project, the municipality continuously measures the level of services using customer satisfaction surveys and benchmarks. The outcomes of these surveys are published and every six months a specific report is addressed to the municipal executive, focusing on outcome.

Another Dutch national project (*Benchmark Policy*) is also using **benchmarking** to improve the service delivery. This benchmark project enables an accurate comparison of all 37 Directorates-General (DG) that form the central Dutch government. The aim of the project is no less than to change the mindset, culture and procedures of the central government. The purpose is – through learning from each other – to make the DGs operate less like independent business units and more as a unity. The project is in line with the whole-of-government reforms we have seen in many countries over the last decade.

In a national French project (*Design, development, implementation, and management of the budget, financial and accounting information system of the French State*) the agency responsible for the **financial information system** of the state has built an information system aiming at integrating in a single application all the actors of financial governance (budget and accounts) of the state. The project addresses **accountability and transparency** and the ultimate goal is to provide citizens with more transparency in public financial management. The project is still in the deployment phase.

A project in Finland (*The Assessment Model for Museums*) has developed a self-**assessment tool for museums**. The assessment model is structured in three parts: management, administration and support processes constitute one area; the actual core activities of museums form the other; and the third area considers the effects of the activities on society. The model is specially designed for museums, but has a lot in common with the **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)** – a self-assessment tool used in public sector organisations. The model can help museums to move in a more goal-oriented quality conscious direction. It is freely accessible to all professional museums via the internet.

## 5. Key messages and recommendations

The Performance Improvement in Public Service Delivery theme is the broadest of the four themes in the EPSA 2009. Not surprisingly it is also the theme that got most applications, 128 of totally 300. The breadth of the theme and the large number of applications makes it complicated to find a few clear trends among the projects. Still we have found some common elements in many of the projects.

### Key messages

#### 1) *New on-line technologies change the public administration – tool and threat.*

When analysing the applications we have found that this trend of increasing ICT use is still there and it is even growing stronger. ICT has for long been an important tool for improving the performance of the public administration. Here it is important to stress the word tool. ICT is just a tool used to reach the goal of improving the public service delivery. The recommendation when implementing an ICT based reform, however, must be to always secure that there is alternative ways for citizens to communicate with the public service supplier. And also to already in the beginning of a reform project consider how to follow up if there are affected citizens who falls beside the reformed service system.

#### 2) *On-line based integrated services*

Many front offices are leaving the physical world and moving to cyberspace while focussing on specific life events or client groups. On-line based integrated services may ensure a better coordination of especially cross-cutting issues that do not fit well in traditional administrative boxes.

#### 3) *Cross-Sector Networks and Workgroups*

Among the applications there are a number of projects dealing with cross-sector networks and workgroups, for example by trying to change the whole culture and way to work in a government. Many applications also describe projects addressing cross-cutting issues, like improving the service for disabled and elderly.

#### 4) *Improving front-office services and identifying clients' needs*

A trend that we find among the submitted projects is that the interests of those who want to reform the public administrations today is more focused on improving the “front-office” service. There is a shift in interests from back-office to front-office. Connected to that trend there is also a shift away from a producer perspective to a perspective where the needs of the citizens and enterprises are focused.

When analysing the applications we have found that this trend of increasing ICT use is still there and it is even growing stronger. One factor behind this is of course the constantly development of the ICT in itself. For example is interactivity not a problem anymore, as it was a decade ago. The opportunities to open up data are therefore bigger than ever before. In the best public services the availability and overall quality of information for citizens far surpasses what it has been possible to offer in the past. Citizens are no longer just users; they can now play an active role. The empowerment of citizens through ICT is a clear trend in today's public administration reforms. The ICT technologies are also tools for enhancing transparency. Some of the good practise examples in this theme show how better provision of information through ICT have improved the public service delivery in those aspects mentioned here.

What is also very clear when we study the submitted projects is that the front offices now to an ever increasing extent are leaving the physical world and moves to cyber space. On-line based integrated services – one-stop-shops – focused on specific life events or client groups are very common among the projects in this theme. One reason for that are of course the fast developments of the on-line technologies.

Another reason for the increasing interests for providing integrated services for citizens and business is that during the last decades more issues have become “cross-cutting” and do not fit so well into the traditional ministerial boxes. The shifting nature of issues is making coordination more difficult. Focus in ongoing reforms of public administration has now to some extent shifted from the vertical towards the horizontal. The work of the public administration is to a greater extent being carried out in the form of, for example, cross-sector networks and workgroups.

Naturally in most of the projects in this theme the focus are on saving costs and time for business and citizens, having a more efficient and effective public administration, but also in general to deliver better services. However, it is very clear that the needs of the citizens and companies are the driving force the reform projects submitted. Especially the interests of the business society are more in focus today. A number of projects among the best practice certificate holders are in different ways try to improve the services and reduce the administrative burdens for companies. The purpose is often not just better services for companies, but to make the whole economy work better, for example by offering enterprises access to public markets. These projects are of course of special interest in a time of global financial crisis.

It is difficult not to see the increased focus on citizens and business needs as a step in the right direction for public administration. Still it is necessary to hoist a flag of warning for being too naive in relation to the possibilities that ICT today gives. ICT is a fantastic tool which gives possibilities to open up government and public administration in a way we have not experienced since the days of the direct democracy in Athens. However, there are also risks connected to the use of ICT. One important such is how to protect citizens' privacy and integrity when more and more information from different sources can, and is, integrated on Internet. May it be through one-stop-shops, or by other means. The recommendation must be to always take the integrity questions seriously. The reformers should remember that if not, there is a big risk for a backlash among citizens. A backlash that can affect reform projects for a long time ahead.

When it comes to implementing ICT tools it is also important for reformers to take the democracy question seriously. There is a risk that groups of citizens instead of better will have poorer services when services move from the physical world to Internet. And the risk groups are the ones that already have the most vulnerable position in society, like elderly, immigrants and homeless people. It is important not to forget these groups in the general enthusiasm for new high tech solutions.

And last but not least always bear in mind that ICT, coordination and integration is not universal solutions to all problems in public administration. Sometimes they cost more than they taste. The recommendation here is to always weight the costs against the benefits. ICT and integration are not goals in themselves; they are tools for performance improving in public sector delivery.

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# Citizen Involvement

By Melanie Pissarius & Tony Bass

## 1. Specific context of the topic

In recent years, European citizens have become more disengaged with politics: many factors have contributed to this but one is the distance between governments and the people they are there to serve. Thus, it is becoming increasingly necessary to engage and encourage active citizenship through involvement in the policy process. It is essential

that citizens are empowered and facilitated to become part of the decision-making process; thus finding ways and means to encourage citizen involvement is just one – albeit a hugely important one – of the difficulties with any democratic system.

*“Democracy is hard to love. Perhaps some people enjoy to make speeches, or confronting those with whom they disagree, or standing up to privileged and powerful people with claims and demands. Activities like these, however, make many people anxious. Perhaps some people like to go to meetings after a hard day’s work and try to focus discussion on the issue, to haggle over the language of a resolution, or gather signatures for a petition, or call long lists of strangers on the telephone. But most people would rather watch television, read poetry, or make love.”*

*(Young 2000, p. 16)*

Citizen involvement is necessary to provide differentiated answers to the growing complexity of social demands, to cope with the need for improved efficiency in public spending (especially in the most ‘sensitive’ areas of public service, such as social care etc.), and to rebuild the trust of citizens in politics and public administration. Building effective participative partnerships between government, citizens and civil society organisations is at the heart of this theme and is demonstrated by various processes and systems designed to:

- **Enhance** *openness, transparency and accountability* of government and administrations;
- **Share** *information*, knowledge and experience;
- **Enable** *dialogue* and consultation between administrations and citizens (including civil society organisations);
- **Create** mechanisms for *feedback* and *evaluation* in relation to governmental and public administrative decision-making;
- **Facilitate** citizen involvement in debating, discussing and ultimately in making decisions within the overall *decision-making process*.

In effect, we were looking for showcase projects and processes that attempt to adapt private sector models of consumer involvement in business planning and delivery, but which also build on concepts of “**open government**” and “**active citizenship**” ultimately allowing citizens to engage in the planning and delivery of public services. The projects entered under this theme demonstrate how public administrations all over Europe have developed institutional and policy frameworks to promote trust and transparency in government, enhance and facilitate access to information, create spheres of public consultation and ultimately seek to engage citizens in the making of crucial policy decisions.

“**Active Citizenship** refers to the voluntary capacity of citizens and communities working directly together, or through elected representatives, to exercise economic, social and political power in pursuit of shared goals”

*(“The Concept of Active Citizenship”,  
Background Working Paper published by the  
Taskforce on Active Citizenship, March 2007)*

## 2. Current state of affairs

Citizen involvement may mean very different things in different country-specific environments. In elite based systems there is, for instance, very little citizen communication. The degree of engaging citizen engagements may therefore vary from the mere provision of information by the administrative authorities in a one-way relationship, to an actual provision of tools that grants citizens the opportunity to enter into decision-making processes. In the EPSA 2009 competition, the main objective was to especially promote those cases that belong to the latter category and prove themselves to be both transferable and innovative best practices.

Projects submitted in the field of citizen involvement were assessed under the general criteria applied to all applications:

- **Innovation:** assessing the novelty of the solution and the degree to which the case shows a degree of creativity in public administration development;
- **Public concern:** deliberating on how the projects address a pressing need or important issue of public concern;
- **Significance/Relevance:** examining how the project makes a significant contribution to the evolution of public administration and/or involves a significant number of stakeholders in tackling the issue;
- **Impact:** evaluating the actual outcomes of planned objectives and activities of the project;
- **Learning capacity and transferability:** assessing the potential for successful replication by other governments, administrations and sectors.

In evaluating the projects submitted for this particular thematic area, some more specific questions on the planning and implementation of the projects had to be addressed. How and to what extent are citizens, civil society, administrators and politicians in the process and/or system involved? How can their satisfaction with the process and/or system be measured? What balance is there between process efficiency and governmental effectiveness? What is the level and balance of actual process efficiency compared to the level of effectiveness achieved throughout the project implementation? What are the costs compared to the benefits of a new approach vis-à-vis more traditional methods/processes?

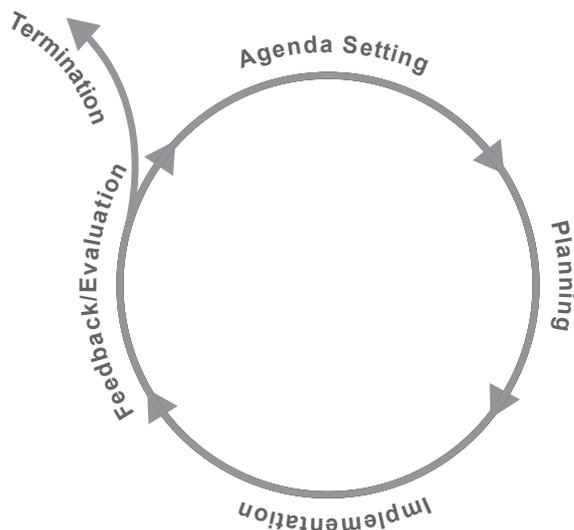
Engaging citizens in participatory processes means investing in the relationship between governments, administrations and citizens. It demands the establishment of suitable standards and the development of innovative ideas as well creating space for citizens to realise and exercise their social responsibility and to make it attractive for citizens to enter into a participatory process.

Being a core element of good governance, citizen involvement strengthens public confidence in public authorities, improves the quality of democracy and contributes to building social capital.

Policy processes which should be looked at are cyclical and can generally be divided into:

- Agenda Setting;
- Planning;
- Implementation;
- Evaluation and Feedback;
- Termination.

*Figure 1: Policy-Cycle*



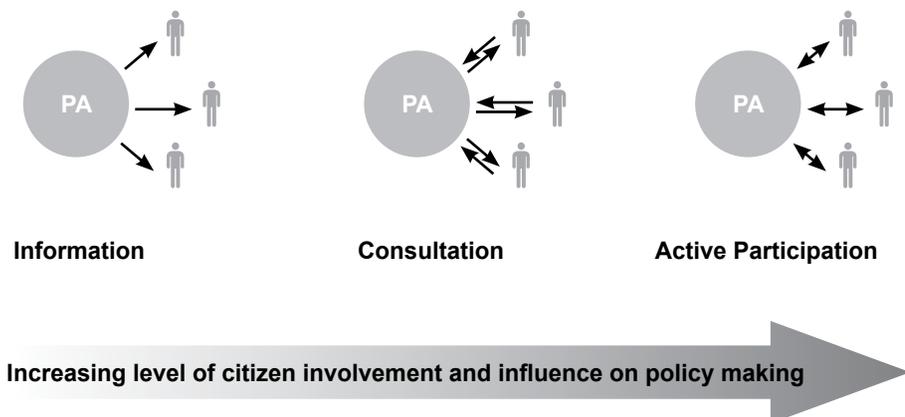
The reasons for citizens' involvements may be present at all stages of the policy cycle:

- **Definition of the problem:** input by citizens may help to identify suitable topics to be tackled;
- Identification and creation of a **policy strategy**;
- Generation of **alternative policy options**;
- **Evaluation** of policies;
- **Recommendation** of solutions and options;
- **Trust** building through greater transparency;
- **Governmental accountability**;
- **Better informed decisions**;
- **Social responsibility** by creating **social capital**;
- **Broader support** for political programmes.

In the current literature a variety of approaches can be found to classify ways and methodologies for citizens' involvement at these various stages of the policy cycle. The most widely used classification is the three-stage model of levels of involvement (OECD 2001; OECD 2003: 27ff):

- a) Citizen **information**;
- b) Citizens' **consultation**;
- c) Citizens' **participation** in making policy decisions.

*Figure 2: Defining information, consultation and active participation adapted from OECD 2001: 23 and OECD 2003: 32*



## 2.1 Citizens' information

Making information available for use and re-use (including performance and financial information), as well as offering high quality data is the first essential step towards empowering people to make well-informed decisions about the administrative services they might wish to avail of. It also allows them to compare and assess services. However, besides this individualistic perspective there is also a collective interest in making performance or financial information transparent to the public since this allows citizens to hold governments and public services to account. The need for citizen information is largely grounded on a doctrine of “open government” which demands transparency in governments, access to information, consultation and ultimately involvement of citizens in making policy decisions. An essential tool in the process of “**opening governments**” is the sharing of information and the enhancement of transparency. Governments and public administrations have come up with a number of tools to provide and deliver sound information to the citizens. Products range from hardcopy information material such as annual reports on governmental and administrative activities, basic tools for awareness raising and citizen education – such as brochures, manuals and guides – as well as media and web-tools. Furthermore, the provision of interactive processes such as workshops not only serves to inform citizens, but is also moving in the direction of citizens' consultation.

### **Open government**

“[...] ‘openness’ means the possibility for everyone to acquire knowledge of government activities by granting access to the fora where public decisions are taken and making available information carriers (documents or other visual or audio instruments), in which these decisions are recorded and which provide insight to the preparation of these decisions. Open government therefore exists where conference rooms or other fora where government bodies make or prepare their decisions are open to the public and where documents relating to these decisions can be consulted within a reasonable time-limit and without to much trouble.”

*(D. Curtin and H Meijers: The principle of Open Government in Schengen and the European Union: Democratic Retrogression? in Democracy, migrants and police in the European Union).*

## 2.2 Citizens' consultation

Sharing and assessing information provided by public authorities is a prerequisite for facilitating public discussion and enabling dialogue between citizens and public sector stakeholders. Measures that seek to move from one-way information consumption by citizens to a system that facilitates feedback loops and allows a two-way interaction between the public and the administration have to be put in place in order to create real dialogue.

Citizen consultation may have two reasons:

- a) **Feedback** on current or past policies or services may be sought; or,
- b) A public debate may be initiated to **identify public needs** but also to explore alternative solutions.

There are numerous methods available to consult with citizens and no exhaustive list of methods can be provided within the constraints of this report. However, we would like to draw attention to some of the methods which we found amongst the projects submitted within the EPSA 20009 competition:

- **Opinion polling** – using established (statistical) methods to measure opinions of defined groups on certain policies, services and programmes;
- **Surveys** – measuring the attitudes of citizens generally by using structured questionnaires;
- **Comment and notice periods** – establishing certain timeframes for citizens to express their opinions on specific documents (i.e. draft spatial plans, draft legislations etc.);
- Public hearings and town meetings – facilitating interactive exchanges;
- **Focus groups** – allowing the collection of comments and suggestions from certain “focus” or “target” groups on a temporary basis;
- **Citizens Panels** – permanent collectives representative of a target group sample, being regularly consulted by the authorities on a specific topic(s);
- **Advisory committees** – groups representing a specific set of interests appointed by the government. Members are chosen to reflect a broad range of interest on a certain policy issue(s).

### 2.3 Citizens’ participation

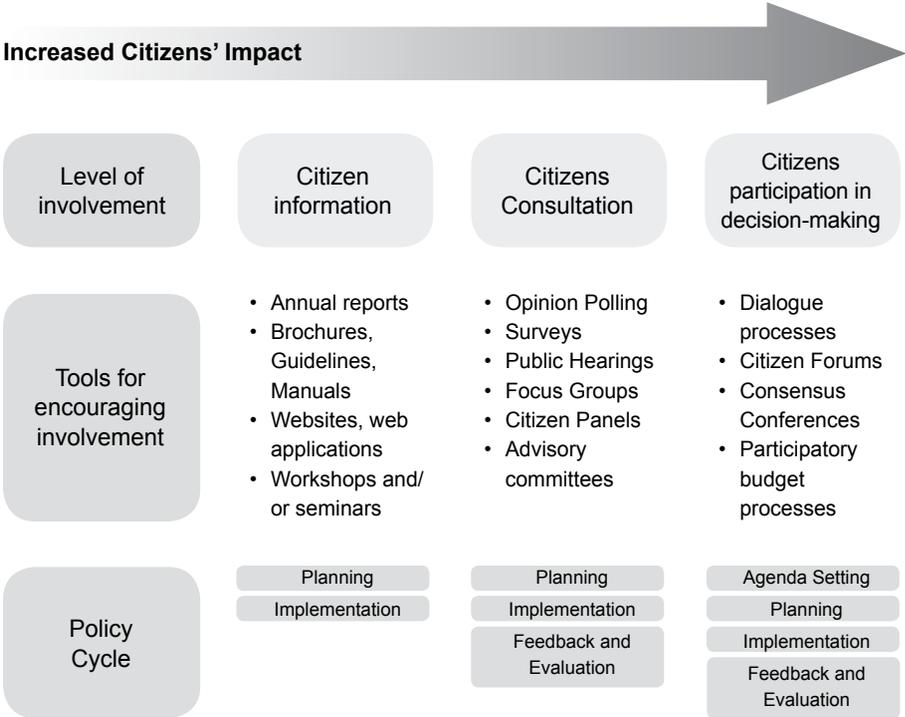
It is not always clear when and where exactly to draw the line between consultation and the actual involvement of citizens in decision-making processes on a theoretical scale. When do we move from mere discussion to real engagement?

The following examples do not claim to be exhaustive in providing a list of methods to engage citizens actively in decision-making processes. These methods nonetheless exemplify features or use a set of tools including and/or combining those of the first and second levels of engagement:

- Enhancing **dialogue processes**: engaging large numbers of citizens in the process of identifying public needs or examining problem issues and developing policies by applying a mix of tools as of levels one and two;
- **Citizen forums**: providing citizens with a means to discuss and posit policy proposals;
- **Consensus conference**: enabling a panel of non-experts to discuss a complex issue over several days and thereafter to report on the conclusions;
- **Participatory budget**: making budget plans understandable to citizens and involving them in discussions on incomes and expenditures.

The following figure visualises levels of civil involvement and the respective tools and methods used. At a later point this table will be re-visited and enriched with EPSA 2009 project examples:

Figure 3: Level of involvement at policy cycle stages



## 2.4 The impact of ICT and web 2.0 technologies

Administrations provide an increasing amount of information online (via government websites, portals etc.) but the quantity, quality and issues covered vary to a great extent.

Citizens, experts and policymakers can be brought together with the help of **web 2.0** tools (i.e. tagging, multimedia sharing, social networking and bookmarking, wikis, audio blogging and podcasting) in order to encourage discussions, to share knowledge and experiences and finally to develop a better policy or public services.

Web 2.0 tools are being used to give citizens the opportunity to participate more profoundly in decision-making processes. One example for effectively and successfully taking advantage of web 2.0 is the **“Participatory Budget”** project launched by the German city of Cologne. By creating a sophisticated e-Participation internet platform, it enables citizens to actively participate in determining and monitoring the city’s budget spending. The Italian project **“Terzo Veneto”** applies a whole set of web 2.0 and ICT tools – such as online consultations, a video game, an election game, a YouTube channel, and a citizen’s dictionary – in order to promote the activities of the project and to inform citizens.

**“Web 2.0** is the second generation of web development, **facilitating collaboration and dialogues** between online participants – through blogs, wikis and other interactive forums.”

*(Cabinet Office, UK: Power in People’s Hands: Learning from the World’s Best Public Services)*

**“Web 2.0** applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of a platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an “architecture of participation”, and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences.”

*(O’Reilly, T., “Web 2.0: Compact Definition?”, O’Reilly Radar blog)*

Clearly, new technologies and especially the second web generation are offering fantastic new opportunities to publish and share information, to encourage dialogues and discussions and ultimately provide for mechanisms of participatory decision-making. However, there are also risks in trends that have evolved into terms such as **“e-Democracy”, “e-Government”, “e-Platform”, e-Participation”, “e-Health”, “e-Inclusion” or “e-Learning”**. Being constantly confronted with those terms in the sphere of public administration makes one easily forget the exclusive aspect of web and internet applications as the sole tool to inform and to consult with citizens.

Online information or consultative platforms are only available for those that have access to them. It is a very elitist point of view to assume that ICT tools will rapidly subsume many traditional forms of service and information delivery.

In assessing all the applications received for the EPSA 2009 we noticed that not only those projects showing an innovative ICT enabled solution, but also those that promote a return to traditional values of dialogue and personal contact, have been particularly successful. Thus, new generation (web-based) technologies must be regarded for what they are: additional enablers and facilitators to citizen's engagement.

## **2.5 e-Tools as enablers and limitations**

Adopting new information and communication technologies is one of the main challenges of current governance in transforming the relationship between governments and citizens. By focusing on the role of ICT in the process of citizens' involvement, a three-fold categorisation has been put forward by Macintosh et al. (2004):

- a) e-Enabling;
- b) e-Engaging;
- c) e-Empowerment.

### ***E-Information***

Public administration websites offers information on the list of elected officials, government structures, policies and programmes, points of contact, budgets, laws, regulations and other information of public interest. Information may be disseminated through a number of online tools such as: community networks, blogs, web forums, text messages (micro-democracy), newsgroups and e-mail lists.

### ***E-Consultation***

Public administration websites provide the tools necessary for e-Consultation. They allow citizens to set the agenda for the debate through e-Petitioning. The government ensures that its elected officials have an interactive website to communicate directly with their constituents. It maintains an archive of their discussions and provides feedback to citizens.

### ***E-Decision-Making***

Public administrations are willing to take into account the e-Inputs of citizens into the decision-making process. The government informs its citizens on what decisions have been taken based on the consultation process.

The literature proposes four major limitations of concentrating on e-Governance:

- There are **no defined technical standards** for applying e-Governance tools and often there is a lack of cross-organisational coherence;
- There is a **general public fear** that interactions between citizens and governments are monitored;

- Bureaucratically fragmented **governments are highly resistant** to change and adapting e-Governance solutions;
- **Access to computers and ICT skills are unevenly distributed** among the population which leads to a “digital exclusion” from the political process.

### **Useful readings on citizen’s involvement**

The OECD report “Citizens as partners” (2001) provides a useful background to citizen participation and policy-making. A “Practitioner’s Manual” freely downloadable on the website of the Flemish Institute for Science and Technology (viWTA) provides a comprehensive overview of participatory approaches, methods and guidelines for their implementation.

The OECD report “Promise and Problems of E-Democracy” examines the new communication and information technology to enable citizen participation comprising numerous case studies of OECD member countries as well as the European Commission.

A guide on e-Methods has been developed by Macintosh, Coleman and Lalljee (2005), discussing 13 e-Participation tools in various democratic contexts. The e-Tools presented comprise: alert services, virtual communities, e-Deliberation polling, e-Petitioning, e-Panels, forums and board discussions, decision-making games, chat rooms, surveys, quick polls, blogs, FAQ sections and webcasts.

A comparative and up-to-date assessment of e-Government advancement across the 192 United Nations (UN) Member States is provided in the UN e-Government survey 2008.

### 3. Overview and analysis of applications<sup>1</sup>

We received 48 valid applications for the Citizen Involvement theme. These applications are analysed in tables 1 to 4 below by country of origin, level of government, size of entity and by sector. The applications came from 16 different countries and broadly reflected the different methodologies and frameworks for citizen involvement across Europe. Almost two-thirds of the projects (34 out of 48 applications) were from the local and regional level. There were still an unexpectedly high number of applications from the national level (12), as well as two applications with a pan-European approach. Those cases however, were generally located within the first and second level of involvement (“information” & “consultation”). The projects at the national and European level were mostly concerned with the set-up and establishment of standards for citizen involvement.

*Table 1: Analysis of applications by countries of origin*

Austria	3
Belgium	3
Bulgaria	1
Cyprus	1
France	1
Germany	4
Greece	1
Hungary	2
Italy	13
Lithuania	5
Netherlands	2
Poland	3
Romania	3
Spain	4
Sweden	1
United Kingdom	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>

*Table 2: Analysis of applications by level of government*

Local	22
Regional	12
National	12
Pan-European	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>

*Table 3: Analysis of applications by size of entity*

1-25	3
25-50	3
50-100	8
>100	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>

<sup>1</sup> The following tables are based on the information indicated by the EPSA 2009 applicants in their online application form.

The distribution among the sectors shows that most activities involving citizens generally took place in the context of public administration modernisation and reform.

*Table 4: Sectoral analysis of applications*

Information society, technology, media and audiovisual	7
Education (higher and lower), training and learning	5
Sports, youth, culture and art	1
Environment, climate change, agriculture (incl . food safety) and fishery	4
Employment, labour related affairs and gender equality	1
Public health and social welfare/affairs	2
Public administration, modernisation, institutional affairs, reform	20
Justice, police, human rights and security	1
Regional policy and development, decentralisation	3
Taxation, customs, finances	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>

Specifically however - and although not indicated by the applicants - the most successful projects for citizen participation took place in the realm of urban and spatial planning, environmental issues, and involvement of young people in policy and decision-making processes.

By and large, we noted that most of the submitted applications were either based on, or featured a web application. Even though only 20 applicants indicated “information society” as their sector, we could see that almost 90% of all the projects received had used, featured or were based on internet and web-applications. E-Governance tools were most widely used for information sharing purposes but some applicants managed to apply them in a way that significantly enhanced a dialogue and created a feedback system between policy stakeholders, as was shown by the “**Governance Plan in Cantabria**”; or to create a platform of active participation as the project “**Participatory Budgeting in Cologne**” demonstrated.

## 4. Review of applications and summary of best practices

The comparative examination of the submitted applications and projects is based on the premise that no two countries are alike and that country-specific environments are shaped by historic prerequisites, public sector related variables and the society at large.

### 4.1 Building institutional frameworks for citizen participation

As a first step towards greater involvement of citizens, an institutional framework that offers the tools and the space to apply them has to be put in place. Besides legal and policy prerequisites, which define citizens' rights to access information and to passively or actively engage

*“Where policies, plans, programmes, and legal instruments are prepared, the public is increasingly offered an opportunity to participate. Public, politics and administration can benefit optimally from such involvement where the participation of the public is exercised at a high quality. This can be ensured by the application of standards aimed at maximising the effectiveness and efficiency of public participation...”*

*([http://www.partizipation.at/standards\\_oeb0.html](http://www.partizipation.at/standards_oeb0.html))*

in decision-making processes, institutions have to know how to apply and exercise them. The Austrian project on **“Standards for Public Participation”** has developed a set of standards and is providing guidelines for the involvement of citizens at any governmental and administrative level.

In **Malmö**, those theoretical considerations have been converted into a city-wide action programme. A considerable level of political responsibility has been delegated from the City Council to local- or district-based committees and has appointed a local Government Commissioner who is responsible for further developing local democracy. A Steering Group for the Development of Democracy was appointed as the drafting body for the City Executive Board, tasked with developing citizen dialogue and following up democracy initiatives in the municipality. The incentives for promoting a higher degree of citizens' involvement in Malmö were to:

- Create greater trust in politicians;
- Stabilise decentralised organisation;
- Improve the quality of work in the public sector;
- Provide an active and attractive e-Democracy structure;
- Make available good quality information structures for the public.

In order to gather views even from groups that do not express their opinions in the public debate during the period between elections and on the basis of theoretical considerations, Malmö has developed multi-faceted tools and methods for citizens' participation, dealing with various topics and sectors which concludes in e-Democracy initiatives such as e-Participation (Malmöpanelen); e-Petitions (Malmöinitiativet); interactive homepage (Malmö.se); local petitions (Medborgarförslag); different local democracy projects, and appointing a local government commissioner.

## 4.2 Providing information

Whilst definitions of information depend on the context, one thing is evident: without information, or indeed the provision of information, citizen involvement cannot be fully realised. It is vital when asking citizens to actively participate and share their views that they are adequately informed or have access to the information needed in order to form opinions and participate.

The Cypriot project – **“Cyprus Price Level Monitoring Project (Observatory of Prices)”** – sets out to increase consumer awareness on price levels via the monitoring and publishing of retail prices of basic products offered to consumers. This project not only provided vital consumer information, thus facilitating the consumers right of choice, but the effect of doing so also ensured that large retail outlets were indirectly pressurised to provide the most competitive price and quality products. The Cyprus Competition and Consumer Protection service created a framework for systematic price level monitoring and provides constant information to consumers. This is achieved through several innovative features, such as immense freedom to access a vast amount of information, and an organised and interactive system of citizen consultation via the provision of individualised information and consultation services. All information is readily available on the official website, but the mass media is also utilised to increase awareness of the project and its results. This system of rapid communication channels, dissemination of information and efficient extraction of up-to-date results has significantly reinforced citizen involvement, consumer awareness, price transparency and overall competition.

The project by the Commune di San Giuliano Terma (Provincia di Pisa), Italy – **“The Social Responsibility in Local Government”** – took social accounting as the beginning of their project with the hope that it would bring about control by citizens over the real results of local administration. The main aim of this social budget approach is to be accountable to citizens and stakeholders for the real effects and implications of political decisions and administrative measures of local government. Although the project is in its early stages, the methodology behind it is based on four fundamental key principles of informing citizens. This is to be achieved through transparency, responsiveness, conformity and inclusiveness. To achieve these two-way communicative tasks, the formation of focus groups was successfully achieved. Firstly, the point of view of the citizen was required to identify needs, thus the use of direct and informal methods was deemed most effective. Furthermore, with a combination of precise information and an absence of vagueness it was hoped that this would bridge the information gap on the part of citizens and facilitate active participation in decision-making.

The NHS North Lancashire recognised the need to create new ways of actively involving and consulting their local population, thus the project **“NHS North Lancashire Affiliate Scheme”** was set up to encourage citizen involvement. The Affiliate Scheme is an informative mechanism for engaging and involving local communities, in order to share views and gauge opinion, for example, through focus

groups, online polls etc., related to the planning and delivery of local health services. With over 7000 citizens contributing to decision-making on vital topics, this project keeps the communities key issues to the fore. By adapting innovative recruitment measures, such as The Health Fast Forward campaign, they enabled people to voice their views verbally in an informal conversational manner whilst also providing direct information. This scheme facilitates two-way communication, by providing transparent and coherent information and citizens are provided with real involvement.

### 4.3 Enabling dialogue

Facilitating two-way channels of communication and dissemination of information are basic factors to enable dialogue. Dialogue can provide citizens with clarity on issues of concern, provide resolution to conflicting matters, and deepen understanding of possibly contentious or sensitive issues.

Enabling dialogue – the Italian way – can be seen in the project “**Routes: The Way to Integration**”, aimed at setting up transnational cooperation networks in order to exchange best practices in the field of immigrants’ integration policy. This project reinforced and modelled mechanisms and a set of recommendations to establish a dialogue between regional and local public entities and immigrants. It analysed governance experiences on integration issues at national and regional level and presented positive examples of migrant integration into decision-making processes in workshops, seminars, internet platforms and study reports. An internet-platform allowing access to all the publications was created, thus providing improved knowledge and information on participatory practices for involving immigrants in local and regional decision-making processes.

In 2008, the Dutch town of Heerhugowaard organised “**A Day Never to Forget**” that aimed at bringing together policy stakeholders and people from problematic social backgrounds. A total of 35 expert staff members and managers were linked to a partner within the target group as coaches. The goal was to get insights into the problems and environment of a group of citizens with severe (social and financial) problems and to offer them an opportunity to enter into dialogue with relevant decision makers.

A similar approach to the Dutch example is to be found in Belgium, but moves one step further by using focus groups in the area of social and youth support services on a permanent basis. Over the last ten years, the “**Agora**” project in Belgium has established a permanent communication channel between those families living in poverty and youth support services. Agora brings together representatives of two associations in which people who have the experience of poverty gather together with others for a common objective.

*“The Agora group encourages those living in poverty to talk about the reality of their lives and to talk face-to-face with support workers in order to improve how the Decree regarding youth support services is put into practice.”*

*(“Agora” project application)*

Representatives of counsellors and directors of youth social work, social workers in the youth aid services and the legal protection services of the central administration for youth aid of the Ministry of the French Community, as well as a representative of the supervisory Minister are discussing with the families how services and policies may be improved in order to avoid placements due to poverty, thus preserving the relationship between parents and children. These meetings have allowed youth social workers to better **respond to the needs of young people**. It has helped to develop common tools that can be used within the youth aid sector, and outside of it, to create discussion and aid training of professionals, as well as to place the people responsible for policy into contact with society as a whole.

By agreeing to participate in the Agora group, professionals also question their assumptions and situate themselves in a training procedure with their citizens/clients. By allowing families living in poverty to define their needs and their expectations, the project increases trust, respect and promotes mutual learning among the authorities and the families involved. Taking their experiences as a starting point, citizens/clients have the chance to engage in a constructive way and play an active role in working towards improving the complex and delicate issue of providing support to children, young people and families who are socially excluded.

#### **4.4 Involving the third sector**

NGOs depend upon a healthy relationship with the public, being points of contact for information, complaint, and importantly for mobilising public support and interaction. Therefore, it should be of no surprise that NGOs and governments can cooperate to facilitate active citizen involvement in decision-making.

Several projects included cooperative programmes involving NGOs: for example **Gdynia** is spending around €1.35 million each year on cooperation projects with local NGOs (three times more than anywhere else in Poland). A **programme of cooperation** was drafted and has recently been updated. It describes different forms of cooperation and participation. An **NGO division in the city hall** is affiliated to the mayor's office and is responsible for the coordination of contacts, establishing rules and standards, organising meetings, ensuring equality policy, providing advice in setting-up an NGO and offering workshops for NGOs on how to apply for grants or other sources of funding, as well as training in accountancy every month. Almost everyone in the city hall has an NGO background – the deputy mayor was actually part of the initiation process that made the change in law and eventually cooperation with the third sector possible.

Every year an annual get-together – an **NGO-Forum** – is held, which is always dedicated to a special topic (this year will be dedicated to “young people” and how to get them interested in NGO work). The aim is to involve the NGOs more in actual decision-making processes and to build sustainability in the third sector. An annual evaluation is also undertaken during these meetings. Every second year,

a consultative committee – consisting of 12 NGO members – is elected during the forum. The committee is actively involved in deciding and advising on the city’s budget and also in evaluating NGO grant applications to ensure balanced sectoral spending.

The **NGO centre** which is affiliated to the NGO division at the city hall facilitated 1100 meetings at their premises in the past year. The city furthermore allows – even encourages – local NGOs to promote their work during the yearly ship race in Gdynia harbour. The possibility for self-campaigning becomes particularly important in the context of the “1% campaign”: Gdynia offers citizens the opportunity to use their annual tax return to identify an NGO they may wish to support. The campaign has recently won a national award.

#### **4.5 Consultation**

It is important to understand that providing information to citizens on services, programmes, events, etc., is one-way communication. However, consultation involves slightly more: this two-way communicative act provides citizens with the opportunity to respond and give feedback on concerns which directly impact them. Many local governments have taken on board the benefits of consultation and the following examples are worth mentioning.

The “**Governance Plan in Cantabria**” was drafted after consultation with 1800 citizens (out of a population of 600 000); this is a governmentally-driven project, monitored by the statistical institute and combining both top-down and bottom-up approaches with effects on policy development and public consultation.

It is a tool, both for involvement of citizens in the governmental plan design (“co-design”), and for the measurement/monitoring of its progress and fulfilment via a wide range of key indicators. The opinion polling which enables evaluation of progress in implementing the plan is done by the statistical institute which stresses its independence and impartiality in the process (see more below). The total budget of the project is €1 million for four years (the duration of the plan); there are 30 staff members in the institute of which 3-4 work full-time on the project. Citizens are involved at several stages of the project via standardised, individual and anonymous questionnaires and interviews (only citizens above 18 years are included in the sample, but are drawn from different groups, i.e. elderly, low-high income, disabled etc.) at the inception period; the monitoring of progress includes publication every three months via an interactive web-portal (which is to be upgraded in the future steps); one year of design phase, i.e. back-office and database with all the indicators (in close cooperation with all public entities of the government) and citizenship; the whole project design was carried out internally, only technological aspects of the website and the interview stage aspects have been outsourced (to private companies), i.e. ownership of the project is secured. There is high potential for transferability to other public actors, since it is a well thought and easy to apply model. Unfortunately this has yet to happen in other local, regional or state level administrations (although there is interest), due to

fear and resistance (since it facilitates the work of opposition parties in parliaments) of other actors. Its implementation demonstrates high transparency, open governance and enhanced democracy features in the regions; the data collection to update the system takes place every 6-8 months (i.e. meetings with public managers across all ministries and department) to gather information and evaluate progress of tasks/implementation; as a consequence, the project creates among the public managers a kind of competitive process to improve based on the quarterly communication of results and progress (press, website, brochures etc.) and creates better planning (i.e. not too ambitious “promises” at the beginning of each cycle) within the public administration. High visibility in the region is proven, i.e. the project is widely recognised. The project is now in its second phase (second government plan) further to a successful pilot phase with the first plan (2004-2007); continuous updates are envisaged.

In Bulgaria the **“Citizens Involvement for More Effective Decisions”** involves the urban planning council, which consists of 23 members who are local architects, construction engineers, journalists, businesses, representatives of local cultural and educational institutions and other active citizens. They have been invited to be members of the Council by the Deputy Mayor in charge of urban planning and civil works in the Stara Zagora Municipality. They meet monthly with the Deputy Mayor and discuss urban planning and urban environment issues of crucial importance.

The second Consultative Council is developing ideas for transparent administration. Its focus is on public service delivery issues and aims to facilitate effective solutions jointly with the Chief Secretary of the Municipality. Currently, the Municipality of Stara Zagota provides more than 200 services to citizens and the business sector. It consists of nine members. Five of them are high-level experts with a lot of professional experience and good reputations within local society. The rest of the members are selected partly by local media and NGOs. The selection process is organised in a very transparent way in the presence of local media representatives and citizens.

It is important to note that all the Consultative Council members are volunteers. The Consultative Councils have established their own statutes and are entitled to initiate and to make suggestions for decision-making on complicated issues to the Mayor. The final decisions are taken by the elected politicians. The members of the Consultative Councils give suggestions on key problems, and in this way they extend the civil participation in local decision-making; thus enhancing social capital.

The **“Citizen Panel in the Tax Collection Process”** project aims to support the process of improving tax services and since the early 1990s has been in place in the tax office in Sierpc, Poland. The objective of this project was to create a “friendly and optimum organisation of tax collection” in a way, which is not perceived as a “punishment” to the taxpayer. In order to accomplish this mission, the main director is assisted by a panel of economically weak taxpayers – craftsmen and merchants. The project aims to build an effective partnership between clerks, citizens and social organisations, i.e. guilds of different crafts. The participating taxpayers in the panels are older people, who have diminishing jobs, such as blacksmiths, shoemakers,

or tailors. The goal was to use the knowledge and the involvement of this group to plan and deliver services and to eventually make administrative decisions. For this purpose, a framework of constant cooperation with craftsmen and merchants had to be designed and implemented. The Head Director of the Office and the management staff direct the project. The results of the employment of citizen panels within the tax administration include measurably reduced costs related to procedures, complaints and appeals, as well as a higher level of customer satisfaction, as confirmed by public surveys. The project also managed to increase public trust in the local tax authority by involving respected community business people in the process. This also led to a greater acceptance of tax bills and an increase in the number of taxpayers who voluntarily fulfilled their tax duties.

Inspired by the success of this approach, this method of citizen panels is developing dynamically. It is now planned to adapt the model for other areas of public interest in Sierpc (i.e. cooperation programme with higher education institutions).

As previously mentioned, the **Cyprus Price Level Monitoring Project** included the involvement of superior government officials in public consultation meetings, along with press conferences, public debates, and more importantly, offered citizens the opportunity to become involved in consultations. With regards to consumer rights, best consumer practices on prices and assurance of the levels of protection, the government provides citizens with a consultation process which has highlighted some problematic areas for citizens. The results of highlighting and underlining these areas allowed for consultative resolutions to be met and consumer scrutiny to evolve. This valuable opportunity provided for direct action to be taken thus achieving active citizen involvement.

The “**Terzo Veneto**” project provides a range of online consultation services in order to manage, organise and launch initiatives aimed at promoting participation, as well as coordinating and cooperating in the assessment and organisation of initiatives for citizens and animating the local political and social debate.

## 4.6 Active participation

Actively involving citizens in the decision-making process in a way that is inclusive and productive should encourage participation on the part of the citizen. Many elements are needed in order to reach the goal of active participation; several projects highlighted below are moving towards best practices in this area.

**Participatory Budget** – “*school in democracy*”. People’s budgeting first appeared in 1989 when it was introduced in Porto Alegre in Brazil. There are now almost 200 municipalities in Brazil practising the Orçamento Participativo.

However, people’s budgeting has now not only caught on in other emerging economies, but also in many industrialised nations. In Europe, people’s budgeting focuses on the careful disclosure of what have previously been largely non-transparent consultative processes and is being used as a tool for managing the financial crisis at the municipal level.

One of the principal ideas is to make the budget process understandable to citizens and involve them in the discussion on revenue generation and expenditure. This can promote citizen participation, and is seen as a means of reducing political apathy and indifference. In Europe, the first experiments started in Italy (*Grottammare 1994*), Great Britain (*Salford 1996*) and Germany (*Mönchweiler 1998*) (<http://www.buergerhaushalt-europa.de/>).

The participatory budget in Cologne is a pilot project, which involves citizens, via the internet, in the preparation of the city’s budget. The project created the opportunity for citizens to participate in designing the municipal budget, focusing on three areas – playgrounds, streets and sports – by setting up an e-Platform. The project stimulated a lot of discussion, as well as proposals, ideas and corrections. In all, 10 231 participants, 4973 proposals, and 9184 comments provided 52 746 inputs. Through this method, a new culture of participation has emerged based on transparency and the ability to activate large and diverse target groups.

*“The project goes to the heart of citizens’ participation.”*  
(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)

Currently, there are 38 municipalities in Germany that have either introduced a participatory budget or are executing a participatory budget for the second or third time (<http://www.buergerhaushalt.org>). The German processes are usually composed of three stages:

- a) Citizens receive information about the budget focusing on revenues and expenditures;
- b) Residents are consulted in public assemblies about priorities;
- c) Public officials report on the final version of the budget approved by the council.

The participatory budget in Cologne however is going further by involving citizens in active monitoring of implementation.

In the city of Timișoara (Romania) – “**Neighbourhood Consultation**” – neighbourhood consultative councils are citizens’ non-political, non-profit organisations, formed by volunteers who act to improve the quality of life in their communities. They were formed in Timișoara in 2003, following the example of their twinned city of Mulhouse in France. There are 19 neighbourhood consultative councils in Timișoara. These organisations make proposals to the local administration regarding infrastructure, traffic, public transportation, environment, playgrounds, public lighting, schools etc. They also monitor the way issues are addressed. As part of the definite results seen in the neighbourhoods, civic spirit is being developed and voluntary inclusion of citizens is growing. People in each neighbourhood democratically elect their representatives, and these representatives keep in continuous contact with the local administration and public services.

Once again, the **NHS North Lancashire affiliate scheme** warrants a mention as their approach to citizen engagement is not a project with a beginning and end, but instead it is intended to become a permanent feature of its service planning and design. Citizen engagement is embedded in the decision-making process of the organisation by requiring that proposals for new services, changes in service levels and methods of service delivery etc., have to demonstrate how citizens have been consulted in these decisions. The organisation has put in place measures to minimise the risk that the process leads to unrealistic expectations by citizens, by intelligent facilitation of citizen input, setting out the choices available and resource constraints (a typical challenge for many consultation schemes).

The organisation has not tried to avoid consultation on difficult issues for primary care, such as access to publicly funded dental services. A staff involvement toolkit – the guide to involving citizens in service decisions – is intended to be a user friendly aide to staff, which interprets lengthy and detailed national government guidance on the subject. The staff involvement toolkit has now been made a requirement for service heads by the Board. As with other citizen engagement initiatives, it has been undertaken without additional specific national government funding to implement it.

#### **4.7 Youth apathy**

Examples of youth focused projects can also be seen in the “**Terzo Veneto**” portal which has broadened its scope, by dedicating a project to schools called “Civil Life” ([www.civillife.it](http://www.civillife.it)). This incorporates specific communications tools with suitable language and contents including a dedicated online forum, a video space, targeted surveys and direct links to the websites of regional high schools. This project represents a first step to engage young people through a dedicated space enabling direct interaction with the regional parliament by presenting its main activities.

*“Public administration is still perceived as distant from concrete youth problems, muddled and poorly predisposed to dialogue because its language and procedures are complicated and bureaucratic.”*

*(Provincia Regionale di Siracusa,  
Project: Future Managing Classes)*

Over the last ten years, around 3000 students in total, drawn from 120-140 schools, have participated in the Italian project **“Ragazzi in Aula”**. The project is annually evaluated and further refined in partnership with the Regional Ministry of Education. Since 2008 those students who participate and are selected for the short-listed projects (6-8 projects every year) are being awarded with class credits within their curriculum. Initiatives include:

- Familiarisation with the drafting of laws, decision-making process etc. and thus bringing an important group of citizens (the youth – “our future”) closer to politics, policies etc.;
- Involvement of pupils and their proposals in the co-design of legal acts (some laws are named after the students) via a very sophisticated simulation exercise and with assistance of real regional parliament members, their legal services etc.;
- Familiarising students with the fact that proposing and approving legal acts implies costs for implementation and therefore provokes debates;
- Familiarising and involving students in discussions on the state reform, structure of competences and responsibilities between state and regional level (e.g. some law proposals and the lack of competence at Piemonte level have been brought to attention of the Italian parliament);
- High visibility and recognition in the region (national newspaper press announcements, etc.);
- High transferability to other regions with concrete examples in Tuscany, Puglia, Abruzzo, which were inspired by the “Ragazzi in Aula” project and now carry out adapted versions of it;
- Clear political leadership in the project via the president of the regional council who is at the same time president of the Piemonte student/pupil association, i.e. has a demonstrated personal interest in the project;
- Actual topics are dealt with in the law proposal thus sensitising students with topical issues; e.g. one law proposal on the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty for the Italian and Piemonte parliament which is currently on hold, obviously because the treaty is not yet in force;
- The thematic areas of the law proposal are taken up by the real regional council members and in several cases were debated. In addition an attempt is made to analyse whether they match with the regional government plans and priorities.

The Greek project **“Bring the Goteborg & Lisbon Principles to the Attention of Pupils in Secondary Education”** involves organising a competition, a large awareness raising campaign and partnership building with the relevant educational bodies. The project was designed to raise the awareness of pupils regarding the Goteborg and Lisbon policies, but not to involve them in decisions etc. – unlike Ragazzi in Aula. However, the small number of students rewarded seems to be a problem. The good thing is that the project stimulated public discussion about the role and policies of the EU. The provincial administration project **“Future Managing Classes”** has been divided into two steps:

- a) Planning between scholastic institutes involved and the public administration was followed by implementation of a visit calendar. During visits, the students observed different Provincial Council sessions, learning the role of its different organs, the mechanisms that regulate its operations, the dynamics of Council Sessions and the interaction between majority and minority;
- b) Organisation of simulated Provincial Council sessions will provide active participation by students. The aim is to help young people to play an active role in democratic life and exercise their rights in society. Youth participation at local and regional levels is a pressing need; young people need to know about life in civil society, about their specific role in that society and their personal responsibilities. Within this general context, the Provincial Council Presidency initiative aspires to be an important first step towards greater awareness and inclusion of young people in administrative processes.

Young people, being increasingly distant from politics and administration, need to be encouraged to understand government policies through new methods and approaches in which they are actors and not passive recipients.

The combination of theoretical and practical aspects, with the choice of introducing, in the second phase, a simulated council session on school buildings, aims not only to further increase the desire and interest of students in problem solving; it also offers, above all, a forum for conciliation and confrontation, through which the public administration can build on emerging applications and provide ongoing assistance to specific, targeted, conscious and effective problem solving. In addition, the involvement of the provincial civil servants at all levels (Council Presidency and officers, public managers, advisors and councillors), lends experience and expertise to the dialogue with the students. It also demonstrates the commitment of local administrators to work in ever greater synergy with their community.

## 4.8 Environment

The Cypriot case “**Environmental Assessment (SEA) Concerning Hydrocarbon Activities**” shows an example of how environmental risk management is supported by **Public Consultation**. A public consultation meeting was held to provide citizen with information on the legal framework of the environmental assessment, the possible effects of hydrocarbon activities and to give recommendations on risk minimisation. In total 29 people participated in the meeting from various public and private sector organisations, such as the Energy Service, Cyprus University of Technology, Labour Inspection Department, Oceanographic Centre (University of Cyprus), Geological Survey Department, State General Laboratory, Department of Fisheries and Marine Research, Environment Service, the Commissioner of the Environment and the Environmentalist Movement (Green Party). It also allowed the attendees to pose queries and make proposals. The outcome of the meeting was later incorporated into the final environmental report.

The **Local Energy Forums** of RES PUBLICA are Sustainable Energy Forums within the cross-border<sup>2</sup> ResPublica Project ([www.respublica-project.eu](http://www.respublica-project.eu)). They provide public places of discussion where different local stakeholders can voluntarily participate and share ideas in order to:

- Define a local renewable Energy Action Plan and related projects that can be implemented at local level by different stakeholders involved in the Res Publica project;
- Implement projects, which can be measured and monitored using accessible tools based on transparency criteria;
- Promote a sustainability model which combines economic wealth, social development and conservation of natural resources.

#### 4.9 e-Information – e-Government – e-Governance

E-Platform: The **Cologne** project's e-Platform will also be used for other e-Participatory projects, for example to discuss demographical changes and how to reduce CO2.

The Lithuanian “**Safer Internet Academy**” project is aimed at detecting internet content that might be harmful to children and teenagers using the internet. The key objective is to provide information about safe e-Communications and e-Threats, as well as educating children and adolescents and providing parents with tools to protect their children

By applying new ICT tools/web 2.0 “**Terzo Veneto**” project ([www.terzovento.it](http://www.terzovento.it)) facilitated citizen involvement in five areas:

- a) Coro – Online Consultations is a space for online consultations. Coro wants to build a virtual environment intended to help the citizen and various agencies to interact with the Regional Parliament in a constructive way, in order to define laws and administrative actions while evaluating the overall reactions of citizens;
- b) Civil Life for schools – an area of the portal is wholly dedicated to younger users;
- c) Videogame Election Play “Election Play” ([www.electionplay.it](http://www.electionplay.it)) – is an innovative game that enables both young and old users to directly interface with the places and circumstances in which decisions are taken;
- d) Youtube Channel – the new channel “**Terzo Veneto**” (<http://it.youtube.com/terzoveneto>), makes audio-visual material of the regional Parliament available to internet users;
- e) Citizen's Dictionary – the portal also provides a glossary of the administrative terms which can be found in the Regional Parliament's web pages.

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<sup>2</sup> The countries involved are Italy, Hungary, Spain and Germany.

The Austrian project “**egosta**” stands for e-Government stakeholder involvement and is conducted and operated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance and the University of Koblenz-Landau. A consortium consisting of 18 partners is participating in the EU project PEPPOL (*‘Pan-European Public eProcurement OnLine’*) with the objective of setting up a pan-European pilot solution that, conjointly with existing national solutions, facilitates EU-wide interoperable public e-Procurement.

#### **4.10 Citizen Involvement in spatial and urban planning processes**

In the “**Neighbourhood Councils**” project in Timișoara, Romania, representatives of the City Hall are trying to consider propositions regarding the way a street, a park or a playground should look, and to take into account costs and municipal plans by establishing neighbourhood council bodies

The aim of the “**GeoPortal.rlp**” was to harmonise geo-data of Rhineland-Palatinate so that they could easily be included in a large geo-data infrastructure at different territorial levels. At the regional level, citizens have the opportunity to access diverse information of public administrations. Citizens are allowed to use the GeoPortal.rlp without a fee or registration. However, it is possible to register on the portal and receive more specific services such as saving personalised WMC (Web Map Content) files.

Ledeberg, a district of the Belgian town of Gent has entered a new era of spatial planning. The city of Gent aims to involve local citizens in the overall spatial planning process in order to come up with a concept that respects citizens’ wishes, concerns and difficulties. The process of community-based planning commenced in Gent in 1996. A city renewal office has been established within the Department of Strategy and Communication and is responsible for developing tools to involve citizens in planning processes. The urban renewal project “**Ledeberg leeft**” which involves the redevelopment of an entire local district commenced in 2007 and entered its implementation phase in autumn 2008. The actual duration of the overall project is projected for ten years. This urban renewal project is based on an integrated approach based on three cornerstones that are linked on the horizontal and vertical level:

- a) Spatial;
- b) Social-economic;
- c) Social-cultural.

The integrated goals set out to achieve more accessible green areas, better quality living space, better and more active service delivery, smoother and safer traffic, and more space for meeting with people. Ledeborg has so far been one of the more problematic districts, characterised by narrow streets and small grey buildings, little access to green areas and no involvement of the river stream that goes right through the district in spatial planning.

Methods of involvement and introducing the spatial planning vision to a broad audience include:

- Going on the street with a camera;
- Scale modelling various street designs with mobile blocks;
- Writing poems in the scope of redesigning a square;
- Rendering general advice to the steering group;
- Indoor and outdoor exhibitions;
- Short teaser movies;
- Theme tours and guided tours with urban development experts.

Within the project, four urban development bureaus closely cooperate with two advisory bodies:

- A **counselling group** with expert municipal officers that expresses what is possible in terms of city planning;
- A **brainstorming group** with inhabitants and local intermediaries.

Those two groups formulating their advice to the steering group composed of all parties involved, including the deputy mayors and heads of department who eventually take all final decisions. Furthermore, there is one person in the local community office responsible for communicating all decisions taken in an understandable way to local citizens.

The Citizen Brainstorming Group acts as interlocutors and consists of around 50 people who applied within a public call to participate in the spatial planning process. All current members were then selected on the basis of creating a certain balance in representation at geographic level and different target groups (even children have been involved). Over the past year, 12 meetings have taken place. The members of this group act as quasi-ambassadors for the spatial planning process with their neighbours, networks, etc.

The results so far include:

- Working cooperation between citizen and officials;
- Real dialogue;
- Positive association with the ‘Ledeberg leeft’ logo;
- Strong motivation of staff and citizens (reflected by surveys);
- Successful application of new methodologies and translation of citizens’ demands into the actual spatial planning process;
- Other urban planning projects have been initiated.

The democratic participation project “**Cisternino2020**” (<http://cisternino2020.comune.livorno.it/>) was set up to involve the city of Leghorn/Livorno in the choice of how to use a newly restored building, “Il Cisternino”, in the centre of the city. The administration wanted to go beyond the norms – referenda, petitions, proposal by popular initiative – to see if there were other means to reach the local population.

In order to do this it was vital that the project was genuinely free – that the people engaged in the process would not feel obliged to provide answers that would satisfy the municipality, but rather answers that would satisfy the young people of the city. The structure of the project consisted of four phases necessary for a serious democratic participation process. The first two phases (listening to the city/exploring the city) involved explaining the project, training the facilitators and starting their interaction with the city. The second two phases (the city proposes and the city decides) were when the citizens made their proposals for the Cisternino and then decided on the final text to be given to the Mayor.

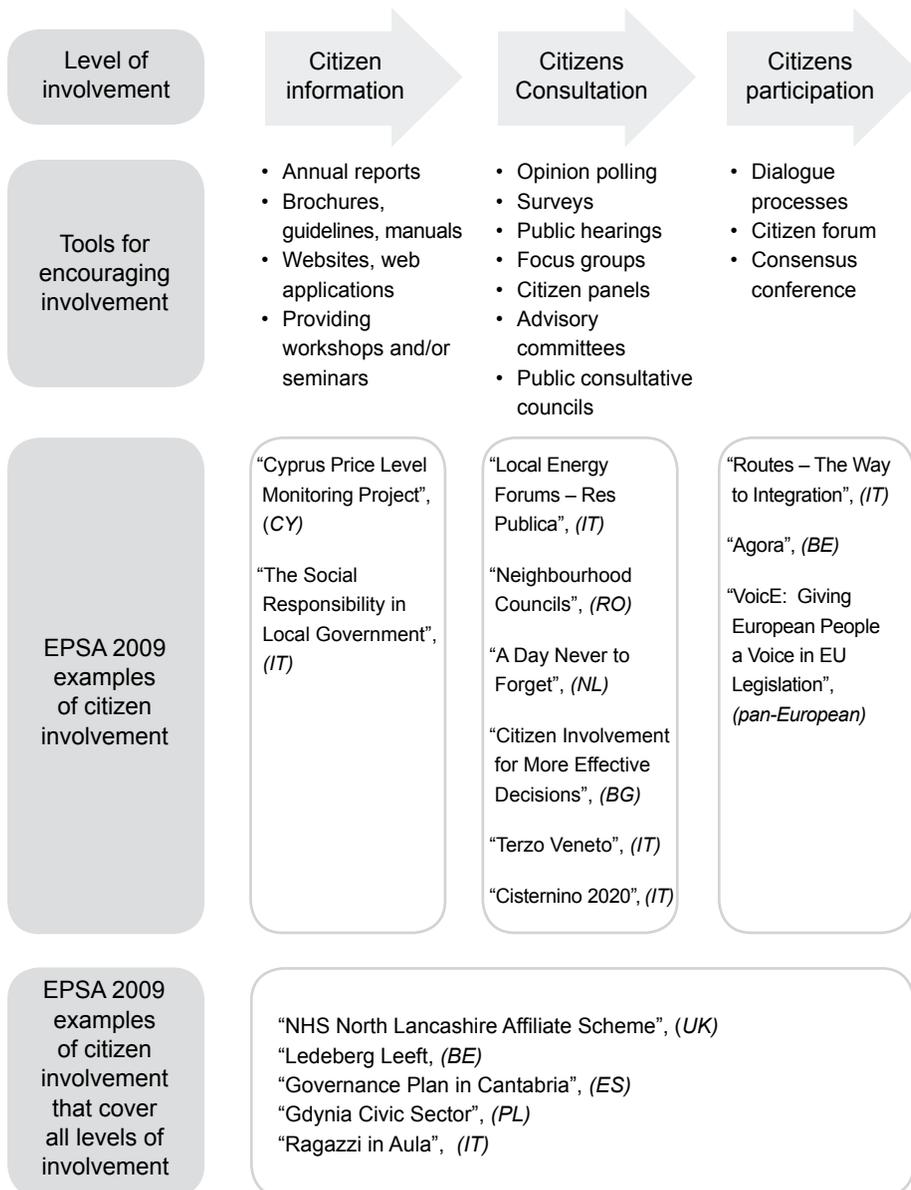
*“Can we do something better together converting the difficulties into resources and forcing us to make a quality quantum leap?”*

*(EPSA2009 project application –  
Il Cisternino2020)*

There were 37 proposals and these were placed into five areas from which five panels evolved to produce a document for each area. From these five areas one document called “the single text” was negotiated by managing differences creatively and moving from a zero sum game to a positive result. The vision of this project is that methods of active listening and the creative management of conflict will also be extended to other areas in the city.

In sum, the presented projects apply tools from the three levels of citizen involvement – as shown in the table below. Getting people involved at the various stages of the policy cycle means putting greater emphasis on the policy process than on the functionality of the outcome. This process-focused perspective of involving citizens in decision- and policy-making processes is the basis for facilitating mutual comprehension of all stakeholders and of building public capacity, whilst strengthening social cohesion and reducing conflict potentials.

Figure 4: Level of involvement of EPSA project examples



## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

### 1) *Leadership and dedication*

All of the best practice examples were driven by creative and dedicated thinkers, whether political, administrative or from civil society.

### 2) *Partnerships granting collective support*

Projects in the realm of citizen involvement are always targeted at certain groups of citizens and may not function well without the support of civil society stakeholders or citizen groups. Therefore, the creation of reliable communication channels and partnerships with civil society stakeholders as interlocutors is crucial for enhancing citizen involvement.

### 3) *Ownership*

The most successful projects managed to create a balance of ownership amongst the main stakeholder groups of the project. It is only this shared feeling of ownership that can lead to the equally dedicated commitment of all stakeholders, thus to a successful project implementation.

### 4) *Web 2.0 and ICT tools – and their exclusivity*

Most of the projects within this theme involved or integrated certain web 2.0 or other ICT tools. This should therefore not allow us to lose sight of the fact that web and internet applications as a sole method to inform and to consult with citizens may be extremely exclusive. Online information, consultative platforms and other web-related applications are only available for those that have access to them. Projects that combine traditional values and forms of personal contact with innovative web tools generally proved to be stronger and have a longer-term impact

### 5) *Sectoral transferability*

Citizen involvement has most successfully been used in the field of spatial and urban planning, youth apathy and for solving environmental problems. However, methods and tools used in these areas of work also proved to be highly transferable to other sectors.

### 6) *Innovation in societal context*

Developments – whether truly innovative in European terms, or breaking ground on a national, regional and local level – should be recognised, supported and encouraged.

### 7) *Moving from local to national level?*

Citizen involvement is most likely to be pitched at the local level. The role of national governments may, in the foreseeable future, be limited to promoting, encouraging and facilitating the adoption and/or provision of frameworks, principles and guidelines, and not to the enhancement of active involvement of citizens.

Drawing conclusions from the vast array of successful applications is not an easy task as this theme covered many different areas, all with the same goal of reaching some form of citizen involvement.

What was particularly noteworthy was the degree of crossover with other themes within the EPSA 2009 competition, in particular Theme III – Partnership. Indeed many of the projects would have scored equally well in that theme and vice versa

It must be noted that the evaluators and jury faced a difficult task in that what is innovative in one country may be not be regarded as such in another. Often this depends on the societal development, administrative tradition and cultural context. What is important is that developments, whether truly innovative in European terms, or breaking ground on a national, regional and local level, should be recognised, supported and encouraged; this goes to the heart of the EPSA objectives.

Some clear trends did emerge. These include a significant reliance on e-Tools. However, it is clear that the most successful projects were those which took a more holistic approach combining various methodologies. Over reliance on ICT risks alienating significant groups of citizens such as older people and lower socio-demographic groups. However, some projects demonstrated that by using facilitators these groups could be included and thus promote genuine widespread citizen involvement.

Citizen involvement is most likely to be pitched at local level although there were a number of examples of larger scale projects. The role of national governments may, in the foreseeable future, be limited to promoting, encouraging and facilitating the adoption and/or provision of frameworks, principles and guidelines as demonstrated by a number of the submissions.

A key issue is “leadership”; all of the best practice examples were driven by creative thinkers, whether political, administrative or from civil society. The very best projects had a combination of all three elements – however the role of the administrator is crucial as they must see citizen involvement as an asset and not as a hindrance to the “daily task of planning and providing public services”. Political leaders cannot succeed by themselves without this positive attitude.

Whilst leadership is important, “ownership” is another key concept. The most promising projects appeared to share one thing in common, an equality of ownership amongst the main stakeholder groups.

Perhaps the most promising aspect of the many projects assessed was that it IS possible to engage and fill young people with enthusiasm about the process of governance and administration. These types of projects are amongst the most transferable across Europe as they can be adapted to virtually any governmental or administrative system.

Another key finding is that citizen involvement is best approached on an incremental basis. Those projects which aimed at a “big-bang” approach were often fraught with difficulties as the various stakeholders struggled to come to terms with differing aspects of what they needed to achieve.

Indeed, quite a number of projects seemed to have been designed by politicians or even administrators; but those which demonstrate the best long-term chances of success were those where citizens are engaged in the planning and design of the involvement process itself. This factor is particularly evident in those projects which appear to be over reliant on ICT, as it would appear that they were mostly driven from within the administration.

The wide variety of projects also clearly demonstrates there is virtually no area of public administration which cannot be benefit from increased citizen involvement. Thus, it is imperative that more public administrations must consider and embrace the concept in order to improve democratic legitimacy and societal acceptance.

Whilst there may be positive beneficial effects from citizen involvement, there is no doubt that it is a time- and resource-consuming activity and the current economic crisis may militate against further developments in the field. However, a number of projects clearly demonstrate that genuine citizen involvement can lead to improved resource allocation and an acceptance and understanding by citizens of the constraints under which public administrations must operate. Thus, the question may not well bet “can we afford to do it?”, but ultimately, “can we afford NOT to do it?”

EPSA 2009 presents a wide variety of innovative, and some not so innovative, but nonetheless very useful ideas, concepts and models which have the potential to be adopted in at least some form by virtually all administrations. Patience, durability, flexibility and indeed courage along with commitment are needed to move along the citizen involvement ladder.

The future may be fraught with difficulties, but as societies evolve in ever increasing complexity, it is clear that citizen involvement is a vital concept and needs to be ingrained throughout societies in order to protect and preserve democracy and give ordinary citizens an understanding and desire to be governed in a fair and just manner.

Mankind has demonstrated throughout modern history the desire for justice and inclusion, and citizen involvement is in itself a strong and vital manifestation of this heartfelt desire.

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# New Forms of Partnership Working

By Michael Burnett & Alexander Heichlinger

## 1. Specific context of the topic

The pressures on public administrations to deliver services in a complex, resource constrained and often fluid environment inevitably leads to the conclusion that the formation of partnerships could be a useful tool for the delivery of public services. “Long gone are the days [...] when a public body [...] could meet all the needs of its citizens directly” (*Geddes, p. 2*).

But realising the benefits of partnerships presents significant challenges for public administrations. As the OECD has put it, “hundreds of partnerships have been formed worldwide during the past two decades. Some of them lasted only a short period; others have been operating a long time. Some concentrate on narrow local targets while others ambitiously try to co-ordinate broad policy areas in large regions where millions of people live and work. There are partnerships primarily oriented towards business and others focused on labour market or social issues [...]. Studies demonstrate that a partnership is a valuable instrument or ‘organisational’ model to overcome weaknesses of the policy and governance framework. Nonetheless, partnerships face several obstacles: they are difficult to set up and maintain, they require political will and resources, and results are not likely to come overnight” (*OECD, p. 3*).

A similar judgment was reached by the Audit Commission, the body responsible for auditing the extent to which local government and other sub-national entities in England use public funds in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In a recent wide ranging study, they concluded that “partnerships can bring significant benefits. They are a response to the complex and multifaceted problems that face society [...] that cannot be tackled effectively by any individual body working alone. They can provide flexibility, innovation and additional financial and human capital resources to help solve problems. These are powerful incentives for organisations to work with others and now all local public bodies work in partnerships to different degrees [...]. But partnerships also bring risks. Working across organisational boundaries brings complexity and ambiguity that can generate confusion and weaken accountability. The principle of accountability for public money applies as much to partnerships as to (individual) bodies [...] public bodies should be much more constructively critical about this form of working: it may not be the best solution in every case. They need to be clear about what they are trying to achieve and how they will achieve it by working in partnership” (*Audit Commission, p. 2*).

This leads to the conclusion that the formation of partnerships should be driven by functional rather than quasi-ideological considerations, *a priori* preferences or historical experience. Put simply, it means that they should be entered into when the benefits exceed the costs (however measured) and not entered into when the costs exceed the benefits, and that partnerships are a means to an end for the delivery of public services and not an end in themselves. In short, they should represent what Hodge & Greeve call “the pooling of intangible resources such as experience, competence, connections, ideas and commitment critical to success in finding new, creative solutions surpassing the limited perspectives of individual actors” (*Hodge & Greeve, p. 282*).

Partnerships have been formed for a wide diversity of purposes, which have, for example, included:

- Improving service delivery (innovation in methods, reduced cost, new/increased revenues, improved outcomes/preventing service failure etc.);
- Attracting new investment;
- Protecting employment;
- Accessing new skills;
- Changing service culture;
- Tackling social exclusion;
- Addressing social and environmental challenges not previously faced by public administrations;
- Empowering citizens;
- Improving democratic legitimacy;
- Accessing EU funds;
- Accessing partner networks;
- More effective influencing of decision makers, especially at EU level.

But, whatever the objectives of entering into the partnership (and the list of potential objectives is not by any means meant to be exhaustive), a decision to do so calls for a disciplined approach to decision making and implementation by public administrations. In practice, however, partnership models have in some cases been used when they are not appropriate and implementation has not always been planned or managed effectively.

Specifically, it is widely accepted that a public body cannot decide what it wants from its partnerships unless it is clear about its own corporate/service delivery objectives and how partnership can contribute to them. Partnerships must contribute tangibly to the corporate/service delivery objectives in order to justify the financial and human resources devoted to them. Partnerships must furthermore:

- Be better than the alternative means of realising those objectives e.g. in better dealing with complex issues;
- Justify the opportunity cost of the resources devoted to the partnership;
- Allocate sufficient resources to enable Key Performance Indicators to be achieved;

- Have suitable governance arrangements to deliver planned results and manage risks;
- Measure the actual delivery of planned results.

The particular challenges identified in the effective implementation of partnerships include:

- The emotions associated with the term “partnership”, which is often used to describe a collaborative style of working which is assumed to be more desirable than, and an inherently different kind of transaction from, contractual relationships. For example, this was the impetus behind the change in the United Kingdom after 1997 in the name (but not the substance) of the Private Finance Initiative to Public-Private Partnerships as a means of investing in infrastructure and delivering services. But in reality all partnerships, and particularly PPP, are entered into to achieve the objectives of the partners, some of which converge. They clearly would also not be entered into if there were not a shared intention to achieve certain objectives, and should not be based on continuing conflict between the partners. However, it is possible that other objectives of the partners, or disagreement about the means of achieving shared objectives, may diverge, so that the presence of tensions in a partnership, while not inevitable, cannot be ruled out;
- Ensuring that the use of partnerships does not crowd out the alternative means of addressing service delivery issues e.g.:
  - Improving the performance of the entity which has the responsibility for achieving a given objective;
  - Assigning one entity a lead role in addressing cross-cutting issues;
  - An extension of the legal powers of an entity to enable it to achieve complex objectives;
  - Administrative re-organisation to ensure that the efficiency in deploying the resources of different specialist functions or entities are not undermined by conflicts in the priorities of separate organisations or lack of resources. The latter is a phenomenon observed particularly in EU Member States with a sub-national administrative structure of a large number of small municipalities, which may be too small to efficiently discharge the functions assigned to them, such as, for example, waste management. In other words, the solution to the inability of an entity to achieve objectives may lie in administrative re-organisation reducing the number of sub-national entities rather than attempting to create collaborative structures. This amounts to ensuring that partnership is considered against alternatives on a case by case basis rather than being regarded as the default option.
- Minimising the risk that public authorities (typically sub-national authorities under pressure from national government or arising from statutory obligations) enter into too many partnerships. Some have been observed to show signs of suffering from “partnership fatigue” in their inability to realise the benefits of partnerships. (*Audit Commission, p. 24-25*). This is crucial, because, for an effective

partnership to exist, it is necessary not merely for the design to be appropriate, but also that it delivers the desired results. Thus public authorities need to make a judgment about the maximum number of partnerships that are manageable for them;

- Ensuring that the form and intensity of the partnership follows the purpose for which the partnership was established. While there are (see below) a number of key considerations to be addressed in making a decision to partner, there is no “one size fits all” architecture and *modus operandi* for a partnership (even where there are peer group examples of similar partnerships being entered into by similar entities) and these should, again, be driven primarily by functional considerations relevant to the current circumstances faced by an individual entity;
- The fundamental importance to successful partnerships of information sharing between the partners. This is not merely a behavioural phenomenon, i.e. of the willingness of partners to share information and perspectives. It is also clearly influenced by the robustness, integrity and interoperability of ICT systems of the partners. This will clearly vary from one individual entity to another, though it may be observed that the degree of public confidence in the ICT systems and the consequent reliability and integrity of data shows differences between EU Member States;
- The importance of periodically reviewing and considering the continuing relevance of existing partnerships. This follows from the functional approach to partnerships i.e. that, as noted above, they should be entered into when the benefits exceed the costs (however measured) and not entered into when the costs exceed the benefits. This is not, of course, a static judgment and, irrespective of whether or not a partnership agreement includes a formal “sunset clause”, a public authority needs to consider whether the partnership continues to fulfil the objectives for which it was formed or has achieved its original objectives and is thus no longer needed;

To address these issues, public sector entities need to have both a **strategy for partnership** and a **structured approach to decision making for individual partnerships**.

The current trends in partnering strategy and decision making about individual partnerships are analysed in the next section.

## 2. Current trends in partnering strategy and decision making

It is possible for a public sector entity to answer the question “why look for partners?” in a purely pragmatic, or perhaps simplistic, manner based on an *ad hoc* answer to external legislative pressures, crises etc. or simply to be responsive to opportunities initiated by other entities. But the scale of opportunities, benefits risk and costs noted above highlights the importance of a strategic approach.

In any event, assessment of a range of considerations may enable public sector entities to examine the appropriateness and viability of **its portfolio of current and future external partnerships**, i.e.:

- What partnerships is the organisation obliged by law or direction from a higher level authority to establish?
- What corporate objectives is the organisation failing to address effectively or could address more effectively?
- Does partnership have the potential to address these issues more effectively?
- Based on an assessment of the options, is partnership the optimal way of addressing these issues?
- How many partnerships does the organisation need in order to address these issues?
- What are the priorities between these areas?
- How many partnerships is the organisation capable of managing?
- What kinds of partnerships are likely to be most appropriate between different degrees of formality, length of partnerships, number of partners etc.?
- What kinds of partnerships are likely to be most appropriate, e.g. public-public partnerships, public-private partnerships and public-third sector relationships?
- What kind of role does the organisation want to play in the partnerships it enters into e.g. lead role, supportive role, service provider, service user etc.?
- What does the organisation want to contribute to its partnerships and how should it make that contribution?
- What does the organisation expect to achieve from its partnerships and in what way?
- What are the implications for the public entity arising from its partnership strategy, e.g. change in organisation, culture, staffing, operational or financial working methods etc.?
- How, by whom and when will these consequential implications be addressed?

In our experience and consistent with the above, the roadmap for successful decision making by a public sector entity about **individual partnerships** is typically derived from a process addressing the following issues i.e.:

- Clarity of objectives for the partnership;
- The process of selecting the right partner/characteristics of a suitable partner;
- Structure, governance and allocation of responsibilities within the partnership;
- Assessment and management of the risks of partnership operations;
- Allocation of resources to the partnership and its (financial) management;

- Preparing, motivating and empowering staff assigned to the partnership;
- Performance management of the partnership;
- Partnership communication (internally and externally);
- Dispute resolution for disputes within the partnership and an exit strategy for the partnership, if and where necessary.

These factors are analysed in more detail below. They are independent in themselves, and are all relevant to the decision to establish a partnership or not; a partnership needs to address them all effectively. They cannot, in the strictest sense, be referred to as a balanced scorecard, in the sense that the lack of effective discharge of one of these elements cannot be balanced by performance in another aspect. However, for the purposes of *ex post* assessment, for example by auditors, they may be considered collectively as the factors to be taken into account in an overall assessment of the implementation of a partnership.

Because of the importance of each of the individual factors, they are assessed in more detail below.

### **Clarity of partnership objectives**

It is evident that, for a partnership to be justified there must be clear objectives for the partnership; these must be consistent with the service delivery objectives of the individual entities which they have determined should be achieved by the partnership.

Otherwise, there might be a better way of serving the public, e.g. less costly, less complex, to a higher standard, with broader range of services or services offered in a more differentiated or customised way. The added value of doing better than the entity could do if acting alone must be agreed, defined and demonstrated, to clearly include, in particular, the citizens. One of the key choices for entities considering using a partnership is also the scope of the envisaged partnership, i.e. whether an entity opts for a broader partnership with wider objectives or smaller one with narrower objectives.

The objectives of the cooperation have to be expressed as measurable indicators for the target outcomes. These can be both qualitative and quantitative. They must also be realistic and achievable, but on the other hand also sufficiently ambitious, especially if the objective of the partnership is crisis recovery in service delivery.

A third dimension is the potential duration of a partnership. Public authorities entering into a partnership should assess how long it considers that the partnership will take to achieve its objectives and whether or not this timeframe is realistic.

A success story from the inter-regional cooperation experience is the partnership of five European regions (Övre Norrland, Lorraine, Häme, Wielkopolska Voivodeship and Brescia). They have signed a memorandum of understanding (at political level)

with the aim to “develop a *long-term* and *strategic cooperation* between the regions in order – amongst other objectives – to enhance the entrepreneurial knowledge and skills by exchanging experiences and transferring tools, methods and policies in this field”. This agreement set out a list of actions to reach this target. This was funded within an INTERREG IV C Regional Framework Operation (RFO) and a highly respected STIMENT project. Its objective has been to stimulate new ways of entrepreneurship. The effective management of the project and its promising results have encouraged the partners (and their politicians) to commit themselves to continuing the partnership, irrespective of whether or not they receive European funds in future (*See www.stiment.net, www.alsoproject.eu*).

This also shows that any partnership objectives can and should be modified and updated in the light of changed circumstances.

### **Selecting the right partner**

It is widely accepted that the best way to find a good or the “right” partner is a pragmatic approach with no prior judgment being made. For this, public sector entities are advised to follow a rigorous process to select partners, including, for example, an assessment of possible options, giving suitable potential partners an opportunity for dialogue, offering them clear information and timing about the objectives and scope of the partnership and, where appropriate, selecting the partner using a transparent and competitive selection process, which in many cases will be required by the European and/or national public procurement law. In any event it should be clear to an independent informed third party how the entity reached the decision it made on the choice of partner.

Different choices will be made in different selection processes, but a culture of past successful partnerships will generally be one of the criteria forming part of the decision process.

This is enhanced where there has been past experience of cooperation with partners proposed in a specific case, even if this has been only in informal bi-lateral relations or in wider networks. The example of the INTERREG STIMENT project referred to above shows, for instance, that all five regions had since the 1990s cooperated bilaterally with each other; they also possessed experience in European programmes before establishing this multi-lateral partnership for the first time for this specific Community initiative and subsequently implemented it as a consortium.

This past experience is the most obvious manifestation of the criterion that there should be sufficient fit of culture and commitment between the parties.

Finally, it may in some cases be necessary not to engage in a proposed partnership after it has been explored and, of course, not selecting a partner where there has been a competitive process. In that case an entity should be capable of explaining the grounds

for its decision to a potential partner, and, in particular, doing so in way which does not preclude the possibility of future partnerships with that partner.

### **Structure, governance and allocation of partnership responsibilities**

Good management is key to a successful partnership. A prerequisite for this is an integrated organisational structure for the partnership with clear responsibilities (“who does what”) among the partners. In some cases there are legal requirements which set the framework for a partnership.

In the absence of any legal requirements, the organisation of a partnership does not necessarily need to follow a pre-determined model. It needs to be relevant to the objectives and scope of the partnership, i.e. the principle of organisation design should be that form follows function. It also needs to be scaleable and sustainable i.e. being capable of meeting the needs of the partners throughout the whole lifecycle of the partnership.

The governance structure of a partnership typically operates at a minimum of two levels, implying two separate bodies, i.e. one to give strategic direction to the partnership and a second to manage its operations within that strategic direction.

Other key parts of a robust governance structure include a periodical review mechanism and processes by which decisions are reviewed in an appropriate manner and documented to avoid any possible misunderstanding between partners and to ensure agreed actions are implemented.

A robust governance structure is, however, the infrastructure within which results are delivered. Within this structure it is necessary to allocate responsibilities to each partner based on the most effective use of the abilities of the partners and record that allocation of responsibilities. This can be done by different types of agreement, ranging from a brief declaration to work in partnership via a memorandum of understanding, to a fully-fledged and legally binding contract. This should, again, be determined on a case by case basis, though with a preference for a greater degree of formality where this would clarify the obligations of partners and thus help to manage risk more effectively. In any event the nature of the partnership agreement should be appropriate to the scope of the partnership’s aims, the complexity of its activities, the resources allocated to the partnership, the number of partners, the different roles of the partners (including, possibly, that of sleeping partners) and their past experience of collaboration.

### **Assessment and management of operational risks**

As noted above, the use of partnerships often involves risks as well as benefits, especially if it is a new kind of partnership. It is therefore essential to apply an adapted version

of another known methodology, the SWOT analysis (i.e. of **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**), to any partnership, i.e. to understand and evaluate the main risks (and advantages) associated with the activities of this partnership and how likely they are to occur and thus determine how to avoid or mitigate their impact. Risks may be characterised as the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of an event relevant to the operations of the partnership or the ability of the partners to sustain their contribution to the partnership. In this context the risks considered may fall very broadly into different categories i.e. financial, operational or legal and all may impact on the reputation of the parties to a partnership.

Clarity of responsibility for managing risks is essential, the core principle being that risks, as is fundamental in PPP projects, are allocated to the party best able to manage them and to take corrective action where necessary. This allocation of responsibilities, and/or an appropriate legal framework, may act to minimise the likelihood of the occurrence of major risks, but cannot entirely prevent the occurrence of unexpected events. Thus there needs to be mechanisms by which the occurrence of unforeseen risks can be managed. For example, in the field of PPP, cost and service interruption risks are often managed by insurance so that the contractual arrangements for a PPP need to include a mechanism which can deal with the possibility that previously insurable risks become uninsurable for reasons beyond the control of the parties, as generally happened with terrorism risks after September 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Allocating and managing partnership resources**

Partners need to consider the appropriate level of resources to be allocated to partnership activities, how these should be made available and how they should be managed. In this context resources can be defined as physical, financial, human or information assets.

Firstly, if the partnership objectives are clearly defined as suggested above, the resources allocated need to be adequate to meet these objectives and the contributions proportionate to the benefits to be gained by each partner. In this context, partners must understand, before entering the partnership, what resources (time, assets, money etc) they are devoting to the partnerships (and document them). This is independent of the source of the funds, i.e. of whether they are from their own resources or by way of allocation from another source e.g. national funding for sub-national entities or EU funding.

The partnership's financial systems should clearly specify how the resources of the partnership will be allocated to activities, the proper discharge of resources by which have been allocated funds and *ex post* reporting of outcomes. This implies robust budgeting, financial management and management information systems. The most difficult challenge can be to ensure that partners require of the partnership the same standards or financial planning, probity and accountability that they would expect within their own organisation. This is, however, not merely a question of controlling wasteful or excessive spending – there must also be a system established in which

money allocated, but unlikely to be spent, may be reallocated back to partners or within partnership activities in response to changing priorities.

One means of achieving this result is to designate one partner as the lead partner for financial monitoring and reporting, and being responsible for the economical and efficient management of resources allocated to partnership activities. Alternatively this can be done autonomously by the partnership. In any event, these functions should be subject to appropriate audit scrutiny relevant to the scale of the resources and the risks associated with the partnership's activities.

Finally, there is a need for an agreed formula on how any additional revenues generated by the partnership will be shared amongst the partners. Such arrangements are a standard feature, for example, of PPP contracts in the United Kingdom for the gains arising from the refinancing of project debt after the initial construction period.

### **Preparing, motivating and empowering partnership staff**

There is no definitive list of the attributes staff needs to possess when assigned to a partnership, nor for the behaviours which they need to display.

A recent study on what kind of skills public service officials are required to possess to use, manage and lead the application of the information and communication technology (ICT) in contemporary society illustrated that not merely the “hard” skills, e.g. knowledge of the different types of software programmes, but also the “soft” skills, e.g. new methods of working together, governance in networks, sharing of information and delegation of power (if needed) are of major importance if the concept of eGovernment is to become reality in European public administrations (See [www.eupan.eu/eGovernment](http://www.eupan.eu/eGovernment)).

The same in practice tends to apply to staff and partners in partnerships, e.g. “soft” skills such as being open, enthusiastic, optimistic, ready to consider common interests and being used to working within other cultural environments, combined with knowledge and experience of, and qualification for, the partnership's activities, are crucial to being able to build the trust which is so often a key success factor within a partnership (especially in public-third sector partnerships).

As Dhillon puts it, “analysis of [...] partnership indicates that shared goals underpinned by mutual values and trust amongst key people in the partnership constitute the “social glue” that hold organisations and individuals together to provide the basis of effective and sustained partnership working” (*Dhillon, p. 211-219*). And for Douglas, “no two words convey the essence of partnership working as clearly as ‘working together [...] Stating the obvious, working together means not working in isolation from other professionals and people who use services. It means always working as part of a team: partnership is essentially teamwork with a fancy name” (*Douglas, P3*).

Staff assigned to the partnership need to be given the necessary authority and mandate to make decisions on behalf of the partnership, kept informed on what their authority is, or whether it changes and how and by whom they are supervised. Absence of support for decisions made, or a simple lack of authority to make decisions or get them made, can be a major source of demotivation for staff who, in many cases, have volunteered to work for a partnership because of the specific intention to realise measurable results.

Staff also needs to be trained prior to a new assignment if they are seconded to the partnership in the same way as they would for a new assignment to activities within their host organisation. This is another manifestation of the fact (as has been observed above in respect of clarity of objectives and robustness of systems) that the use of a partnership has as many similarities to other corporate functions as they have particular additional characteristics. If the allocation of partnership responsibilities is not full time, there needs to be clarity about how the partnership task fits with their other priorities and how conflicts of priorities will be resolved.

Consideration also needs to be given to the career development of staff assigned to partnerships to ensure that they can be aware of, be prepared for and be eligible to be considered for future opportunities to return to their host entities. The same applies to the employment conditions of staff assigned to partnerships relative to those within the host entity and whether, over time, they are at least maintained.

### **Performance management of the partnership**

It is often stated as a principle of performance management that “what gets measured gets done”. But it is equally important to state that what gets measured is often what is easy to measure and not always what is most important.

Therefore, setting the right performance measures is important and it is generally accepted that these should be “SMART” (i.e. **specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-related**), though outcomes are not always accurately measurable over a short period of time. Thus the indicators to be used in measurement and agreed upon by the partners should, as Burnett explains elsewhere, include “both measures of immediate performance and measures relevant to performance sustainability and which may provide early warning of future failure” (*Burnett, p. 126-127*).

But this, of course, depends on reliable information systems existing to enable information and data about performance to be collected and reported. The monitoring system also needs to be appropriate to the objectives and scale of the activities of the partnership (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly etc.) and at different levels within the organisation (operational, supervisory, managerial and executive). The reporting must make it clear which partnership targets are and are not being met and to what extent. From these systems it is then necessary to measure and assess whether the targeted results have been achieved and to manage performance.

Finally, it is important to consider who reports progress and to whom is it reported. How are failures reported and who will take what action in what circumstances? Any measurement and performance results should be rigorously analysed. Only then can partners act upon it in a timely manner.

In the European Commission Logical Framework model (*See [www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid](http://www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid)*), the use of indicators enables a judgment to be made of the actual and planned result on a regular basis of each project or partnerships and thus contributes to an effective management and implementation of them. Where the public sector is contracting with the private sector this is essential to enable the public sector to test whether it is achieving value for money. It is, for example, common practice for PPP contracts to include such indicators, though it is often difficult externally to obtain performance information due to considerations of commercial confidentiality which are often invoked by the public sector.

### **Partnership communication**

To plan and execute effective communication within a partnership is, in our experience, a necessary key success factor for any partnership.

There are two dimensions to any communication strategy i.e. an internal and an external one. Defining a clear standard internal communication system and means by which the partners will communicate with each other about partnership activities is essential. Issues such as the frequency (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, less frequently) and at which levels within the partner organisations communication will take place needs to be discussed and agreed. Needless to say, specific staff skills are required for those partners responsible for the information sharing and diffusion.

Each partner must be sure that it is well informed not merely about its own contribution but also about the overall performance of the partnership. Too often partnerships fail due to a wrong communication strategy, i.e. either too little or misleading information or too much information is shared.

With respect to the external dimension of communication, a partnership (especially those with a public involvement) first has to identify all the stakeholders with whom it needs to communicate, e.g. other employees not directly participating in the cooperation, public end users, the media, labour unions and/or other interest groups in civil society.

Consultation with, and information dissemination, to these external stakeholders, and especially public end users, can generally be assessed by its effectiveness in matters such as whether or not it tells them who does what, how well the partnership is working, how redress can be obtained for service failures, and how, how often and when consultation happens etc.

Success in communication in partnerships, both to internal and external (with special focus on the latter) stakeholders, leads to the development of the corporate identity of a partnership and is highly valued by potential partners in decisions related to new partnerships.

### **Dispute resolution and exit strategy i.e. when and how the partnership could end**

While it is clear that disputes between partners may arise throughout the life-cycle of a partnership, it also often happens that they are not dealt with in a timely manner. This can often be due to the absence of effective mechanisms for resolving them, i.e. an appropriately escalating means of resolution within the partnership to be used before external means such as mediation, arbitration or, in the most serious cases of partnership breakdown, resort to judicial processes.

Independently of any dispute, (though clearly serious dispute can prompt such a decision) there are times when a partnership has served its purpose, or no longer fits with the strategy for achieving its objectives of one partner, and needs to be brought to an end, even though this may not, of course, be what a partner may want to think about at the time of the formation of the partnership. It is in any event considered best practice that any entity includes in its procedures regular reviews of its partnership activities so that it can, if necessary, take the hard decision to terminate a partnership.

Partners need an exit strategy to deal with this situation, which should, at minimum, address the following issues i.e.:

- How much notice will it need to give to terminate a partnership?
- How will the individual partners retain/obtain the service delivery capability delivered by the partnership if the partnership ends and it needs to continue to deliver the service;
- How long will this take?
- How will assets and liabilities of the partnership be reallocated back to the partners?

### 3. Overview and analysis of applications in Partnership Working theme

A total of 81 eligible applications were received for the Partnership Working theme. These applications are analysed in tables 1 to 4 below by country of origin, level of government, size of entity and by sector.

The applications came from 17 different countries (with one application from a European institution) and broadly reflected the diversity of purposes for which partnerships are being used across the EU. The applications also reflect the fact that, as expected, partnerships are being used at different levels of government, i.e. national, regional and local and also at pan-European level and by entities of different sizes.

The balance of applications does not fully reflect the intensity of use of different types of partnerships as defined by the theme. For example, Public-Private Partnerships and collaborative arrangements between different territorial entities are relatively under-represented amongst the applications.

The number of applications from some countries does not fully reflect the extent of use of partnership working in those countries. For example, only three applications were received from the United Kingdom, where there is extensive use of partnership underpinned by statutory obligations on sub-national authorities.

*Table 1: Analysis of applications by country of origin*

Austria	8
Belgium	7
Cyprus	1
Estonia	1
Finland	2
France	2
Germany	12
Greece	2
Hungary	2
Italy	2
Lithuania	2
Netherlands	2
Pan-European	1
Romania	17
Serbia	1
Spain	9
Sweden	1
United Kingdom	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>

*Table 2: Analysis of applications by level of government*

Local	34
Regional	29
National	15
Pan-European	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>

More than 60% (50 out of 81) applications were from entities with more than 100 FTE staff. This tends to indicate that effective partnership working requires entities to devote resources for the effective design, governance and implementation of partnerships.

*Table 3: Analysis of applications by size of entity*

1-25 employees	10
26-50 employees	6
51-100 employees	15
>100 employees	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>

*Table 4: Sectoral analysis of applications*

External relations and aid, development and enlargement	2
Information society, technology, media and audiovisual	2
Education (higher and lower), training and learning	11
Sports, youth, culture and art	2
Science, research, innovation	1
Environment, climate change, agriculture (including . food safety) and fishery	4
Employment, labour related affairs and gender equality	2
Public health and social welfare/affairs	5
Public administration, modernisation, institutional affairs, reform	21
Economic affairs, competition, SME	2
Justice, police, human rights and security	6
Regional policy and development, decentralisation	8
Taxation, customs, finances	2
Transport and infrastructure	2
Other sectors	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>

In analysing these applications, it should be noted that EPSA is a competition in which participation is voluntary; EIPA makes no claim that the process represents a comprehensive survey of the use of partnership across the EU.

## 4. Partnership working - Emerging best practice

This section analyses emerging best practices amongst the applications for the Partnership Working theme in two categories, i.e. the elements of best practice demonstrated by applications which were awarded best practice certificates (including those nominated for the theme trophy)<sup>1</sup> and elements of best practice identified amongst applicants who did not, overall, qualify for best practice certificates.

### 4.1 Strengths displayed by nominees and best practice certificate holders

#### Cooperation between entities with different core objectives

This included:

- Preventative approaches to alcohol abuse involving **cooperation between several statutory bodies and third sector partners** such as different departments of municipal government (including with political support), law enforcement agencies, anti-addiction charities, the private sector and citizens (including the alcohol abusers themselves etc. to address local challenges in a coordinated way, **which would have been difficult to achieve without a partnership** (*“Cambridgeshire Community Alcohol Project” and “Civic Alcohol Forum”, United Kingdom*);
- **Cooperation between several statutory bodies, third sector agencies and the private sector** with the long-term aim of reviving the declining local economy, raising the level of local aspirations and addressing underlying ethnic tensions **which went well beyond their statutory obligation to cooperate** (*“Oldham Local Strategic Partnership”, United Kingdom*);
- An integrated and innovative approach using locally based resources for the **provision of social, medical and educational services** in poor areas with deep rooted social and economic disadvantages, **capable of being replicated elsewhere in Europe** (*“Bacau County Council integrated services”, Romania*).



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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this section is not intended to be a detailed assessment of all the entries which were awarded best practice certificates and nor does it necessarily include all of the strengths of those applicants, 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 achieving best practice certificates.

## Cooperation between entities to address social, economic and environmental issues which are often difficult to effectively address by public administrations

This included:

- Promotion of the professional and social **integration of disabled employees** who might otherwise fail to fulfil their potential through the provision of a wide range of opportunities and experiences offered by different partners collaborating within the initiative (*“Tandem in Science”, Germany*);
- A multi-agency approach to **countering demographic decline** (and thus economic development) in a rural area, which **can be successfully replicated** in many other European territories in a similar situation, such as Eastern Germany, parts of Spain, Southern Italy etc. (*“Flytta till Dalarna”, Sweden*);
- Multi-agency approaches to continuing adult learning which aims to **integrate lifelong learning with employment**. One partnership included employers, employees, educational services and both local and national (e.g. social security) authorities and another included cooperation among between a public administration, universities and private sector enterprises (*“Haus des Lebenslangen Lernens”, Germany*, *“Stimulating and facilitating regional partnerships for adult learning”, the Netherlands*);
- An initiative to **address global environmental challenges** (mainly excessive CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) through a multi-party partnership between entities in the private and public sectors at different levels of government, **using a range of tools to achieve its objectives** e.g. publicity initiatives, advisory services, financial assistance, training initiatives, procurement strategies etc. (*“Klima: aktivmobil”, Austria*);
- An initiative to address the need for **cleaning up heavily contaminated land**. It has been effectively implemented through the active involvement of the owners of the property, public authorities and technical operators **using innovative and environmentally sustainable methods** (*“Licence to dig”, Germany*);
- A self-financing initiative to fully implement the polluter-pays-principle, which has **responded effectively to major increases in the amount of hazardous waste controlled and reduced regulatory costs** (*“Sonderabfallmanagement-gesellschaft mbH”, Germany*);
- **Child protection and parental support** through early intervention such as pre and post birth home visits and cooperation between a **broad range of local stakeholders** e.g. local political leaders, local education, health and social care services and churches (*“NeFF – Network for Families”, Germany*);
- A project aimed at **addressing youth delinquency** through integrated cooperation between different partners. The initiative uses **early intervention and is based on linked variables** i.e. levels of truancy and delinquency, with results achieved by re-direction of resources rather than the allocation of additional resources (*“Present in school, Absent from jail”, Romania*).



## Successful cross-border cooperation

This included:

- The development of an **integrated approach** (including physical and social infrastructure, skills development, business information and administrative and regulatory procedures) and **relevant across many regions across Europe** to increase the attractiveness of a city region to investors and thus to promote innovation and territorial economic development (*“ARAW – Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency”, Poland*);
- **A cross-border partnership** as a successful tool for dealing with **emergencies resulting from natural disasters** by simplification and coordination of procedures (*“Regional and cross border centre for prevention and intervention in case of floods”, Romania and Hungary*).

## Cooperation to address issues of broad concern to a large number of citizens

This included:

- A cooperative initiative between **partners at different levels of government** in the **administration of justice** to modernise and speed up judicial processes through the use of electronic communication (*Judicial telematic notification programme, Spain*);
- An initiative in the field of **social housing** based on **facilitative leadership by a second tier public authority which does not possess exclusive competence in this field** but leads by project management, thus influencing the necessary collaborative working between lower tier entities and the private sector. The initiative uses a simple legal instrument that has the potential to be easily transferable across Europe (*“Register of social housing developers”, Spain*);
- A regional **eGovernment initiative embracing all public administrations in the region**. The key features in the success of this initiative are **interoperability of systems, sharing of technological solutions, maintenance of data security and integrity and effective governance**, thus simplifying the procedure by which citizens access public services (*Consorci Administració Oberta di Catalunya, Spain*);
- An **electronic tax system** used by public administrations, personal and corporate taxpayers, banks and professional advisers. The initiative addresses the problems of traditional tax systems (e.g. **it reduces process time and costs and establishes a uniform structure of payments**). (*PAY-FON, Austria*);
- **A PPP scheme for the construction of university buildings which represents a country first** (*PPP St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, Austria*).

## **Best practice in the working methods of partnerships**

In addition, many of the best practice certificate holders also demonstrated key elements of best practice in the implementation of partnerships such as:

- **Adoption of joint decision-making** where partner entities empower the partnership to make an agreed range of binding decisions;
- **Empowerment of staff to take decisions with the authority of the partner entities;**
- **A prior decision by partner entities to pool an agreed amount of their own resources to be allocated by the partnership;**
- **Evidence-based decision making**, both in terms of management through performance indicators and responsiveness through communication outside of the process of gathering data for performance indicators;
- **Informal cooperation between individuals outside formal working procedures**
- **The agility to respond to different types of need**, e.g. through the use of mobile assistance in remote and poor regions;
- **The agility to respond to emerging issues** such the financial crisis through new initiatives supported in some cases by reallocation of resources.

## **4.2 Elements of best practice displayed by other applicants**

The majority of elements of best practice identified in the Partnership Working theme derived, as might be expected, from schemes which were recognised through the award of best practice certificates. However, the following representative elements of best practice were identified amongst applicants who did not, overall, qualify for best practice certificates. They have been included in the report, both to ensure that the lessons of these projects are not lost simply because the projects did not happen to be prize winners, and also to recognise what the projects referred to have achieved.

Two schemes amongst the applicants represented potentially replicable cooperative projects to address different aspects of the diversity agenda in Europe e.g.:

- A project aimed at enhancing equal access to EU funds by Roma living in Hungary, focused on improving housing conditions and thus promoting their better integration and inclusion into Hungarian society. The partnership has a multi-level structure (national ministerial departments, regional authorities and municipalities) as well as several representatives of the Roma community;
- A gender equality partnership project in Austria between a regional public administration and third sector entities. The aim is to improve equality of opportunity for women of employable age through education, health promotion, access to employment services etc., with progress being measured through ongoing monitoring against performance indicators.

One scheme was identified that aimed to promote an integrated approach to the rehabilitation of prisoners in Belgium, where there is a division of competences between the Federal State, responsible for public protection, and the Flemish Regional Government, which is responsible for social assistance to prisoners with a view to promoting their social re-integration. Though the issue being addressed is particular to the administrative structure of the Belgian state, the measures taken are indicative of what might be done where different levels of government could usefully work together to deliver services in a joint way.

One scheme was identified which promotes better European governance and thus greater public confidence in the exercise of EU competences i.e. an anti-fraud network (submitted by the EU anti-fraud office, OLAF) constructed as a pan-European initiative and with a partnership of 75 public authorities across Europe. This scheme recognises that fraud is not constrained by borders and thus needs cross-border responses. It also aims to bring anti-fraud related information closer to citizens.

One scheme was identified which contributes to European integration in a priority area for EU enlargement, i.e. a Serbian regional project which brings together a wide range of organisations with the purpose of designing projects to use pre-accession funds, fostering cooperation with European institutions and other EU partner regions and spreading European values across the territory. Although the initiative is not, in itself, unique in the EU, it is particularly relevant to Serbia as it pursues its path towards eventual EU membership. The project also has the secondary benefit of promoting dialogue and cooperative action between parties who may not otherwise have reason to interact, thus promoting the development of a stronger civil society.

One scheme – a multi stakeholder partnership between various public and private sector entities – was identified in Italy which addresses issues which are often difficult to effectively address by public administrations i.e. control of illegal and/or sub-standard construction, protection of the health and safety and employment conditions of construction workers and extortion by organised crime, as well as aiming towards the rehabilitation of urban buildings and public spaces. Although, again, the partnership is driven by location-specific issues, it highlights that cooperative action can be helpful in addressing difficult and deep-rooted social and economic issues.

A cross-border partnership (in a border region of Poland and Slovakia) has been created as a mechanism to deal with emergencies resulting from natural disasters by improving coordination of procedures between fire and rescue services.

One municipal public safety and crime prevention scheme in the Netherlands underlined a very important, but often difficult to implement principle of public administration i.e. that the most challenging public service issues should engage the energies of the most skilled public servants. It also demonstrates that partnership as a means of delivering public service outcomes should be a conscious choice amongst alternatives and not merely a default option. In this case, the municipality has started to achieve results by opting for top-down enforced collaboration rather than the voluntary collaboration of equal partners.

Greece has provided an example of a wide-ranging attempt to reform the training of public officials with a view to enabling them to respond to administrative reforms and to face the challenges of 21st century public administration. The project includes the development of postgraduate programmes for civil servants in cooperation with several universities and training institutes, both within Greece and internationally. The initiative is not unique in itself but the steps taken to implement it are an indication of what can be useful in reforming traditional public administration structures.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The main conclusions and recommendations arising from our analysis of the applications for the Partnership Working theme are that:

- 1) Political and senior level support for partnerships is important, but they work better when they are primarily driven by the enthusiasm of those responsible for making them work rather than being imposed on a top-down basis. Some of the best practice examples were based on statutory obligations of the partners, but their success was characterised by the motivation to exceed minimum statutory compliance obligations. This does not necessarily imply that effective partnerships are easier or more difficult to form at any particular level of government or in either centralised or decentralised political systems – our research identified effective partnerships for national functions in decentralised systems and at sub-national level in centralised systems.
- 2) As might have been expected from current trends in partnership working, the likelihood of success of a partnership is linked to the clarity of objectives for the formation of the partnership e.g. to address complex cross cutting issues which cannot be solved by a single entity, i.e. climate change or complex social problems such as ethnic tensions, alcoholism, drug abuse, needs of care leavers etc.
- 3) Joint decision making is a strong indicator of an effective partnership i.e. that partner entities empower the partnership to make an agreed range of binding decisions. This means that staff attributed to the partnership are empowered to take these decisions with the authority of the partner entities rather than routinely requiring decisions to be referred back to the partners for approval.
- 4) A prior decision by partner entities to pool an agreed amount of their own resources to be allocated by the partnership is a strong indicator of commitment to a partnership. This approach facilitates joint commissioning by the partnership to achieve commonly agreed objectives, by allowing the partnership to plan the allocation of resources more effectively and to set the priorities for implementation and delivery methods. The alternative approach, an *ad hoc* allocation of resources by partners for individual partnership activities, in effect means that the decisions are being made on a case by case basis by the individual partner entities and increases the risk that they will be made on a zero sum basis. However, irrespective of which of the two approaches is adopted, partnerships are likely to be capable of being sustained on a “zero additional resource” basis only for a limited period. In other words, if a partnership is worth undertaking, it is worth supporting with resources.

- 5) Effective partnerships are ones in which there is not only clarity of objectives but also the agility to respond to emerging issues e.g. the financial crisis. In practice, this means that, consistent with the principles of effective resource allocation procedures, the financial systems of a partnership should enable them to recall allocated resources which are not subsequently expected to be needed and reallocate them to newly emerging priorities.
- 6) In effective partnerships, the partners are clear about the opportunity cost of partnerships i.e. that the partnership is capable of justifying how it addresses public service issues better than other means of collaboration or action and must actually address them more effectively. In the majority of applications made by best practice certificate holders, the objectives of the partnership would have been difficult to achieve had the partnership not existed.
- 7) If all other conditions are present (objectives, governance, operating and financial procedures etc.) there is no barrier to multi-agency partnerships which involve more than two entities and public, private and third sector agencies in the same partnership. In particular, cooperation between different levels of government, and between different functions within the same level of government, is an important component of the success of a number of the best practice certificate holders.
- 8) One of the key trends confirmed by an analysis of the applications is that partnerships between the public and third sectors are based on a greater equality of relationships than had formerly often been the case i.e. that third sectors are no longer so frequently regarded by the public sector as solely contractual service providers.
- 9) A number of the best practice certificate holders, such as the e-tax initiative and the electronic processing of judicial documents, rely on a high degree of confidence in data security and integrity.
- 10) The nature of the review of the continuing relevance of partnerships will vary from partnership to partnership – in the case of partnerships to tackle youth delinquency or alcohol abuse, for example, it would be expected that outcomes could be achieved more quickly than those with wider aims, such as the impact of combining lifelong learning with employment or the sustainability of schemes to promote immigration to a region.

In summary, partnership is not the only answer to modern public management, but it can be one of the answers to deal with the challenges of contemporary public service delivery i.e. it is one tool in the toolbox for public entities.

The lessons of the entries submitted to EPSA under the Partnership Working theme are that a partnership is not an easy solution to implement, but, if the key criteria for entering into the partnership are met, and if it fits with the objectives of a public sector entity, it is worthwhile for entities responsible for delivering public services to invest time in building capacity through good partnering.

## **References and suggested further readings**

*Douglas, J. (2009), "Partnership working", Routledge*

*Burnett, M. (2007), "Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) – A decision maker's guide.", European Institute of Public Administration*

*OECD (2006), "Successful partnerships – A guide",  
OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance*

*Audit Commission for Local Authorities and the National Health Service (England) (2005), "Governing partnerships – Bridging the accountability gap."*

*Geddes, M. (2005<sup>1</sup>) "Making Public-Private Partnerships work.", Gower Publications*

*Hodge, G.A., Greve, C. (2005) "The challenge of Public-Private Partnerships - Learning from international experience.", Edward Elgar Publishing*

*Dhillon, J.K. (2005) "The rhetoric and reality of partnership working.", Journal of Further and Higher Education, Vol. 29*

## **Online Resources**

[www.eupan.eu/eGovernment](http://www.eupan.eu/eGovernment)

[www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid](http://www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid)

[www.stiment.net](http://www.stiment.net)

[www.alsoproject.eu](http://www.alsoproject.eu)

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<sup>2</sup> The title of this book is of wider value than the title may suggest in that it is as much if not more focused on general principles and practice of partnership working than on PPP infrastructure construction and service delivery contracts





# Leadership and Management for Change

*By Anita Rode & Herma Kuperus*

## 1. Specific context of the topic

The top management of public organisations has to balance the interests of all stakeholders, such as politicians, citizens and enterprises, as well as their employees. They have a role as policy maker and as employer. Each top manager has his or her own qualities, but in order to face the challenges, they also need the other members of the management team; using the qualities of others in the organisation in an effective and motivational way.

They should perform as leaders instead of only as managers, whilst being able to bring movement and change to the organisation in a way that encourages most of the employees to want to be part of the movement. For the management this will mean: strategic thinking and vision; high values of integrity and ethics; getting the best from people; making a personal impact; self reflection for continued learning and improvement; focusing on outcome; building relations and supporting teams; and creating shared understanding and values. To cover all the required competences, the top management has to operate as a complementary team.

The composition of the management team also requires special attention in order to face the challenges (e.g. shortfalls of talent) and obtain different leadership styles and values, as well as complementary competences in the organisation. This is important since in many public organisations there is no balance in the teams between women and men, young and old, cultural or national backgrounds. To face these challenges with an increasingly European and even international dimension, a good diversity balance in the top management of public sector organisations is needed. As far as this requires renewal of labour conditions for a better work/life balance (e.g. working time arrangements) or better communication (more languages or multicultural tools/trainings), it will be of benefit to all in the organisation, as well as to society in general; thus increasing the attractiveness of public organisations on the labour market.

## 2. State of affairs

In order to create more efficient, effective and citizen-friendly public organisations, the focus in the last two decades has been on public sector reforms. In recent years the main questions asked are: how can these reforms be delivered more successfully and how can the changes be made to last? One of the answers has been to focus on the quality of the management of change and of leaders of the organisations.

## 2.1 Current trends

### Leadership vs. Management

The growing discussion regarding differences between leadership and management has led to the question, which one (of the two) is needed for an organisation? The answer is probably: both. Nevertheless, in order to implement fundamental and sustainable change in the organisation, leaders, not managers, are required. The biggest difference between managers and leaders is the way they motivate the people who work with them or follow them; leaders focus more on fundamental organisational values and culture.

Often leaders in public administration are also managers; they have management jobs, but they realise that popularity cannot be bought, especially when times are difficult; therefore they also act as leaders. However, not all managers can be leaders as well. The leaders must have a long-term vision, strategy, and a focus on sustainable change; meanwhile managers, by contrast, must focus on short-term results, day-to-day problems and making the decisions to solve them.

Managerial skills and qualities that were important during the last two decades are no longer sufficient to cope with future challenges; therefore new competencies for public sector management have to be introduced. Today top public managers are expected to be more performance-oriented and less process-compliant than in the general civil service. They should have a managerial focus, leadership skills, an innovation and communication focus, as well as professional competence. These competences are a prerequisite for productive top management. The traditional values such as hierarchy of control, authority through position, conformity and command-control paradigm are slowly going to be transformed into new cultural values within public administration, such as openness, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, authority through leadership and managerial culture (*Pagon, etc.; 2008*).

In the literature a distinction is made between competence(s) and competency(ies). Competences are abilities, skills, behaviour and knowledge; competencies deal with responsibility, accountability and authority. In other words, what you are *able* to do and what you are *allowed* to do. In practice, however, the distinction between each term is rarely made; the same practice will be followed in this report.

Competency-based management (CBM) is one of the change strategies aiming to improve HR systems. The process of implementing CBM tends to follow the tradition of the centralisation of public administration. There is a common tendency for the competency-based approach to only focus on certain types of entities/bodies, an incremental implementation process and on some professional groups and HR functions. Managers and senior and technical staff are the preferred targets (*Nunes, etc.; 2007*).

The definition of competencies by Gruban (2003) found in Pagon etc. (2008), is the following: *competence is the ability to use knowledge and other capabilities, necessary for successful and efficient accomplishment of an appointed task, transaction of work, goal realisation, or performance of a certain role in the business process*. In addition, the term competency is associated with individual attributes fostering excellent performance and behaviour to reach the strategic goals of the organisation (Hood and Lodge; 2003).

The competency framework is a list of competencies that are important for the organisation but which can also be used to express the strategic focus of the organisation and as a tool to assess and measure the organisational leaders' competencies (Horton; 2002).

The concept of New Public Management (NPM) states that top public managers should have certain competences and skills in order to deliver effective leadership and organisational management. A highly effective public sector increases the chances of having a competency framework for the top public management. This could imply that reforms in the domain of public leadership and adoption of a competency framework for the top management is only initiated when the comprehensive reform programmes are in place, thereby indicating that a country is ahead in the process of public sector reform (Frank; 2007, p. 2).

At the same time, previous research in the context of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU (Pagon, etc.; 2008, p. 23) shows that the more traditional values that are present, the less the new cultural values exist in a public administration institution. And the more the new cultural values exist in a public administration institution, the less fear and resistance to change there is in this institution. Managing change from traditional values to new cultural values enables us to examine and assess the success of change management in a particular public administration institution. This study of the Slovenian Presidency on competency management in EU public administrations distinguished between old/classical and new/modern competencies necessary for public managers and leaders to obtain. New cultural values are positively associated with multicultural skills, people skills, understanding, innovating and changing the organisation, emotional intelligence and self-control.

The difference between managers and leaders is that managers have subordinates, and leaders have followers. Furthermore, the work focus and working styles differs. While managers focus on "getting things done", often within tight constraints of time and money, leaders inspire their followers and give them a vision of the expected outcome.

The following table 1 (based on information from: [www.changingminds.org](http://www.changingminds.org)), summarises differences between leaders and managers.

Table 1: Main differences between leaders and managers

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Manager</b>
<i>Essence</i>	Change	Stability
<i>Focus</i>	Leading people	Managing work
<i>Have</i>	Followers	Subordinates
<i>Horizon</i>	Long-term	Short-term
<i>Seeks</i>	Vision	Objectives
<i>Approach</i>	Sets direction	Plans detail
<i>Decision</i>	Facilitates	Makes
<i>Power</i>	Personal charisma	Formal authority
<i>Dynamic</i>	Proactive	Reactive
<i>Style</i>	Transformational	Transactional
<i>Wants</i>	Achievement	Results
<i>Direction</i>	New values	Traditional values

### **Differences between country traditions**

Historically and culturally, in the European countries there is a wide range of strategies for developing public sector leaders. There are countries, where future leaders are identified at an early stage of their career through a centralised competition and training process. At the opposite end, there are countries where only a light coordinating role at the centre exists and all leadership and management posts are widely advertised and in theory can be awarded to anyone who meets the knowledge and skill requirements.

Between these poles, there are different mixes of the two approaches. Some countries (e.g. UK, Netherlands) have designated “Senior Executive Services” membership – with varying degrees of central intervention. Some countries are introducing more market into centralised elite systems, because the elite can over time become unresponsive to social change. In the other extreme, some countries are finding that highly market driven systems create difficulties in forming an adequate pool from which they can recruit for key public sector positions, and may undermine the development of a set of collective values to bind the public sector together (*OECD; 2001, p. 20*).

Table 2 shows country divisions among different types of systems for top public managers (*Kuperus and Rode; 2008*).

*Table 2: Grouping of Member States by typology of Top Public Management (TPM) models*

	<b>Formal TPM status</b>	<b>No formal TPM status</b>
<b>Special conditions for TPM</b>	With central TPM office: NL, UK <div style="text-align: right;"><b>No.1</b></div> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> BE, IT, MT, PL, PT, RO <div style="text-align: right;"><b>No. 2</b></div>	AT, DE, EL, ES, FR, LU, IE DK, FI, SE, SI EE, LV, SK <div style="text-align: right;"><b>No. 4</b></div>
<b>No special conditions for TPM</b>	BG, CY <div style="text-align: right;"><b>No. 3</b></div>	CZ, HU, LT <div style="text-align: right;"><b>No. 5</b></div>

Countries can also be clustered depending on their civil service tradition, which often shows similarities in reform processes among the countries from the same tradition. Table 3 illustrates this in detail.

*Table 3: Civil service tradition according to the type of country tradition*

<b>Country tradition</b>	<b>Civil service tradition</b>
Continental	High status for civil servants, organised around corps, recognised as special group of employees
Anglo-Saxon	High status for civil servants, they are non-politicised
Nordic	Civil service is highly decentralised (agency model), and it is professional and non-politicised
Mediterranean	Civil servants have a low status and political intervention in their work is possible
Eastern European	Each has adopted different system, but common tendencies are: low CS status and mechanisms to avoid political influence

As mentioned above, countries from the same civil service tradition often also choose the same type of reform path. For example, Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries plus the Netherlands have more or less implemented New Public Management reforms and are currently focusing more on the Welfare State policy elements, which could be combined with the existing NPM practices. At the same time, most of the Continental countries are still proceeding with the implementation of NPM reforms, focusing the discussion on privatisation. For example, Germany is further implementing

decentralisation reforms and is trying to create more competition in the public administration. Also, Mediterranean countries are still implementing NPM in their public administrations; Spain and Portugal are more active in reforming at this point in time; whilst Italy for example already implemented more of the NPM elements at an earlier stage. In the Eastern European Member States after the regime change took place at the end of 1980s and the beginning of 1990s and after their accession to the EU (2004 and 2006), public administration systems had to be changed completely; so at this point in time they are also slowly starting to implement NPM elements in their systems.

### **Types of employment systems**

Another factor influencing a country's choice of type of reform or top public management system is the type of employment system a country pursues. In general, there are two types of employment system: career-based and position-based. The career-based civil service system aims at building a coherent civil service with top executives, who share the same culture; this makes working together and communication across government organisations easier and favours internal mobility. In the career-based systems career development is mainly based on seniority principle and in the recent years some elements of performance measurement have also been introduced.

The position-based civil service system aims to provide a wider choice of candidates, including those with specialist skills, which promotes competition, cultural renewal, and adaptation in the civil service (*OECD; 2003, p. 5*). This system enables decentralisation, makes it easier to adapt recruitment to specific competence needs in different activities, makes it easier to differentiate pay and other employment conditions in accordance with the market situation, and makes it easier to achieve a strong performance-orientation (*Rexed; 2007*). Meanwhile, an increasing number of Member States are starting to combine elements of both these systems. They can be considered as mixed or hybrid systems, because the configuration of the civil services of some Member States shows a mix between the two types of system.

In reality, these employment models differ in nuance between Member States, and the grouping of countries according to one or other model can be difficult. Nonetheless, the main characteristics usually remain the same: in the career-based system a group of candidates is recruited for a career in the civil service, and in a position-based system candidates are selected for a particular position. In a hybrid model both these elements can be present in the recruitment of civil servants. Member States were divided between the three employment models based on these criteria: *see table 4 (Kuperus and Rode; 2008)*.

Table 4: The Member States with a career-based, position-based and hybrid systems for general civil servants

	<b>Career-based</b>	<b>Hybrid</b>	<b>Position-based</b>
<b>Member States</b>	Austria Belgium Cyprus France Germany Greece Hungary Ireland Luxembourg Portugal Romania Spain	Bulgaria Italy Latvia Lithuania Malta Poland Slovakia Slovenia	The Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland Netherlands Sweden United Kingdom

Furthermore, in many Member States the recruitment procedures and career systems for the specific target group of top public managers differ from the general or main employment system. To improve their TPM, the Member States with a career-based employment system are moving in the direction of a position-based system for top public managers positions in order to select candidates to a greater extent on the basis of merit and performance for short-term appointments and from outside the own organisation, corps or pools. Member States with position-based systems for the TPM are tending to move elements of the system towards the career-based system in order to ensure some kind of career path for the best employees and to strengthen the corporate identity of the group. Collective recruitment of young trainees or internal long- and shortlists of candidates for specific positions have been introduced and combined with the open recruitment of external applicants for specific positions (*Kuperus and Rode; 2008, p. 9*).

## 2.2 Challenges for managing change and developing leaders

To successfully implement organisational change, some specific challenges for the public leadership have to be acknowledged. First of all, due to the double role of a policy maker and an employer, top management in public organisations has to balance the interests of all stakeholders, e.g. politicians, citizens, own employees, and it can be a challenging process. In the process of change it is very important to have a powerful team of supporters for the reform. “Individuals alone, no matter how competent or charismatic, never have all the assets needed to overcome tradition and inertia except in very small organizations. Weak committees are usually even less effective” (*Kotter; 1996*).

Secondly, the changes cannot materialise without a strategic, future vision; but the vision will not be implemented unless most employees are willing to help, “often to the point of making short-term sacrifices. But people will not make sacrifices, even if they are unhappy with the status quo, unless they think the potential benefits of change are attractive and unless they really believe that transformation is possible” (Kotter; 1996).

Thirdly, in order to be up to date with latest developments, managers have a permanent need to develop their competences, both as individuals and as a team. Due to a very limited time and often also a long period of experience in the organisation, the development of this group demands a special approach, both regarding the content and the methods used. It is also very important that managers perform as leaders, being able to bring change in the organisation and inspire the employees to participate in this process of change.

Fourthly, to face the challenges of a diverse society and labour market, with an increasing European and international dimension, a good diversity balance in the top management in public organisations is needed. In many European public organisations there is no balance in the management teams between women and men, young and old, from different cultural or nationality backgrounds. As far as this requires renewal of labour conditions for a better work-life balance (e.g. working time arrangements) or a better communication (more languages used or multicultural tools/training) it will be beneficial for everyone in the organisation as well as for the society in general, and will increase the attractiveness of the public organisations in the labour market.

Finally, “the leadership challenge is about how leaders get extraordinary things done in organizations. It is about the practices leaders use to turn challenging opportunities into remarkable successes” (Kouzes and Posner; 1988, p. xv). That is also what the projects submitted for the EPSA award are about, and it is certain that many of them will contribute towards a better public sector leadership.

### **Useful further readings on public leadership and management for change**

The OECD – in the “Public Sector Leadership for the 21st Century” (2001) – defines the role of public leadership and goes deeper into today’s main trends for leadership in the public sector, as well as offering several case studies on different public leadership models in the OECD countries.

“Leadership competences for successful change management” (Pagon, etc; 2008) offers a detailed overview on leadership competences and analyses the differences between traditional management values and new leadership values.

“Top Public Managers in Europe” (Kuperus and Rode; 2008) compares different employment systems, working conditions and competency frameworks for top public managers among the EU Member States and the European Commission.

### 3. Overview and analysis of applications

Countries have taken a variety of approaches towards developing their public sector leaders, but there is no single best model, because each country has its unique public sector values to be emphasised and the management systems differ from country to country.

EPSA applications for the theme on Leadership and Management for Change were assessed on the basis of general and specific criteria, with a particular focus on the: involvement of all stakeholders in the process; balance between interests of organisation and employees; real influence on the cultural orientation of the organisation; usage of new methods, style and forms of working in the organisation.

*Table 5: Analysis of applications by country of origin*

Austria	5
Belgium	7
Bulgaria	1
Czech Republic	1
Denmark	1
Finland	1
France	1
Germany	2
Greece	1
Italy	3
Lithuania	2
Luxembourg	1
Pan-European	3
Portugal	2
Romania	4
Spain	6
Switzerland	1
United Kingdom	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

#### Geographical distribution

The total number of eligible project applications for the theme on Leadership and Change Management was 43. The majority of the project applications were from Belgium (7), Spain (6), Austria (5), Romania (4) and Italy (3). Other countries submitting 1-2 projects were: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. There were 3 pan-European projects submitted by the European institutions (*see table 5*).

It must be noted that there were several differences in types of projects submitted and reforms in each Member State depending on the (European) region where the project was implemented. As mentioned earlier, depending on the country tradition, reforms taken in Member States also differ. Some similarities with the theory were also seen in the EPSA applications. While some Member States have implemented NPM in their

public administration and are focusing more on leadership and new values orientation in the organisation, some, like many Eastern and Mediterranean Member States, are just starting to focus on the benefits of NPM. From this point of view, each country has a different starting point for implementing leadership and management for change practices: often while their approach can be innovative in their country or region, it is not new in the European context. Nevertheless, within the theme on Leadership and Management for Change, the projects which were innovative and transferable for the specific region of countries were also highly appreciated.

### Level of government

Most of the projects were implemented on the regional level (14), closely followed by the projects on national (13) and local levels (12). There were 4 projects implemented at the pan-European level (*see table 6*). This shows that leadership and change management issues are important and relevant to all levels of government.

*Table 6: Analysis of applications by level of government*

Local	12
Regional	14
National	13
Pan-European	4*
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

\* *The number of pan-European projects here differs from table 6 as there is one project from Belgium dealing with trans-national cooperation between several countries.*

### Size of entity

The majority (around 80%) of the projects on leadership and change management were conducted and submitted by organisations with more than 100 employees, indicating that change management and leadership are more apparent in larger organisations. The reason for this could be that bigger organisations have more structures, and change influences more people; therefore reforms are more often defined as a change process.

The implementation of change also requires more resources and cooperation among managers and staff in order to change the existing organisational values and culture; therefore the process demands more time and resources.

*Table 7: Analysis of applications by size of entity*

1-25	1
25-50	3
50-100	6
>100	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

## Type of civil service system

It can be seen from the applications in the theme Leadership and Management for Change that they were mainly sent from countries with a career-based system (see tables 8 and 9). It is a well-known fact that Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries plus the Netherlands, with position-based employment systems as a basis for their civil service, have achieved a lot with regard to the topic of leadership and change management within their public administrations; nevertheless, these countries were underrepresented in the EPSA, and it seems that they might already be focusing on different aspects of public administration reform.

Table 8: Division of applications between the represented types of civil service employment systems

Type of employment system	Amount of applications
Career-based	32
Position-based	4
Hybrid*	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

\* Switzerland is included in the hybrid system

Table 9: Division of applications between the country traditions

Country tradition	Amount of applications
Anglo-Saxon	1
Nordic (plus NL)	2
Continental (plus Swiss)	17
Mediterranean	12
Eastern European	8
Pan-European	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

Although EPSA applications may not be fully representative regarding Member States' interests in leadership and change management in their public sector reforms, it can be noted that the majority of applications come from Member States with a career-based system and from the regions of Continental, Mediterranean, and to a lesser extent, Eastern European countries. It shows that in countries with this type of system, reforms on leadership quality and management of change are high on the agenda and are seen as a necessary step towards improving their current public organisations. They feel more of an urge to reorganise their existing structures, where there is little recruitment at management level and managers have to be trained for leadership skills and new management competences, in order to face the future challenges in the public sector.

## **Diversity of management teams**

Although with the changing public environment and its challenges, awareness of changing labour trends is rising; yet the importance of diversity of workforce is rarely a topic or specific element in the change processes. In particular at the higher management levels, there are many underrepresented groups, such as young people and women. The diversity component in public management teams is still lacking.

Among the EPSA applications only a few projects mentioned the gender aspect. One was the Austrian project on gender mainstreaming in the organisation. It was not particularly related to the gender distribution within the management team, but rather about gender mainstreaming in the organisation in general. Nevertheless, that is also a good starting point for ensuring gender equality within the management team itself in the future. In another Austrian project gender-specific skills are taken into consideration in training courses. The European Commission in its project E-practice mentions the inclusion of diversity, ethics and the European/international dimension when creating its staff and top management teams. A German project on junior personnel promotion, although not focusing on the equality issue as such, is specifically oriented towards the young staff members. During this project a specific leadership scheme was created and the junior staff (not current executives) was recruited and re-trained for future executive roles.

## **4. Good practices in Leadership and Management for Change among the projects**

This section will analyse emerging good practices amongst the applications for the theme on Leadership and Management for Change. The division will be made between the nominees, other best practices awarded with EPSA certificates, promising cases, and others who refer at least to one of the elements of proven evidence, or are introducing innovative elements for their organisation, country or region. The main focus will be on the change and whether it has been fully implemented in the organisation and is sustainable.

### **4.1 Best practices, where change has been completed**

When meeting the challenges of today and the future, public organisations have to change in order to satisfy the customer; however, sustainable and long-lasting change can be implemented only with the involvement of all stakeholders and through change within an organisation's values and culture. All the EPSA award nominees (**from A to E**) are best practice examples of improving external services for the society through initiating, implementing and monitoring a fundamental internal change process. In these cases the internal change was initiated after realising that an organisation's performance no longer fits with the public concern.

Only the nominees have used a whole approach and focused on all the elements in the organisation, such as common values and wished culture, training (of managers) and self-reflection of all employees and managers. The proven (and measured) result was changed behaviour, performance and image outside the organisation. These projects stand out from other EPSA applications because they are clearly customer-oriented, focus both on internal and external change, and show real leadership. It is expected that the change realised during these projects will be long-lasting and sustainable, even when the driving powers of this change leave the organisation. The nominated projects also have a very high transferability aspect because the subject of change is very common for all public sectors in Europe, and the change process is well structured and documented.

The other best practices awarded with an EPSA certificate (**from F to J**) have focused more on the internal change, and its relations with external factors are less visible; nevertheless the change has been fully implemented in the organisation and is sustainable. These projects focus change on some of the elements within the organisation, not on the organisation as a whole. E-practice from the European Commission differs a little from the others as it is an internal tool made to facilitate external relations/networks. In a certain way leadership elements were shown in these projects.

## Nominees

**A. An organisational and cultural change in a Swiss local police force** took place after noticing a growing number of complaints from the public and staff resignations. Both management and employees worked together to change the organisation's culture, e.g. limiting code of silence and questioning the traditional modes of management and leadership (e.g. purely hierarchical command), and highly emphasising ethical values. The approach is adaptable to other organisations that deal with such socially sensitive areas, like police, healthcare or social services.

*“A profound and cross-cutting process to initiate self-reflection and value-creation in a police organisation.”*  
*“The project has significantly changed the organisational culture, the values system and the problem-solving capacity of the police force.”* *“Very systematic approach to develop corporate culture.”*

*(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)*

**B. A Danish Immigration Service** was transformed from an institution with a very bad public reputation to an entirely customer-oriented organisation being able to adapt to the new migration challenges in Denmark. This saw fewer foreigners applying for asylum or family reunification, and more applying for residency in order to work and study. The changes in the organisation's values and employees' behaviour were noticed not only internally but also by the customers. The approach is transferable to other customer-oriented organisations that deal with socially sensitive situations.

*“Managing the turnaround process from a negative cycle of frustration and mismanagement to a performing and motivated organisation is a central topic of the European public sector agenda.”* *“A successful example of renewal of a public service which has known a considerable shift in customers' needs”* *“innovative features: ... the director's conversations with each employee”* *“[...] empowering and listening to the bottom level of the organisation helps in the fine-tuning processes [...].”*

*(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)*

**C. A Portuguese municipality** is developing corporate culture and human capability in the organisation through individual and organisational learning. This is the building of communities of practice by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain, learning how to do it better as they interact regularly. This project uses training through teamwork between all staff levels and merging of bottom-up and top-down approaches.

*“An innovative holistic up-skilling process of employees for a whole organisation”;* *“[...] provides an interesting example that could be of potential value especially for other big cities belonging to countries which have the same administrative culture (e.g. Spain, Italy, France).”* *“Potential lessons for training managers and top managers.”* *“More than 3 500 trainings [...] make a real impact to change [...].”*

*(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)*

**D.** A newly appointed chief executive of a **UK hospital** has reorganised the organisation by giving more responsibility and accountability to clinical leaders and managers. An excellent collaboration between managers and clinicians helps to bring structural, performance and cultural changes in the organisation and significantly improves services for cancer patients. The hospital has become one of the best rated hospitals in the country, and patient satisfaction with its services is very high.

*“Planned objectives are realised by 100%; the Christie is transformed into innovative and modern health care organisation.” “Highly relevant process in sector under quality and resource pressure for many years; results achieved are impressive in the time span.”*  
(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)

**E.** In a **Spanish municipality** public administration’s traditional expenses culture, where budgets are to be spent, was changed into a cost culture which is based on the continuing optimisation of economic resources by introducing a contract between politicians and top public managers (PACTE). In the contract they agree on long-term vision and short-term actions. This change in management and political culture resulted not only in more efficient public organisation, but led to both, the politicians and public managers thinking in the same direction and having the same values, therefore making better policies.

*“Strong case with consequent innovations in processes, structure and behavioural elements” “[...] an evident impact in terms of transparency [...]”*  
*“PACTE – an agreement which made it possible to involve all groups of stakeholders” “highly outcome oriented”*  
(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)

### **Other best projects receiving an EPSA certificate**

**F.** The project in an **Austrian municipality** aimed at facilitating the awareness that gender mainstreaming is the job of executives and has to be implemented top-down by changing the strategies, structures and processes within an organisation. They wanted gender mainstreaming to be identified as a managerial tool for organisational development. The organisational culture (shaping of opinions, informal dispersion of the topic, and engagement of single persons) supported the implementation.

*“Elements such as top management and policy makers’ involvement on a sustainable basis is a strong driver”*  
(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)

**G.** An **Austrian public social insurance company** created and implemented a new model of change management in their organisation. A team of 25 young employees and high potentials (maverick team) was invited to question the new

*“Solid change approach with emphasis on people and culture change via value discussions. Using strong participative elements and interesting dialogue formats to develop a new structure and culture [...]”*  
(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)

structure, culture and the management of the organisation and contribute with their thoughts, ideas and creativity to strengthen the sustainability of the new management system. The results were reached through new thinking, new attitudes, new activities and learning and its repetition. Learning in the sense of creating new patterns that compete with existing patterns lead to new insights that finally sum up the change process in a first loop and then lead into the next level in another loop.

**H. The European Commission** has created the first web 2.0 international initiative for sharing good practices in the public sector. It consists of a platform for self-reflection and development of professionals in public organisations, and face-to-face workshops for leaders. The high participation level in E-practice from managers across Europe suggests that top public managers can learn a lot from each other and one of their main interests is to hear practical experiences from their colleagues around the Europe.

*“The project has a huge number of users; the number of face-to-face events is also significant” “Common e-environment across EU is an innovative solution” “The project is about learning and transfer of knowledge”*

*(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)*

**I. When a new public institution for managing structural funds in a region of Czech Republic** was established, its newly hired managers decided to incorporate a corporate planning tool from the business sector for the organisation’s guidance and management. This is a new approach in the particular country and in the Eastern European region in general.

*“A special unit that is responsible for customer issues [...]” “Delivering public services in customer - oriented way is an important topic for all public organisations [...] especially in post-Soviet countries”*

*(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)*

**J. A Lithuanian public organisation for statistics** implemented a process management approach, which allows effective organisation of the institution’s activity, rational distribution of resources, easy reaction to the needs and expectations of users, respondents and other institutions managing official statistics. One of the main aims of the project was to increase user satisfaction

*“[...] use of active methods in strategic planning, education of customers, and cooperation in planning process.” “Different working groups and organisational levels in the institution were involved [...]” “Many innovative methods were used to involve employees into strategy planning process [...]”*

*(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)*

with statistical information, systematically expand the circle of statistically literate users and to cultivate a new generation of statistics users, capable of understanding and applying statistics. The progress was constantly monitored.

## 4.2 Promising good practices – change is still in process

As mentioned earlier, sustainable change needs a lot of time to be achieved. There are at least two promising good practices among the EPSA applications, which are highly innovative, transferable and of public concern; they are expected to have a major impact on the organisations in the future; but at this point in time they have carried out only a pilot project or focused on a smaller group of staff, and the further effect of these practices is to be seen with time. These practices are more oriented towards internal not external change; however, they use a well structured approach in order to achieve better performance, which would also be noticed outside the organisation. These projects also focus change on some of the elements within the organisation, and not on the organisation as a whole.

**K. A leadership scheme in the German federal ministry**, instead of focusing on current executives, focuses on new personnel who will be executives of tomorrow and must be recruited today, and re-trained and promoted in the long run. The scheme consists of several networks (for junior personnel, alumni and mentors) and qualifications programmes including trainings on self-management, leadership, understanding of human behaviour, and social and methodological competences. The implementation of this project so far has led to a higher interdepartmental and inter-hierarchical cooperation, improved information and intensified informal relationships.

*“Building good managers – starts at junior level” “Good answer to demographic challenge on recruiting level”*

*(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)*

**L. A Spanish regional government developed a training model** for increasing management capacities for a selected group of people. The use of three questionnaires about competencies, styles and working environment in the training activities was a very powerful starting element offering a very accurate diagnosis of each person's training requirements. Furthermore, workshops were adjusted to each participant's requirements, and in parallel, a structured 360° evaluation of their satisfaction was provided.

*“In consideration of the use of sophisticated methodologies, the project presents a high level of innovation. Of particular relevance are: 1) the personal training itinerary tailored on each executive manager involved in the training project; 2) the method used to assess managerial capabilities.”*

*(EPSA 2009 Evaluator)*

### 4.3 Other interesting practices - focus on specific categories of change / change is not yet completed

Practices listed in this category had used some interesting and new elements within their approaches, but overall the change had not yet been fully implemented or measured and/or demonstrated as such. The focus of these projects is more towards some organisational elements or new instruments, not the organisation as a whole. The change is often not directly related to the interest of society.

These projects can be divided into several topical areas, e.g. implementation of New Public Management, improving quality of internal organisation, knowledge management and IT tools, and public-private partnerships. As can be seen from the areas of reform, these projects focus mainly on typical means of internal change management; in reference to the theory, these projects display rather more management than leadership.

#### **New Public Management**

##### *Integrated strategic planning process*

- Development of a strategic planning process for the city of Gent in **Belgium**, where all stakeholders are involved and all planning aspects are integrated (e.g. the financial, the staff, the ICT and the Facility management planning).

##### *Performance-based systems*

- Plan of improvement for participated urban quality in an **Italian municipality** is a project that aimed at improving performance and strengthening the capacity of local authority and raising the organisation's capacity building.
- Introduction of performance-linked remuneration system (A.U.G.E) in an **Austrian** public social funds company by using computerised support.
- Review and redesign of performance management functions in the **Romanian** Competition Council in order to improve employees' performance, motivation and identify development needs.
- Project in **Romanian** local level institution aiming to provide a regulation which allows fair distribution and objective funding awards to personnel to stimulate their professional performance.

##### *Efficiency and effectiveness*

- The new management team of the province of Antwerp (**Belgium**) started the Brabo programme with the main aim to become a fully objective-oriented organisation. Special attention was paid to the transfer of knowledge.

## Improving quality of internal organisation

### *Organisational structure and culture*

- A process-oriented organisational chart has been implemented in a long-term care insurance organisation in **Luxembourg**. The organisational chart allows individual competences to be promoted without taking into account initial training and education;
- From reorganisation to a virtual secretariat is taking place in a **Portuguese** public higher education institution. Virtual Secretariat is a service for the internal community of the institute that aims to simplify access and facilitate the administrative procedures for the academic community;
- Improvement of management structure and the strategic control is occurring in an **Italian** municipality by introducing a new evaluation tool for executives (SISVAL);
- EuReforme is an association which forms a bottom-up staff network aiming to improve the management in **the European Commission**;
- The Lappeenranta contract in **Finland** defines certain organisational values, such as responsibility and justice, in order to avoid any legal conflicts that might occur between management and personnel;
- Corporate culture has been created in a directorate of the **Austrian** ministry through developing a management philosophy where the main principle is that a manager must take on several different roles in the course of the management process (BEST organisation);
- An observatory of local government in **Spain** has been set up as a flexible, wide-ranging instrument that gathers, systemises and validates information on this level of government;
- Management, together with all employees, has created a management plan that includes values and vision of the organisation, and results in increased service delivery, customer satisfaction and employee motivation (Making strategy tangible, **Belgium**);
- Project aiming at the introduction and harmonisation of internal control systems within each Flemish government administration organisation on the basis of a common framework (A new deal for administrative leadership, **Belgium**);
- Stair model: a self-reflection approach for managing change in Greek public administration. The project focuses on identifying the organisational competences needed and finding ways to implement these competences in the organisation;
- An electronic employee survey is used in a **German** regional ministry as a method for introducing employees' ideas and proposals for change into the continuous improvement process of the state administration;
- ZERO PLUS is a demonstration project which aims at developing an integrated management system for the wastewater generated by the electroplating industry (**Belgium**);

- More effective usage of financial resources at the **Lithuanian** county police office by merging two units into one and creating a Joint Operative Management Unit, as well as installing a new system of working hours;
- Project in a **Romanian** university, intended to assist public managers from the educational system to approach principles called Strategic Quality Management in Education (SQME), which is a three-part process based on staff at different levels making their own unique contribution to quality improvement.

### *HRM and quality of staff*

- Training programme for newly appointed top or middle managers in the **French** public administration, focusing on the provision of operational tools for implementing change, use of effective communication in daily management and management of social relations;
- Training programme in the **Bulgarian** public administration created in the context of competencies framework, with an objective to raise administrative capacity and enhance the efficiency and service delivery;
- Organisation-wide implementation of competence management in the provincial administration of Antwerp in **Belgium** on the basis of a self-service HR system. The project aimed to set up a customer-oriented software package in which managers and employees can smoothly retrieve the required information to take control of their own development;
- Project in **Spain** “Continuous learning, leadership route” is a tool for improving staff’s management skills and abilities, and their motivation. The main goal of the project is to transform current administrators into team leaders. A Training Plan which was developed at the beginning of the project seeks to develop each individual’s potential;
- Project in **Romania** aiming to provide better information to youth regarding the possibility to choose a public function. Within the project the training of 40 students from the high school took place, helping them to obtain new competencies and knowledge, and develop their social abilities.

### **Knowledge management and IT tools**

- Knowledge management experience and communities of practice network in the Department of Justice of the Government of Catalonia, **Spain**. The project has initiated a more participative management style in the organisation and has strengthened the role of the employees in the development process;
- Innovation management office in the **European Parliament** is created to prioritise and optimise projects regarding strategic issues, reusability of developments in other projects, coherency of projects and maximising resources cross-over throughout the different units through IT systems and support;

- A knowledge management project in the **Austrian** federal ministry included numerous contents, measures, instruments and varying starting points thanks to which the acceptance among line managers and employees was very high (We know you too!);
- Creation of a cadastral echographic system of the Umbria region in **Italy**, which includes a database and a regional structure, responsible for carrying out a regional coordination for both collection and verification of the comparability of cadastral data from each municipality.

### **Public-private partnership**

- The project describes a new form of partnership between public and private institutions to address changes in the organisational environment (Fundacion Comunidad Valenciana Region Europea, **Spain**);
- A **trans-national** and public-private partnership initiative to improve energy competence in all sectors (IEC-SME).

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

### 1) Leadership or management?

Leadership is shown in few projects, according to the definitions of this report. All nominees show forms of complementary teams, top-down vision and bottom-up involvement of all employees and stakeholders, and focus on fundamental values and culture for sustainable change. The other projects focus mainly on change processes or implementation of new tools or skills.

### 2) Stakeholders involved?

Stakeholders' involvement (incl. employees' acceptance) is very high by the nominees, not always covering the whole range of stakeholders by the other certificate holders, but partially covering or nearly missing them by the rest of projects.

### 3) Really completed and measured change? (impact)

Only part of the projects (mainly nominees and certificate holders) can show a real measured change, both internally and externally. Some others monitor the elements of progress in certain areas of change (internally or externally).

### 4) Interesting for society?

In the case of nominees public concern is directly related to the organisational reform. Most of the other projects focus on internal change, sometimes raised from the awareness of external developments and changed needs of society (indirect relation).

### 5) Innovative?

It is difficult to judge what is and what is not considered innovative because of big differences in reform processes between Member States, regions and traditions. Overall within the projects there were many interesting and new elements seen. Some approaches were not new for everyone, but at the same time, were innovative for specific group of countries, administrative or employment traditions.

### 6) Transferable?

Many of the methods and approaches used are transferable to public organisations in other Member States. Nevertheless, they should not be simply copied, but adjusted to the specific culture and characteristics of the organisation and country.

### 7) Leadership elements important for future?

Strategic vision; NPM, but also ethical, cultural values and soft motivation skills; Diversity element when composing complementary (management) teams; European dimension and multi-cultural skills; Clear agreement with politicians on long-term outcomes and short-term results.

## **How the trends fit with the theory?**

In the regions, where New Public Management was already introduced a while ago (Nordic plus the Netherlands and Anglo-Saxon countries), the reforms focus more on leadership in a way that values, self-reflection and soft motivation skills of managers are being developed. They focus on sustainable change which means: real change of culture and common values, and investing in change process over a longer period of time. They mostly present real concepts of strategic vision and there is a long-term orientation. Nevertheless, the focus on Europeanisation and multi-cultural skills for managers and the diversity in management teams is still lacking.

Also, when looking at the EPSA applications, it can be seen that the nominees and their described cases show the main trends in their represented regions and have gone much further in leadership development than other EU countries. Denmark and the UK have position-based civil service systems and have developed the leadership concept within their public sector. Spain and Portugal are becoming the frontrunners of reforms in the Mediterranean region by changing from a career-based civil service system to a more position-based system. They are increasingly focusing on management for change and stakeholder involvement, self-reflection and learning in the organisation by way of developing leadership skills for top managers. Switzerland is not a member of the European Union and represents a particular system in itself; nevertheless the Swiss public sector systems are currently changing from a more career-oriented towards more position-based civil service. In all the nominated projects the leaders were part of a change process, had own commitment and were willing to change themselves and their ideas in order to achieve the envisioned goal. They worked with the group (of employees and stakeholders) instead of in front of the group.

In other public sector traditions (Continental, Mediterranean and Eastern European) there is more focus on management rather than leadership, which means that they focus more on changing structures or implementation of new tools or new training programmes for staff (not always managers), without having an overall vision and changing organisational culture and fundamental values. There can be a risk that change is not embedded – it is only partial (in an organisation's structures, not in its values). Therefore, in case of a political change or mobility of management or a short-term crisis and reducing of resources, the change process will be easily influenced and cause fallbacks in the reform process.

The majority of the EPSA projects (except nominees) focused on the New Public Management approach, showing that many Member States from Continental, Mediterranean and Eastern European regions are still implementing elements of NPM by managing change in special areas (budget systems, planning systems or competences, HR elements, performance) or organisational structure or quality as such.

Overall, a strong impact of the political component in the public sector has to be emphasised. In public sector leadership there is always a strong connection between administrative and political leaders, and often it creates difficulties in ensuring sustainable and long-term reforms and change. This is because the political and administrative systems are functioning in a way that supports acting on a short-term basis rather than having a strategic long-term vision. The risk is that in times of political and/or economical change, the reform process is stopped or changed to another direction.

A solution for dealing with political issues in the public management could be a clear agreement between politicians and top public managers for long-term development and/or the introduction of a kind of supporting and monitoring institution that could follow up on the sustainability of change over the longer time period. The problem is often, especially in the Eastern European Member States, that leadership and change processes are interrupted by frequent changes of political climate in the country. Therefore a precondition of avoiding political appointments for the positions of administrative leaders should be in place to help create more continuous and sustainable leadership and policy efforts.

On the other side, in most Continental and Mediterranean Member States the reforms are too one-sided and focus only on the effectiveness and efficiency, with little attention paid towards cultural and ethical values and soft (non-financial) motivational skills. Especially, in times of economic downturn and resource scarcity, public organisations cannot spend more money to motivate their staff with financial bonuses; therefore public sector values should be motivation as such. Financial motivation measures work very well for achieving short-term results, but they do not motivate staff to work towards long-term outcomes.

## **Recommendations**

Member States that are still implementing NPM should already be aware of the shortcomings of the NPM approach regarding too much of a one-sided focus on efficiency and effectiveness, and hard skills of management. Whilst introducing NPM they should also introduce a focus on cultural values and soft motivation and diversity skills for managers in human resources. There should be a better balance between the short-term results and long-term sustainable outcomes.

In the profile of leaders there is no European or international perspective, although leaders are the ones who particularly have to think not only outside the organisational borders, but also outside the national borders. In this respect there is still a big gap between the public and private sectors.

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