



## Digital Government Strategies: Good Practices



### Portugal: Citizen's Portal

The OECD Council adopted on 15 July 2014 the Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies. The Recommendation provides a set of 12 principles structured around 3 pillars. The OECD Secretariat is developing a Digital Government Policy Toolkit to support OECD member countries and non-member adhering countries with the implementation of the Recommendation. This practice was submitted by the government of Portugal to be considered as a good practice in the implementation of one or more of the principles contained in the Recommendation.

#### Description of the practice:

<b>Organisation:</b>	Agency for Administrative Modernization (AMA)
<b>Name of the practice:</b>	Citizen's Portal
<b>Principles implemented:</b>	<u>Principle 2</u> – Encourage engagement and participation of public, private and civil society stakeholders in policy making and public service design and delivery  <u>Principle 3</u> – Create a data-driven culture in the public sector
<b>Description:</b>	The Citizen's Portal is the central channel to access and deliver electronic public services in Portugal, facilitating the relationship between citizens, business and public administration. The portal can be defined as the single point of contact for online services provided by public authorities, from both central and local government, and also presents services provided by private entities.

The Citizen's Portal was developed by the Portuguese Agency for Administrative Modernization (AMA), in straight relation with the Portuguese public entities integrated in the Portal. AMA carried out a profound process of functional and technological development of the Citizen Portal, in order to create an efficient, interactive and easy portal to navigate, from a user's point of view.

The first national Citizen's Portal had been originally launched in February 2004 and the Business Portal was created two years later. They both needed functional and technological essential updates in order to answer the demand of online public services of the Portuguese society.



The new Portal was created aligned with the best practices and tendencies, providing information and electronic public services for citizens and businesses in a simpler, clearer and more accessible way.

The new Portal appears with a new layout and refurbished functionalities, aggregating the previous Citizen's Portal and Business' Portal's features and services, bringing together services and information of both portals in a single web point of contact. Access to online services provided by public authorities became simpler, faster, more intuitive and more participative.

Simpler because the new Portal allows users to search the services and information they need with just a single keyword, thanks to a robust search engine immediately available on the Portal's homepage that works like the most popular browsers that the common citizen uses in a daily basis - such as Google, Bing, etc.

The search results point to services and information organized in an easy and simple way to be easily understandable, with practical guides (documents) that explain the steps to carry on the different services and access the information about the related entities.

The new Portal also provides fast access to online public services given the fact that the search results point directly and instantly to the services, in an intuitive way, organized by relevance (automatically defined based on the frequency of the services' use). It also has direct links to the most wanted services immediately available on the homepage.

Simultaneously, the Citizen's Portal is more accessible and is a fundamental part of the national inclusive e-Government approach, being conformant with the WCAG 2.0 AA level and adapted to different kind of mobile devices (e.g. smartphones, tablets, etc.) allowing citizens to access the services with no time and geographical barriers.

It also makes suggestions of search expressions, applies synonyms to search words introduced by the user, and incorporates authentication with the Portuguese Digital Mobile Key ("Chave Móvel Digital") that allows users to log in to the portal with a secure and easy password at any time or place.

The Citizen's Portal is also very intuitive, given the fact that organizes information and services based on themes and life events, and automatically updates and displays in the homepage the list of most wanted services.

The portal presents a high level of participation and collaboration, as it allows users to publically rate, comment and share their suggestions and evaluations about the services and information provided. This can be shared on social networks like Twitter or Facebook, among others. Furthermore, an option that invites users to make a suggestion, a compliment or even a complaint is available in the footnote of the portal.



Currently, the portal offers more than 1,500 online services provided by 578 public and private bodies and entities, such as the online request for certificates; the change of address service; the 'My Street' service for reporting damages in public spaces; or the Online Business creation service, among many other.

The Agency for the Administrative Modernization (AMA) develops policies to modernize and simplify public administration. Created in 2007 within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, AMA is the Portuguese public body which is in charge of public services modernization and administrative and regulatory simplification. The promotion of e-Government and the improvement of public services delivery are some of its main competences.

For the Citizen's Portal's launch, AMA coordinated a multitasking team, with different levels of involvement during the different stages of the project regarding their field areas and time available.

Regarding Human Resources, the project involved around 20 persons from the internal team through several phases, 3 of which were focused on current management of the project. The IT services partner provided a team of 10 resources during the implementation phase.

Representatives of a wide range of public entities were also integrated in the project during definition and test stages, contributing to validate and update their own services.

<http://www.portaldocidadao.pt>

### **Results**

Due to the recent release of the Portal, there are not yet consolidated numbers and results to share, but the first impressions are very positive and reinforce the strategy of simplification adopted.

The first set of data from the visits to the website shows an increase of participation, and the feedback is more focused on the quality of the experience, related specially to the very different presentation of the services, and the easier system of search, very similar to the search engines on the Web.

Since the first days of launching the portal, the feedback is very positive, and the possibility to classify the utility of the services reveals to be very useful for the performance management, facilitating the continuous improvement of the portal, more close to the actual needs of the users.

Since the launch of the new Portal, in the 12th of March, the number of visits to the Citizen Portal is above 1 million. The large majority of visits originated in Portugal, but there is also a significant amount of users from Spain, Brazil and Germany.

The first numbers from the accesses to the new portal replicate the same structure related to countries of origin, and the main topic of search is related to the Citizen Shops, Lines of support and Commercial register.



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### Development

#### **Design:** May 2014

A broad diagnosis of the existing situation was the first step assumed by the project team, so that the problems and needs could be identified. It started with a deep analysis of the information and knowledge sources from the existing platform - databases and documents, usage statistics, existing satisfaction questionnaires - so that a good understanding of the operation and running model of the portal could be achieved.

The future model of the portal was based on the development of a wide benchmark of global, national and local trends, without neglecting previous experiences and existing knowledge. Best practices and case studies were identified, documented and transversally analyzed, and several informal workshops took place.

A draft of layout, the type of technologies and components to be adopted, among others, were delivered and presented.

Representatives of a wide range of public entities were also integrated in the project during definition and test stages, contributing to validate and update their own services.

#### **Testing:** December 2014

Although tests were handled during all the implementation phase, a final stage dedicated to that kind of task was a fundamental part of this kind of project. In this sense, the final solution was transversally and specifically tested.

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#### **Implementation:** March 2015

The implementation's phase was dedicated to develop and implement the previously agreed definitions, using updated technologies and solutions that can be delivered to the reformulated application model.

Based on the approved roadmap and the roll out and versioning scope, the functional and architectural model started to be implemented. Several teams were involved in this phase of the project.



Having in mind that a Citizen's Portal is a contact point to services from all public bodies, the effort of uploading was intense. Dedicated teams from AMA were assigned to that task, side by side with a strong and effective relationship with contact points in hundreds of public bodies. New contents had to be produced, updated and adapted to the new formats of the portal, involving also massive efforts.

Resources: Regarding Human Resources, the project involved around 20 persons from the internal team through several phases, 3 of which were focused on current management of the project. The IT services partner provided a team of 10 resources during the implementation phase.

**Diffusion and scaling:** June 2015

- The Citizen's Portal integrates web portals from different Portuguese public entities and is prepared to seamlessly integrate more. In addition, it was designed to allow its replication and connection to other technological platforms and portals, both nationally and internationally, taking interoperability as a major principle.
- Also, the Citizen's Portal has potential to bring benefits to other countries and contexts, as it presents a simple and user-friendly structure, and collaboration features, responding to one of the main challenges Public Administrations face nowadays: engaging the society to participate and interact with the Public Administration.
- The Portal's information and services are also available in English and Spanish, which is a facilitator for best-practices sharing, as well as the referred replication or connection to other portals at an international level.
- Finally, the creation of such national portal, involving the whole Public Administration, contributed for the improvement of processes underlying the public services and the communication between public entities. Within AMA itself, it gave place to the reassessment of procedures, resulting in improvements of communication flows with other entities, and internally between the teams involved.

**Partnerships:** None

### Lessons learned

The implementation of the new citizen Portal was a considerable challenge, as teams from several areas of expertise and from several public bodies were involved;

The team and stakeholders' mobilization was very important to the successful integration and development of two portals with such a wide range of services;

The relevance and innovation of the project justified a strong investment in time and resources to accomplish the task of implementing a better, faster and more user-friendly Citizen's Portal.



## **Digital government toolkit**



Conditions required: Commitment of the team; Commitment of the stakeholders involved

Additional information: