



Executive summary of the public audit report

IMPLEMENTATION OF SINGLE WINDOW E-SERVICES

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DEFINITIONS

MI refers to the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania

MTC refers to the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania

MND refers to the Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania

ISDC refers to the Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport and Communications

ALAL refers to the Association of Local Authorities of Lithuania

ISPAI refers to the Information System of Public Administration Institutions

SIRIP refers to the State Information Resources Interoperability Platform

RSIS refers to the Registry Services Information System

PASIS refers to the portal of public and administrative services and analytical information system

E-government refers to electronic government

Single window principle refers to the principle, according to which a person may receive information, submit an application, complaint or report and receive feedback at the same workplace. An entity of public administration examining the application, complaint or report and adopts an administrative decision, examines the application, complaint or report and receives information from its administrative units, subordinate entities and, where necessary, from other entities of public administration, without imposing such obligation on the person who has submitted the application, complaint or report¹.

Interoperability refers to the ability of disparate and diverse organisations to interact towards mutually beneficial and agreed common goals, involving the sharing of information and knowledge between the organisations, through the business processes they support, by means of the exchange of data between their respective ICT systems².

Legal interoperability refers to the legislation, according to which exchanged information is subject to legal validity³.

Organisational interoperability refers to coordinated processes, used by individual organisations to achieve a mutually agreed and useful goal⁴.

¹ The Law on Public Administration of the Republic of Lithuania, 17-06-1999, No. VIII-1234, Art. 3, pt. 8.

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions *Towards interoperability for European public services* COM (2010) 744, Annex 2, p. 1.

³ Ibid., p.22.

⁴ Ibid., p.22.

Semantic interoperability refers to the precise meaning of exchanged information understood and preserved throughout exchanges between parties⁵.

Technical interoperability refers to planning of technical issues, resulting from interoperability of computer systems and services⁶.

Composite e-services⁷ refers to the entirety of individual e-services, for the purpose of:

- satisfying the final purpose of the user according to life events or certain area;
- reducing the time of the receiver of services, dedicated for ordering services and communication with the institution providing the services (including the number of communication instances with the institution providing services);
- efficient use of the data submitted and (or) owned by the receiver of services.

Public service refers to social, education, science, culture, sport and other services defined by the law, provided by legal entities controlled by state or municipality institutions. In cases and procedures defined by the law, public services may be provided by other persons as well⁸.

Administrative service refers to activities of an entity of public administration comprising the issue of authorisations, licences or documents confirming particular legal facts, accepting and processing declarations, providing consultations to persons on issues regarding the competencies of the entity of public administration, providing information of the entity of public administration as defined by the law and the implementation of administrative procedures⁹.

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions *Towards interoperability for European public services* COM (2010) 744, Annex 2, p. 22.

⁶ Ibid., p.22.

⁷ The Model for Defining, Categorising and Evaluating E-Services, 2014 (hyperlink <http://www.ivpk.lt/news/1946/158/Elektroniniu-paslaugu-apibrezimo-tipizavimo-ir-vertinimo-modelis> [accessed on 03-10-2014])

⁸ The Law on Public Administration, 17-06-1999, No. VIII-1234, Art. 2, pt. 18.

⁹ Ibid., art. 2, pt. 17.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E-services are one of the methods, which enable the implementation of the single window principle in providing public and administrative services. The goal of the single window principle at state institutions and municipalities is to create conditions for fast, objective and transparent examination of people's applications at state institutions and reduce the administrative burden, caused by the obligation to collect and submit additional information or documents from other departments of the institution examining the application or other institutions.

Strategic planning of e-services in Lithuania has begun in 2002 after the Government approved the concept of e-government¹⁰. Since the beginning of e-government the change of information technology caused changes not only in planning documents and their implementation measures, but also the implementation of rapid development of e-services. The society is increasingly becoming an information society, which spends a lot of time in the digital space. Therefore, the needs to receive electronic public or administrative services increases as well, together with the demands for their quality.

The object of the audit is relevant to the majority of natural and legal persons and all state and municipality institutions. According to the institutional survey carried out in December 2010 by the Ministry of Interior regarding "The implementation of the principle of single window at state and municipality institutions and offices", 86% of the state institutions and only 53% of municipalities have provided descriptions of all of their services, one fourth (25%) of municipalities have provided descriptions of more than half of their services. In 2010 the citizens of Lithuania submitted about three million applications to various public administration institutions. 2 300 000 were submitted to institutions, which provide public and administrative services in application of the principle of single window.

The purpose of the audit is to evaluate the efficiency of the application of the principle of single window by transferring the public and administrative services into the electronic space, by answering the following questions:

- whether the consistent planning and implementation of e-government included identification of all public and administrative services and created preconditions for inter-institutional cooperation in providing related e-services;
- whether the pursue for the interoperability of information resources involves defining effective interoperability requirements and using State Information Resources Interoperability Platform;
- whether the provision of e-services is more efficient, compared to the traditional method;
- whether the developed e-services meet the needs of the users.

During the audit we focused more attention on the assessment of the implementation of single window e-services and analysed the provision of e-services on both state and municipal levels. The audit was conducted at the Ministry of Interior, which develops the state policy in the area of e-government, as well as the Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport and Communications, which coordinates functional interoperability of information resources. The audit includes the period between 2011 and the 2nd quarter of 2014. The analysis of changes involved using data of later periods as well. We gathered information from other subjects too: the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Justice and 15 public institutions. We conducted surveys in all municipalities and analysed the practice of other countries.

The following conclusions and recommendations of the public audit were drawn upon the assessment of the audit findings.

¹⁰ The resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No. 2115, Regarding the Approval of the Position Paper on eGovernment of 31-12-2002 (repealed on 29-05-2009).

CONCLUSIONS

1. There are no conditions for efficient cooperation between institutions in developing e-services, therefore they are not provided under the single window principle:
 - 1.1. the development of complex solutions is not regulated and therefore there is no information on who should coordinate such projects, also their rights and obligations, related to the institutions providing services (subchapter 1.1);
 - 1.2. there is no list of the major life events for grouping related services, planning their development and monitoring, therefore, there are no guidelines for developing related services and connecting the already-developed services (subchapter 1.1).
2. Public and administrative services are not appropriately identified:
 - 2.1. there is no accounting of public and administrative services, therefore the state and the providers of public and administrative services are unable to assess the relevance of these services and monitor, as well as improve their quality (subchapter 1.2);
 - 2.2. the monitoring of all public and administrative services is inconsistent, the monitoring of e-services is carried out by the MI and ISDC. Their functions and responsibility in e-service monitoring are not clearly separated and thus there is no systematic accumulation and analysis of data about service provision indices (subchapter 1.2).
3. The development of the policy of e-government is fragmented, which results in failure to ensure a unified direction of its development, which could ensure continuity of the policy, as well as the implementation of the major obligations:
 - 3.1. The development of e-government policy in Lithuania is inconsistent and does not include all areas of e-government, since the responsible institutions do not always coordinate their related activities (subchapter 1.3);
 - 3.2. E-government development guidelines are not detailed in strategic documentation, because it was not defined in the Public Management Improvement Program and the Lithuanian Information Society Development Program does not define the guidelines of e-government in all areas, while the e-government development activities are carried out by implementing projects on the institutional level (subchapter 1.3).
4. SIRIP provides access to not all of the major state information resource:
 - 4.1. there are no criteria to identify public information resources, which could be accessed through SIRIP, there is no framework for organisational interoperability and ordering procedures and thus there is no information on the scope of data and the number of all of the public information resources required for providing e-services and which should be accessible through SIRIP (subchapter 2.1);
 - 4.2 there is no liability for the public information resource managers that do not ensure the accessibility of the public information resources through SIRIP and thus not all managers and administrators of state information resources provide the data of their information resources in a centralised manner (subchapter 2.1);
 - 4.3. during the audit SIRIP data transfer service was used by 5 institutions, although the demand is much higher, which results in failure to ensure the interoperability of the important state information resources and opportunities to improve the processes of service provision (subchapter 2.1).
5. The interoperability requirements for state information resources are inefficient:
 - 5.1. the Law on Management of State Information Resources defines the basis of legal interoperability, but the legislation required to implement the law have not been yet adopted, which results in failure to implement all of the provisions of the law (subchapter 2.2);

- 5.2. there is no definition of the basis of organisational interoperability, which results in failure to ensure the coordination of processes of individual cooperating institutions, necessary to carry out complex activities (e.g. provide a service) (subchapter 2.2);
- 5.3. the recommendations for data provision formats and standards, necessary to ensure technical interoperability, were approved in 2013. Since the requirements for creating external components are of recommendatory nature, institutions developing information resources may use other (not necessarily recommended) data provision formats and standards, therefore inter-institutional data exchange cannot always be ensured (subchapter 2.2);
- 5.4. SIRIP was established in order to ensure technical interoperability, but not all providers of information resource data have prepared appropriate measures for providing data using web services via SIRIP measures (subchapter 2.2).
6. The provision of e-services is not always more efficient compared to the traditional service:
 - 6.1. institutions developing e-services do not review their internal processes and thus do not make use of the possibility to provide services at a lower cost (subchapter 3.1);
 - 6.2. there is no approved methodology on how to assess the costs of services provided in different ways, and no analysis of these costs is carried out on the national level (subchapter 3.1).
7. E-services do not always meet the needs of the users:
 - 7.1. 70% of the audited services, which had been transferred to the electronic environment, reduced the administrative burden on the users, but the users are not always interested in using e-services and prefer traditional methods (paragraphs 3.2.1 and 3.2.5);
 - 7.2. the majority of e-service websites are not adapted for the disabled, which makes using the already developed e-services more difficult (paragraph 3.2.2);
 - 7.3. there is no method to make a unified evaluation of the demand for e-services at state and municipal administrations and make decisions regarding centralised development of new e-services, which results in developing individual e-services instead of an entire system (paragraph 3.2.3);
 - 7.4. not all state and municipal institutions and agencies survey the users' opinion regarding the appropriate quality of e-services or ask to indicate the reasons for negative evaluations, there are no defined requirements for e-service evaluation, which results in failure to ensure that the e-services are always attractive to their users (paragraph 3.2.4);

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

1. Seeking to create preconditions for cooperation of institutions in developing and providing e-services under the principle of single window, it is necessary to:
 - 1.1. define the development of complex solutions and who should coordinate such projects, also their rights and obligations, related to the institutions providing services (subchapter 1.1);
 - 1.2. include provisions of relating e-services to the major life events and define the deadlines for the implementation of initiatives, when defining the strategic development directions of e-services (conclusion 1.2).
2. In order to ensure consistent monitoring of services, it is necessary to coordinate the functions of monitoring public and administrative e-services of responsible institutions (conclusion 2.2).
3. In order to ensure consistent and unified development of e-service policy, it is necessary to:
 - 3.1. evaluate the distribution of the functions of e-government policy development, making sure that the development is consistent, unified and includes all areas of e-government (conclusion 3.1);
 - 3.2. to define the direction of e-government, which includes all areas of e-government and to define measures to ensure the interoperability of responsible institutions (conclusion 3.2).
4. In order to ensure centralised accessibility of the state information resource data, it is necessary to determine the responsibility of the managers of the state information resources for the inaccessibility of their state information resource data using SIRIP and give authorisation to the SIRIP manager to apply appropriate control measures for the managers of state information resources, who do not ensure the access to the data of their state information resources using SIRIP (conclusion 4.2).
5. In order to ensure the efficiency of the interoperability of the state information resources, considering the deficiencies indicated in the public audit report, it is necessary to improve the regulations of the legal, organisational, semantic and technical interoperability requirements (conclusion 5).
6. Seeking for optimum provision of e-services, it is necessary to define the mechanism to ensure that the process of providing services is reviewed before the services are transferred to the electronic space (conclusion 6.1);
7. In order to improve the quality of the developed and provided e-services, as well as to increase their efficiency, it is necessary to define the mechanism of centralised evaluation of the demand for e-services at state institutions and agencies, as well as quality assessment requirements, which would ensure a unified evaluation of e-services in all state institutions and agencies. It is also important to recommend the application of these requirements at municipal institutions and agencies (conclusions 7.3 and 7.4).

For the Ministry of Interior

8. In order to ensure appropriate inventory and monitoring of public and administrative services, it is necessary to define procedures and measures for monitoring these services, which would ensure the collection and constant renewal of the descriptions of services provided by all public administration institutions and agencies (conclusion 2.1).
9. In order to provide services more efficiently, it is necessary to define methods for evaluating service costs, which would include costs of providing a certain service in both traditional manner or as an e-service, as well as to monitor these indices (conclusion 6.2).

For the Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport and Communications

10. In order to make sure that the data of all relevant state information resources is accessible on the State Information Resources Interoperability Platform, it is necessary to;
 - 10.1. define the criteria to identify the state information resources, the data of which should be available on the SIRIP (conclusion 4.1);
 - 10.2. initiate the provision of relevant state information resource data using SIRIP (conclusions 4.3).
11. Seeking to increase the accessibility to e-services for all users, it is necessary to create sanctions and control measures to ensure that e-services are adapted to the disabled (conclusion 7.2). The recommendation implementation plan is provided in the appendix No. 3.