OECD Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Policy

One-Stop Shops for Citizens and Business

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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Please cite this publication as:
OECD (2020), *One-Stop Shops for Citizens and Business*, OECD Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Policy, OECD Publishing, Paris, *https://doi.org/10.1787/b0b0924e-en*.

ISBN 978-92-64-35709-9 (print)
ISBN 978-92-64-49759-7 (pdf)
ISBN 978-92-64-93480-1 (HTML)
ISBN 978-92-64-89347-4 (epub)

OECD Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Policy
ISSN 2311-6005 (print)
ISSN 2311-6013 (online)

Revised version, June 2020
Details of revisions available at: *https://www.oecd.org/about/publishing/Corrigendum-BPPs-OSS.pdf*

Photo credits: Cover @ Julia Sudnitskaya/Shutterstock.com.

Corrigenda to publications may be found on line at: *www.oecd.org/about/publishing/corrigenda.htm*.

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Foreword

This report is part of a series of “best practice principles” produced under the auspices of the OECD Regulatory Policy Committee.

The OECD Regulatory Policy Committee is at the forefront of building international consensus on matters of regulatory policy. Recently, the Committee has identified the importance of providing assistance to member and non-member countries seeking to improve their “regulatory delivery”.

Regulatory delivery commences after a law is passed, and ought to be viewed as a continuum rather than a single, static action. As a complement to the *2012 Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance*, the OECD has provided policy guidance on regulatory delivery in the areas of inspections and enforcement, both in terms of overarching principles and via a practical toolkit. Building on this and related research, this report is intended to assist policymakers in designing, implementing, and reviewing one-stop shops. One-stop shops allow countries to improve regulatory delivery to citizens and business while also reducing government resource requirements. The principles set out in this report provide a framework for supporting one-stop shops, irrespective of their stage of development.

This document was approved by the Regulatory Policy Committee at its 21st Session on 6 November 2019 and prepared for publication by the OECD Secretariat.

Acknowledgements

The report was produced by the OECD Public Governance Directorate (GOV) under the leadership of Marcos Bonturi, Director, and Nick Malyshev, Head of the Regulatory Policy Division of GOV. It was managed and drafted by Paul Davidson as part of the Measuring Regulatory Performance Programme headed by Christiane Arndt-Bascle, within the Regulatory Policy Division.

Manuel Gerardo Flores Romero and Adriana Garcia were responsible for completing the Mexican *Tu Empresa* case study. Benjamin Gerloff was responsible for liaison and drafting of the German *Informationsportal für Arbeitgeber* case study. Giovanni Borraccia assisted in the drafting of the *ePortugal* case study. Background research was provided by Boris Jaros. The report was prepared for publication by Jennifer Stein.

The OECD Secretariat extends its thanks to guidance provided by João Vasconcelos and Benjamin Welby of the Digital Government and Open Data section of the Reform of the Public Sector Division, within the Public Governance Directorate. In particular in providing input into the survey questionnaire and for very useful feedback on the draft report. The report further benefited from comments by Christiane Arndt-Bascle, Daniel Trnka, and Nick Malyshev, as well as by members of the OECD Regulatory Policy Committee. The Secretariat extends thanks in the preparation of the Annex on cross-border services in the European Union to Vesa Vanhanen, DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs – Digitalisation of the Single Market, Belgium.

The Secretariat pays particular thanks to all of the government officials involved in the case studies. The report has greatly benefited from the comprehensive responses to an initial survey, which was supplemented by open and frank discussions that have helped to highlight challenges and various solutions to practical issues in establishing, implementing, and reviewing one-stop shops. These are Wai Fai Lee, Candace Marzano and Pierre Pharand of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Wendy Birkinshaw Malo, Cheryl Meek, Kate Lalumiere, and James McKenzie of Employment and Social Development Canada; Harald Flex, ITSG GmbH, Germany; Monika Wittstock, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany; Ola Grønning and Live Heltberg of the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, Norway; Cláudia Gonçalves Barroso, Ana Cláudia Pereira, André Lapa, Jorge Sousa and Liliana Onofre of the Administrative Modernization Agency, Portugal; Farah Hussain, Nick Kalisperas and Jessica McEvoy of the Government Digital Service, United Kingdom; Niall Boyle and Heather Woodward of the Office for Product Safety and Standards, part of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, United Kingdom.

The Secretariat thanks both the Government of Canada and the Government of Norway for providing funding to undertake the project.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AMA	Administrative Modernization Agency (Portugal)
API	Application Programming Interface
BizPaL	Business Permit and Licence Information (Canada)
BRC	Brønnøysund Register Centre
DMK	Digital Mobile Key (Portugal)
ELMER	Easier and More Efficient Reporting Project (Norway)
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
GDS	Government Digital Service (United Kingdom)
iAP	Interoperability Platform for the Public Administration (Portugal)
ICT	Information and communication technology
ISED	Innovation Science and Economic Development (Canada)
LBRO	Local Better Regulation Office (United Kingdom)
MADI	MyAlberta Digital ID (Canada)
NBO	National BizPaL Office
OSS	One-stop shop
SCM	Standard Cost Model
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise

Executive summary

The phrase “one-stop shop” has an immediate political attraction. It sounds like a way to sweep away unnecessary paperwork and create a streamlined and easy-to-use interface between government and citizens or business. Indeed, one-stop shops can be a very effective way to communicate regulatory requirements more clearly. However, achieving this goal requires upfront and ongoing investment, as well as a change in government mind-set about the way in which regulations affect everyday life.

Delivering services well is a critical facet of the regulatory environment. The passage of a law or regulation is just the beginning of a process. Laws do not serve the community when they are poorly delivered. Being required to provide the same information to different government agencies is an unnecessary burden that distracts citizens from engaging in other activities. The poor delivery of regulations can result in potential businesses not being created, and put unnecessary strains on those that exist. In particular, small and medium-sized enterprises acutely feel the brunt of poor delivery – they often operate on thin profit margins and the resulting increased costs may force some to cease operating.

One frequent lament by both citizens and business is the difficulty of accessing relevant information on administrative procedures. The report helps to demonstrate that citizens and business do not – and, more importantly, should not – have to be experts in the operations of government to complete necessary administrative tasks such as passport applications or tax returns. One important conclusion from the report is that separate government agencies need to work together to ensure that administrative procedures are established in a way that best serves users, which may not necessarily be the way in which governments internally operate.

When done well, one-stop shops can provide “win-win” outcomes for governments and clients by improving both service and compliance with regulations. Citizens and business can more easily locate forms, supply information once for multiple purposes, and do business more easily. Governments can receive better quality information in the first instance, and improved compliance rates that reduces the amount of resources needed for enforcement.

There is no universal one-stop shop model for all circumstances. While governments have invested more and more in improving digital services, there is still a need for more traditional one-stop shops. Government needs to communicate in ways that are of most use to citizens and business.

The report provides real-world insights into the difficulties in designing and operating one-stop shops across a range of OECD member countries. At the same time, the principles have been devised in part around well-established tenets of sound public governance. The principles thus reflect good public policy as well as the actual experiences of various one-stop shops.

One-stop shops should form part of broader administrative simplification strategies. They are a critical component of regulatory delivery and can help maximise the potential gains of regulatory reduction programmes. One-stop shops should be user-centred and based on life events. In this way, they can help bring government closer to citizens and business in the least burdensome way possible.

The Best Practice Principles for One-Stop Shops cover 10 areas:

1. Political commitment – one-stop shops need continual support from the top in order to flourish.
2. Leadership – managers need to be openly committed to a culture of experimentation. Mistakes will be made, but it is most important that these form the basis of improved service delivery in the future.
3. Legal framework – the early identification of legal barriers to establishing and potentially expanding one-stop shops are crucial to avoid rollout delays.
4. Co-operation and co-ordination – the extent to which government agencies can (and are permitted to) work together to better serve citizens and business is a critical component of one-stop shops.
5. Role clarity – establishing one-stop shops with a clear objective is central to managing both internal and external expectations.
6. Governance – the overarching arrangements are important, particularly for one-stop shops across various levels of government, but should not drive the design of one-stop shops from an operational perspective.
7. Public consultation – Citizen and business clients are an important source of information about what may or may not work and may also offer solutions to identified problems.
8. Communication and technological considerations – the standard industry communication means should emulated wherever possible. Interoperability opportunities should also be identified early in the design of one-stop shops.
9. Human capital – at the heart of a well-functioning one-stop shop are its people. Like any other part of the organisation, they require investment. They also have valuable insights on the day-to-day operations.
10. Monitoring and evaluation – it is important to assess whether one-stop shops continue to meet clients' needs, as these may change over time. Gathering views from citizens and business can help establish what is working well and what can be improved, and foster a culture of continuous improvement in one-stop shop staff.

1 Background and context

This document is the latest in a series of reports produced under the auspices of the OECD Regulatory Policy Committee. As with other "best practice principles" reports, it provides an elaboration of the principles enunciated in the *2012 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance*.

The principles in this document are intended to be of relevance and applicability to all OECD member and partner countries. As such, they offer general guidance rather than providing a prescriptive set or list to follow. Some of them are intentionally ambitious and it is unlikely that few if any countries would consistently meet them all. However, all the principles are based on and supported by the actual experiences of different countries, so they should not be viewed as unrealistic or unattainable.

Background

Business and citizen interactions with governments are becoming increasingly complex. This is simply reflective of economic realities as businesses, citizens and governments become more interconnected, both domestically and internationally. However, governments can unnecessarily hamper growth opportunities where the interface with businesses and citizens is delinked or cumbersome. In an attempt to address this issue, governments have introduced one-stop shops as a means of reducing transaction costs.

Economic prosperity is closely linked to the development of a pro-business environment. Making life easier for existing firms and facilitating the entry of new ones into the marketplace promotes competitiveness and growth. While regulations governing businesses' operation are important, their implementation can sometimes turn into a difficult and costly process, thereby discouraging entrepreneurial activity. Citizen interaction with governments is often at times of heightened stress throughout their lives. For example, citizens generally need to interact with government authorities when they move to a new geographical area, buy a house, or experience a family loss. It is therefore important that the interfaces between citizens and governments are as stress-free as possible. The *OECD 2012 Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance* (OECD, 2012[1]) states that countries should "Review the means by which citizens and businesses are required to interact with government to satisfy regulatory requirements and reduce transaction costs" and that governments should "[e]mploy the opportunities of information technology and one-stop shops for licences, permits, and other procedural requirements to make service delivery more streamlined and user-focused".

The Secretariat is grateful to the Government of Canada, which has provided initial funding to conduct several case studies as part of creating a set of best practice principles for the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of one-stop shops. The Secretariat also thanks the Government of Norway for providing funding to extend this work and in doing so, helping to enrich the design of the best practice principles.

The following countries and one-stop shops were selected as the case studies:

- *Canada.* Created in 2005, **Service Canada** serves as a single point of access to citizens for many government services, delivering some of the Government's largest and most well-known programmes and services such as Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan. **BizPaL** was launched in 2005 as a pilot project with a lead group of participating governments. It enables Canadian businesses to easily identify which permits and licences are required from all levels of government and how to obtain them in order to start and grow a business.
- *Germany.* The **Informationsportal für Arbeitgeber** was established in 2017 as part of a strategy to reduce bureaucracy. It provides employers, including SMEs, which are hiring new employees for the first time, with information on their social security rights and obligations.
- *Mexico.* **Tu Empresa** was launched in 2009 and aimed at facilitating the procedures for the constitution and operation of businesses. It provides information on the procedures for opening, operating, and closing a business in Mexico. As part of the National Digital Strategy in 2015, the website formed part of the GOB.MX platform, and since March 2016 its role has expanded to include the authorisation of Corporate Names and Company deeds for certain types of companies.
- *Norway.* **Altinn** is the Norwegian Point of Single Contact responsible for implementing the European Union Services Directive. The Points of Single Contact are e-government portals that allow service providers to get the information they need and complete administrative procedures online. It provides information about the business lifecycle, from establishment to winding up. Altinn is a fully-fledged one-stop shop where businesses can access information regarding formal requirements, funding, and reporting requirements to government entities, and complete applications or reporting online.
- *Portugal.* **ePortugal.gov.pt** is the starting point for over 1 000 essential government services, providing information, guidance and services for citizens and businesses, as well as detailed guidance for professionals and specific groups such as employees, migrants and others and information on government and policy. Organised on a life events approach, the services offered are provided by 590 entities, from both the central government (17 ministries), local government and private entities.
- *United Kingdom.* The **GOV.UK** website is the start place for 152 essential government services. As the website for the UK government, GOV.UK has a very broad scope including many policy areas relating to both citizens and businesses. The UK **Primary Authority** provides legally assured advice that is tailored to businesses' specific needs to give them a better understanding of what they need to do to comply with the law. Advice is provided by local authority regulators, in discussion with the business, or representatives of relevant trade associations or franchises.

Three of the one-stop shops – Altinn, ePortugal, and GOV.UK – are each country's designated Points of Single Contact for the purposes of the European Union Services Directive. They were designed to assist in establishing new businesses in other EU countries, and as part of that, provide for the rules and formalities that apply, as well as to allow for the completion of administrative procedures. More information relating to the Services Directive and related matters are provided in an annex to this report.

After receiving the completed surveys, the Secretariat commenced a series of interviews with government officials in order to better understand particular nuances in the various one-stop shops examined. The survey responses combined with the interviews formed the basis for the case studies and the examples throughout the report.

Introduction

The starting point was to recall the raison d'être of one-stop shops. The literature indicates that there are four potential interrelated reasons for the establishment of one-stop shops:

1. Enhanced co-ordination across and within levels of government
2. Holistic user-friendly, and user-orientated service
3. Integrated multi-policy service delivery
4. As a possible mechanism for joined-up government services (Askim et al., 2011[2])

In addition to the above, one-stop shops are often established in part as a means to reduce both regulatory and administrative burdens. These are rationales as to why governments might introduce one-stop shops to adapt and improve the provision of public services. From an economic perspective, the main rationale for introducing one-stop shops is to improve overall economic welfare, via reduced transaction costs. Transaction costs tend to be disproportionately greater for SMEs, and thus negatively affect competition and societal welfare. Separately, there are costs associated with unstructured, difficult to navigate government services for citizens. These difficulties provide a justification for improving the provision of various government services where appropriate.

The first point to note is that one-stop shops are extremely diverse. They can operate in seemingly quite discrete policy areas or geographical locations for instance; and at the same time there are one-stop shops with more than 10 000 staff responsible for delivering a whole suite of government services. There are additional differences in terms of scope, purpose, and communication tools used by various one-stop shops. The design, operation and improvement of these vastly different models pose a number of unique challenges for governments, as well as for clients, that is, the users of the services. The principles below recognise these often vast differences and should therefore be viewed more as offering general advice to countries rather than anything prescriptive. It also needs to be recalled that the relative importance of particular principles may well change over time. Thus the principles attempt to cover issues associated with the main stages of one-stop shops through their establishment, operation, and continual improvement.

A one-stop shop brings together a range of information requirements in a physical and/or virtual location. Physical one-stop shops can deliver several public services under the same roof. Governments implement a network of offices where citizens and businesses can carry out a number of transactions with the administration. This is the case for example in Hungary where all available services are listed in a government decree (Government of Hungary, 2019[3]). One-stop shop offices can be created at new or existing government facilities, or utilising the network of offices of other public entities.

Some countries have implemented informational one-stop shops that may also provide advice and guidance to carry out various transactions with the administration, but usually the objective of physical one-stop shops is the delivery of public services. Two basic models exist:

- *Individual services* – Different government entities are present at the one-stop shop providing their own services. Normally each entity has its own separate counter where its officials and public servants deliver the services.
- *Integrated services* – The provision of services tend be based on a single life event (e.g. "having a child", "starting a business", etc.), so that a single official can resolve all the transactions with the citizen or the business in a holistic manner.

The main model of online one-stop shops are based on providing either individual or integrated services (or both), based on user needs. They generally tend to be central "umbrella" portals across all government, although more specialised ones can exist in concert with other individually focussed one-stop shops. Usually there is an amount of central management and oversight which ensures that service delivery

transitions seamlessly for users (that is, websites have a similar look and feel), depending on the services required. These types of one-stop shops are the most comprehensive in terms of services offered.

The scope of services is not limited to central governments' procedures – one-stop shop offices can provide services from regional and local governments. The configuration of the offices and the services provided does not necessarily have to be homogeneous across the country, and therefore each office might be adapted to the local demand, the availability of resources and the collaboration with other entities at the local level.

One-stop shops generally provide information and/or serve as a transaction centre:

- Information gateways disseminate information across a physical counter and/or through an online website on the formalities required to deal with the public administration.
- Single authorities or single windows allow users to carry out transactions with the public administration and apply for different services. Users generally do not have to interact with different agencies, as the single window acts as a third-party that provides the services that users require. This model could be physical, with the creation of a network of offices where businesses and users can deal with the administration, virtual, where a unified website provides e-Government services, or a combination of the two.

One-stop shops can be general or specialised in nature. General one-stop shops handle the procedures of a whole domain (e.g. services for businesses), whereas specialised one-stop shops deal with a particular set of procedures (e.g. business start-up). These services can potentially co-exist.

The experiences of virtual one-stop shops in different countries have been diverse and adapted to the structure of the government, the legal framework, the existing ICT infrastructure and other specific characteristics of the country. There are two basic models for the internet one-stop shop:

- Informational websites offering information about the different procedures to be carried out, to comply with the administration's regulations. Additionally, users can interact with the administration in getting answers to their questions, download paper-based forms, and follow links to specific agency websites where they can complete regulatory procedures online. With this model, information can be pooled from different agencies by a central organisation, or a distribution model can be created, in which the different government entities can include information in the system.
- Transactional websites where users can complete procedures online, dealing with several government agencies in a seamless process. Depending on the level of sophistication of the interactions between the IT systems of the agencies involved, several types of solutions can be implemented (Box 1.1).

Box 1.1. Types of virtual transactional websites

Virtual, transaction-based one-stop shops can have the following underpinning features:

- *Interconnectivity between e-Government websites* – The one-stop shop service receives information relating to the citizen or business and then redirects the user to different agency websites passing on the received information, so data common to several procedures (general information) is required only once. In some cases, user interfaces can be designed following a set of predefined principles, having a common look and feel, in a way that the users do not realise that they are visiting different agency websites.
- *Interoperability between e-Government services.* The one-stop shop integrates the systems of the different agencies involved in the process. The user only needs to use the one-stop shop web application, and this application communicates with other government agencies to perform the necessary transactions. Typically, an interoperability model is usually implemented across different agencies, creating common processes, and implementing standard technical infrastructure.
- *Unified application models.* A more sophisticated approach taken by some countries has been to create a standard model and infrastructure for e-Government services for the different government agencies to use. A government agency creates a set of e Government services, web applications and the technical infrastructure that support these services and applications, and then publishes the specifications, so that other agencies can implement services on this platform following a defined model. In some cases, mechanisms exist to share data, and there can be common databases with standard data about citizens or businesses.
- *Decentralised application models.* These have aspects of unified application models in terms of the existence of a central model and associated infrastructure for other agencies to use. However they go beyond this by decentralising responsibility for service delivery. This is usually done through providing a common publishing platform for informational content (that is, one website, multiple authors), whilst allowing for customised service delivery comprising one single entry point with organisation-specific responsibility for service delivery. They also adopt a common design language and brand to inform the design of page level service interactions, coupled with the availability of reusable tools and services for dealing with particular parts of users' journeys (e.g. identity, payments, messaging, hosting, appointment booking, performance publishing). Finally, they have a data infrastructure that provides for application programming interfaces (APIs) for retrieving information and/or validating inputs that may or may not include an interoperability platform.

The principles that follow are based on a literature review and input from other international organisations. They have also benefited from work undertaken across the OECD including through reviews of regulatory policy and digital government. A number of the principles are closely related to each other. This reflects the fact that the principles attempt to cover the inception, design, operation, and review of one-stop shops. As a result, the overarching principles are referred to throughout the document, and a number of the specific principles are themselves linked.

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Government of Hungary (2019), *Government Decree about the government offices in the capital and the county, and the district offices in the capital 86/2019 (IV 23)*, https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A1900086.KOR. [3]

OECD (2012), *Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/governance/regulatory-policy/49990817.pdf. [1]

2 Best practice principles

The principles reflect common areas identified as important during the case studies, coupled with work previously undertaken by the OECD and others relating to one-stop shops. They have been informed by material from academia, a range of government sources, and from feedback received from country delegates to the OECD Regulatory Policy Committee. In particular, the report has benefited from work undertaken in informing and emanating from the *2014 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies* for the design, delivery, and operation of government to maximise the impact of digital, data, and technology with the purpose of improving citizens' and businesses' access to services (OECD, 2014[1]).

The principles are by their very nature broad in application. This is to ensure that the salient features of one-stop shops have been appropriately captured. Furthermore, the Secretariat has been conscious to, wherever possible, elucidate the principles with practical information and examples from the case studies and from related sources. Viewed in this way, the principles should be seen more as advice and guidance rather than a prescriptive list to follow. In particular, the Secretariat is very grateful for the frank and open discussions it had with the selected case study participants. This provided many insights into the challenges and difficulties experienced in establishing, operating, and reviewing one-stop shops. It also gave the opportunity to present key insights and learnings that the staff and management in these one-stop shops have had over the years. It is hoped that future users of this document find these additions useful as a more practical means of expanding on the principles.

Overarching principles

There are two overarching principles for one-stop shops, they should:

- form part of broader administrative simplification strategies
- be user-centred and based on life events

Administrative simplification strategies have historically centred on the quantification of regulatory burdens to business through the Standard Cost Model (SCM). Since then the SCM has been extended to assess regulatory burdens faced by citizens (Hurk, 2008[2]). These models measure the value of administrative costs of regulations and both the strengths and weaknesses of these models are relatively well-known (OECD, 2003[3]) (OECD, 2010[4]). Administrative simplification is a seemingly attractive way for politicians to appear in touch with their communities, through, for example, a "red tape reducing" or "business friendly" approach. One-stop shops have been announced as part of this overall strategy in a number of countries. However, it is important to bear in mind that one-stop shops have limits. They cannot, for instance, "fix" redundant, unnecessary, or poorly understood or enforced laws.

Although one-stop shops are important for the reasons discussed previously, they only represent one part of the regulatory landscape. One-stop shops should be used as a means to improve service delivery, reduce transaction costs, and improve societal welfare, but they are merely one part of reducing administrative burdens more broadly. Administrative burdens refer to regulatory costs in the form of asking for permits, filling out forms, and reporting and notification requirements for the government (OECD,

2006[5]). Of course, administrative simplification is itself only one tool that can be employed to improve regulatory management, and boost regulatory quality (OECD, 2002[6]). Seen in this light, while one-stop shops have the potential to improve regulatory environments, they do not offer a single solution but are part of an overall network. The creation of a number of the one-stop shops included as case studies in this document illustrate that they were part of broader government strategies aimed at improving the broader regulatory environment (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. Establishment of one-stop shops as part of broader regulatory reform efforts

Information portal for employers (Germany)

The establishment of the information portal for employers (*Informationsportal Arbeitgeber*) was part of a longer-term effort to digitalise and simplify notification requirements for employers to social insurance organisations. In December 2014, the federal government officially adopted the one-stop shop as part of its wider government strategy of administrative simplification and the reduction of compliance costs for businesses. With the "Key Issues Paper to Further Reduce Burdens for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises", the Federal Cabinet adopted a wide range of measures with the goal to reduce bureaucracy and red-tape. In addition to the introduction of the information portal, these measures included, for instance, the further development of one-stop shops for the creation of businesses ("Single Point of Contact 2.0"). The portal was legally established in 2016 through an amendment of Volume IV of the German Code of Social Law (*Sechstes Gesetz zur Änderung des Vierten Buches Sozialgesetzbuch und anderer Gesetze*).

Primary Authority (United Kingdom)

The establishment of Primary Authority occurred at a time when the UK Government was focussed on administrative simplification, along with several other contemporaneous regulatory reform programmes. A review that initiated the Government's drive was known as The Hampton Report. Among other things, it highlighted a number of problems with local authority regulatory services including inconsistency in local authorities' application of national standards. As a result of the Government's acceptance of the report's recommendations, the Local Better Regulation Office was created from which the Primary Authority emerged as part of an overall approach to reduce administrative burdens across the UK.

Source: Information portal for employers' responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, Primary Authority responses to OECD OSS survey.

Given that one-stop shops are focussed on service delivery it almost goes without saying that they should be user-centred. From the reason for their introduction in the first place, through to performance evaluations – users must be at the heart of one-stop shops. A number of the first one-stop shops were based on collecting licence and permit information as a means of reducing search costs for (usually prospective) businesses. Whilst search costs were reduced, they were not reduced as much as they could have been (OECD, 2003[3]) (OECD, 2010[4]). Over time, one-stop shops have become a means of breaking down government silos and presenting information in formats that are of greater benefit to users. Such one-stop shops are classified as being based on "life events" for citizens and as part of businesses' lifecycles. Viewed in this way, one-stop shops should aim to provide an end-to-end experience across various transactions channels (e.g. the ability to commence a process via phone, continue it via the internet, and finalise it in person). These one-stop shops collect information in a way that is more logical and useful for users, although it may (certainly initially) impose higher costs on governments in establishing them. Critically, it does not require users to understand the inner workings of government to be able to complete required transactions. Some common life event one-stop shops are: the creation, expansion,

and closure of businesses; permitting and licencing information from multiple levels of government for one specific geographic area; birth, death, and marriage; and purchasing real property.

All of the specific principles that follow should be read as being subject to these two overarching principles.

Specific principles

The best practice principles are summarised in Box 2.2 and are expanded on in the following sections.

Box 2.2. Summary of the best practice principles of citizen and business one-stop shops

Overarching principles

- One-stop shops should form part of broader administrative simplification strategies
- One-stop shops should be user-centred and based on life events

Specific principles

Political commitment

- Ensure strong and long-term political support
- Establish continuous communication between the political and administrative levels on one-stop shop development, implementation, and improvement

Leadership

- Managers need to be committed to the objectives of the one-stop shop and have the ability to be flexible if goals change
- Make realistic plans
- Ensure that good project management practices are followed
- Ensure that one-stop shops have appropriate staffing and resources

Legal framework

- Make necessary adjustments to the legal framework to ensure the co-operation with other agencies and so that one-stop shops can maximise their potential net benefit to society

Co-operation and co-ordination

- Entities responsible for planning one-stop shops need to have strong communication and feedback channels with those responsible for implementation
- Focus on building strong relationships and permanent communication channels between all the participating agencies and other stakeholders

Role clarity

- Set clear objectives and expectations for what one-stop shops can achieve
- Focus the design and structure of one-stop shops on user needs and requirements, relying on focus groups, surveys, and pilots to identify potential users' needs and expectations

Governance

- Design a governance structure for one-stop shops where all agencies participate at an executive level and high-level political commitment can be obtained
- Develop governance mechanisms that allow operative decisions to be taken by a single organism leading a one-stop shop

Public consultation

- Undertake public consultation to ascertain whether one-stop shops are the best solution from the users' perspective
- Plan and execute a pilot phase to test the services before they go live, ensuring that they meet users' expectations
- Follow a phased approach for the implementation of one-stop shops, ensuring that lessons from one phase are taken into consideration for the implementation of following phases

Communication and technological considerations

- Utilise communication methods that will be of most benefit to users whilst also taking into account potential accessibility issues
- Where information and/or assistance is provided via multiple channels, customise content so as to best assist users

Human capital

- Allocate sufficient resources to change management, and design tailor-made programmes for training one-stop shop staff
- Focus training not only on technical competences, but also on interpersonal and social skills

Monitoring and evaluation

- Establish quantitative and qualitative indicators and evaluation methods to test the success and quality of the service provided to users
- Implement continuous improvement processes
- Ensure that significant changes to one-stop shops are subject to both appropriate impact assessment and public consultation processes prior to their commencement.

Political commitment

- ***Ensure strong and long-term political support***
- ***Establish continuous communication between the political and administrative levels on one-stop shop development, implementation, and improvement***

Related principle: leadership

Political commitment is an important ingredient for all public policy. In the regulatory policy context, "Political commitment to regulatory reform has been unanimously highlighted by country reviews as one of the main factors supporting an explicit policy on regulatory quality" (OECD, 2012[7]). Similarly, previous research indicates that political commitment is one of the most critical factors to ensuring the success of one-stop shops. It has been noted that a permanent communication channel with high political levels is necessary so as to provide progress updates, as well as to get assistance to overcome any problems or difficulties that arise (OECD, 2013[8]).

For business one-stop shops, they tend to be politically quite attractive as they are often focussed on small businesses, which as a collective can be a difficult community to contact given their dispersion. While this fact helps to ensure political buy-in, business one-stop shops also represent an important conduit. Ministerial reassignments were highlighted as a particular communication challenge, breaking the understanding built up between the user community and politicians. This in turn may delay needed changes to the one-stop shop (e.g. to infrastructure and so on) as new ministers familiarise themselves with the portfolio.

Research indicates that political will in the form of both upfront and ongoing commitment are needed for the survival and growth of one-stop shops (United Nations, 2005[9]). The case studies indicate that in order to maintain political support a staged implementation approach can be useful (Box 2.3).

Box 2.3. Securing upfront and ongoing political commitment: the case of GOV.UK

GOV.UK was part of the government's "Digital Strategy". GOV.UK replaced the two main government digital brands "Directgov" and "Business Link" as a single domain for government in 2012, thus enabling access to all departments', agencies' and arm's length bodies' digital information and transactional services to citizens and businesses, using one web address.

GOV.UK was implemented through three separate phases of Alpha, Beta, and Live, via the creation of the Government Digital Service (GDS), which is the entity responsible for delivering content to users. During the summer of 2010, the main government website at the time, Directgov, was reviewed. A letter with the key findings was sent to the Minister for the Cabinet Office. As well as highlighting areas for improvement, it also helped to secure the necessary political buy-in for the creation of GDS.

- Alpha – The 12-week launch of the alpha version of GOV.UK helped to build greater political buy-in for the recommendations of the review. During this time, the position of Executive Director for Digital was announced as part of the Cabinet Office, taking on a co-ordinating role for digital service delivery across the UK. Being at the centre of government provided strong political support for the further development of GOV.UK.

- Beta – A bespoke position was created to assist the team in strategic thinking, and in particular, how GDS would be explained to ministers. After demonstrating the success of the pilot, funding of GBP 10 m was secured and announced by the Minister for the Cabinet Office as part of the Identity Assurance programme (which would later become Verify).
- Live – On 17 October 2012 GOV.UK went live, replacing Directgov and becoming the central UK government portal. Communication channels have remained strong throughout, with the Minister for Implementation recently visiting staff, as well as releasing the UK Government Technology Innovation Strategy in June 2019, building on work by the GDS.

Source: (Fox, 2010[10]), (GOV.UK, 2010[11]), (GOV.UK, 2011[12]), (GOV.UK, 2012[13]), (GOV.UK, 2013[14]), (GOV.UK, 2018[15]), (Government Digital Service, 2019[16]).

The timing of political commitment is important. Appropriate planning is central to ensuring that political input supports the development of one-stop shops. Instances have existed where political decisions have been made to create one-stop shops without due regard to establishment issues. This has meant that processes were rushed in the development of one-stop shops, and that problems arose during design, which were then passed onto users. Realistic design and implementation plans have resolved this as an issue in the creation of a number of one-stop shops (Box 2.4).

Box 2.4. Implementing a one-stop shop through a step-by-step approach: the case of the German "information portal for employers"

The "information portal for employers" was established through an iterative approach including consecutive project phases and involving relevant political actors and stakeholders. The process was initiated in 2011 by the Federal Cabinet that commissioned the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to examine the extent to which the existing reporting channels between employers and social insurance institutions could be simplified and optimised. In the first phase of the project that led to the identification of the information portal as a possible solution, a baseline scenario was created. This provided an overview of the main business procedures, technical mechanisms and reporting obligations involved. With the support of the Federal Statistical Office, the compliance costs incurred by the investigated procedures were determined. Following the creation of the baseline scenario, areas for improvement were identified and assessed through a feasibility study.

In the second phase of the project, a prototype of the information portal was created, which formed the basis for the actual development of the one-stop shop. The prototype was specifically designed for the relevant reporting procedures that were identified in the previous phase of the project. The design of the prototype was partially based on a similar platform from the Irish Health and Safety Authority (http://besmart.ie/).

After the Federal Cabinet decided in 2014 to establish the one-stop shop, the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs specified the organisational and technical requirements for the information portal in a description of the required functionalities. This description served as a blueprint for the subsequent development of the portal.

Source: (Informationstechnische Servicestelle der Gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung GmbH (ITSG), n.d.[17]), (Informationstechnische Servicestelle der Gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung GmbH (ITSG), 2014[18]), Information portal for employers' responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Leadership

- ***Managers need to be committed to the objectives of the one-stop shop and have the ability to be flexible if goals change***
- ***Make realistic plans***
- ***Ensure that good project management practices are followed***
- ***Ensure that one-stop shops have appropriate staffing and resources***

The objectives of establishing one-stop shops were covered previously (see introduction section). Broadly, the main goal tends to be to both improve access and lower the costs of government service delivery. However, meeting this objective is not necessarily explained in much detail when one-stop shops are established. This should not necessarily be viewed as a negative, as one-stop shops have better ability to adapt to changing user needs if they themselves have some degree of autonomy in delivery methods. That said, the case studies highlighted that the overall direction is set by the attitude of management and that they are key to embracing changes over time (Box 2.5).

Box 2.5. Flexible management attitudes are critical to the success of one-stop shops

BizPaL (Canada)

The Canadian one-stop shop BizPaL was established in 2005 as a pilot project with a lead group of participating governments of two provinces and one territory. It enables Canadian businesses to readily identify which permits and licences are required as well as how to obtain them in order to start and grow a business. BizPaL provides information to users about regulatory requirements at all levels of government.

The National BizPaL Office (NBO) is responsible for managing the centralised governance structure, providing expertise and development for BizPaL federal content, and design/development of the BizPaL website.

As part of a series of evaluation reports, provincial and territorial government interviewees considered that the NBO staff had “done a good job in leading the partnership, co-ordinating activities and seeking consensus on issues.” This was despite the recognition that the role had become more difficult as the number of partners had grown over time.

The NBO had developed an information quality management framework in 2012, in recognition of the fact that content management is one of the biggest challenges faced by BizPaL. It is a challenge because the approximately 15 000 permits and licences on the database – and in particular updating their content – is the responsibility of the various partner provincial, territorial, and municipal governments. BizPaL management are leading ongoing work to ensure that clients are provided with accessible, locatable, accurate, complete and concise information.

GOV.UK

From the very beginning GOV.UK has adopted an agile management approach to the design and delivery of its services. It began with a review of the main government website at that time, Directgov, which called for a “revolution, not evolution” in a recommendation letter written to the Minister for the Cabinet Office. Since that time, staffing decisions, the development and testing of ideas, and seeking, receiving, and incorporating feedback into proposals have all been undertaken within a management environment that has embraced experimentation. During its development, a number of ideas did not work but this has not deterred the team – instead they learnt from these difficulties and iterated until a solution was found that would benefit users.

Source: (Fox, 2010[10]), (GOV.UK, 2010[11]), (GOV.UK, 2011[12]), (Government of Canada, 2011[19]), (Government of Canada, 2015[20]).

It is necessary for one-stop shop management to carry out realistic planning, establishing clear and practical objectives for each phase, and assigning adequate timing for each task. It is important to consider critical paths and bottlenecks, so that special attention can be given to the tasks carried out by agencies with limited resources or less involved in the one-stop shop. Problems have arisen where plans have been overly ambitious as they can negatively affect service delivery (Box 2.6).

Box 2.6. Initial rollout targets need to be appropriately set

In 2007 BizPaL expected to be available in a majority of Canadian municipalities by 2011 (around 1 825 municipalities). However an evaluation of BizPaL in 2011 found that the current take-up rate represented less than 20% of all municipalities. Even in 2019 there are less than 1 100 municipalities currently involved.

Perhaps a more appropriate indicator could have been based on BizPaL coverage, which in 2011 was just over half of the Canadian population. By mid-2019, BizPaL was available to about 80% of the population.

Source: (OECD, 2009[21]), (Government of Canada, 2011[19]), (Government of Canada, 2019[22]).

While planning is important, it is also recognised that plans may change. This is especially the case for one-stop shops. One clear observation from the case studies is that growth has been organic rather than necessarily anticipated or designed. Whilst this should be recognised as a positive for the demands of the service, it can also bring challenges.

As is the case in government more broadly, managers are ultimately responsible for securing funding, and one-stop shops are no different. Where the service provision and/or delivery is in the nature of a public good, the associated costs would be expected to be funded through more traditional fiscal means. For multi-agency one-stop shops a variety of funding models could exist where for instance, there is an allocated annual budget which is then supplemented from the participating agencies (Box 2.7). For business one-stop shops, there may be a rationale for recovering costs associated with service delivery. This can however bring its own challenges (Box 2.8).

Box 2.7. Financing arrangements in selected one-stop shops

Altinn (Norway)

The Norwegian one-stop shop solution Altinn fulfils the most sophisticated one-stop shop model. It is a common web portal for transactions and information, but it is also a platform where governmental agencies can develop and run their services.

The service owners have developed about 1 000 forms and services on the Altinn platform. Citizens and companies find these services in the forms overview on altinn.no.

The Norwegian one-stop shop Altinn is a common web portal for transactions and information, but it is also a platform where governmental agencies can develop and run their services.

The annual expenditures for management costs and basic maintenance costs of Altinn are funded by specifically allocated amounts in the annual government budget on a multiyear basis.

Funding of development costs are applied for on an annual basis, by a separate application to the respective ministry. If approved, the funds are included in the government budget for the succeeding year. The platform is developed according to the needs of the end users and service owners, and it is

possible for the service owners to fund concrete development projects on the platform as long as the functionally is in accordance with the general strategy.

Operating costs are covered by the government entities that are service owners in Altinn. The service owners pay their share of the annual operating costs based on how many transactions their services generate on the platform.

BizPaL (Canada)

Each partner government at the federal, provincial and territorial levels financially contribute to BizPaL based on population shares of their respective jurisdiction.

A new technological approach that was adopted substantially reduced operating costs. While this was obviously welcome news for participants, because of the particular account arrangements, this meant that surplus funds could not be easily redistributed to other areas. In part this was also because of the fact that while consensus decision-making is one of BizPaL's strengths, in this case it was highlighted as a weakness as agreement was required by all parties about how and where to distribute the additional funds. BizPaL resolved this difficulty through an agreement to change its governing structure which has enabled it to improve regional BizPaL services in the provinces/territories, and also at the municipal level. One aspect learnt from this process was that if there had been a bit more foresight by the parties then the surplus funds would could have been allocated or saved sooner.

Information portal for employers (Germany)

With the establishment of the one-stop shop, the provision and operation of the information portal was enshrined in German social security legislation and defined as a joint task of the involved social insurance institutions. It was legally established that the finance investment and operating costs would be jointly met by these organisations. This was enshrined in the relevant chapter of the German Social Security Code to permanently allocate the financial contributions by the various partner organisations.

For the actual management and maintenance of the one-stop shop, a steering committee comprised of representatives from the involved organisations was established. The committee decides annually on the budget plan and the service portfolio of the portal.

Source: Altinn responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, BizPaL responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, Information portal for employers' responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

The case studies have highlighted that financial constraints are especially acute at the municipal level. Yet it is also clear that they are responsible for developing a significant proportion of overall rules and regulations, as well as often being left in charge to implement national government regulations. Whilst finding solutions to this funding gap is important in the one-stop shop context, due care must be given to avoid creating additional unnecessary localised levels of taxation. Besides, the issue is usually broader than a revenue deficit. There are also problems for example with the local capacity of officials to communicate with entities about various regulatory requirements. Where problems tend to be common rather than localised, this does offer opportunities to reduce some of the difficulties municipalities face. For instance, municipalities offering similar services can gain by co-operating on developing transaction solutions, and sharing development solutions. For example, while the ePortugal portal infrastructure largely relies on a central uniform basis country-wide, synergies among different levels of government do allow for some room for manoeuvre for local government administration (municipalities) to implement customised solutions (e.g. unique forms or special customised taxes). The staff at ePortugal also offer some basic assistance to municipalities to get them to utilise the portal for their services.

Box 2.8. Introducing cost recovery to one-stop shops: experience of the Primary Authority

The UK Primary Authority provides assured regulatory advice to businesses. The advice is relevant to businesses, and anyone trading in the UK. Primary Authority advice is available in the following areas: environmental health, trading standards, and fire safety specifically relating to licensing, petrol storage certification, and explosives licensing.

Businesses pay local authorities, fire services, and national regulators, on a cost-recovery basis, for the provision of Primary Authority services. This is designed to protect front-line services and to provide advice to businesses at a reasonable cost.

The cost-recovery funding model was an initial challenge for some local authorities. This was particularly the case in Wales where it was not commonplace for local authorities to charge users directly for their services. As a result, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (the entity responsible for the administration of the Primary Authority) conducted extensive outreach programmes to assist local authorities understand how they can best structure such regimes, and explained to affected businesses what the benefits of the scheme were, thereby helping to overcome any difficulties with the introduction of a cost recovery model.

Source: Primary Authority responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

In addition to the overall funding envelope, managers are also responsible for its distribution, allocating it to the various aspects of one-stop shops. Depending on the particular financing arrangements for one-stop shops this may include investments into capital and operational expenses. Expenses will differ and primarily relate to the type of one-stop shop. For example, physical one-stop shops will have expenses associated with the purchase or lease of buildings and the training of frontline staff. Online one-stop shops tend to have more capital expenses associated with the technology mix or design. Management also need to allocate appropriate funds to gathering user feedback and input to future design changes, and training of staff (see sections below).

Legal framework

- ***Make necessary adjustments to the legal framework to ensure the co-operation with other agencies and so that one-stop shops can maximise their potential net benefit to society***

Related principles: Co-operation and co-ordination; role clarity

The legal framework is integral in both facilitating and constraining the potential scope of one-stop shops. There are legal considerations that affect the potential establishment of one-stop shops, and those that affect its potential operations. In terms of establishment issues, these may relate to issues such as constitutional questions, e.g. division of powers between various levels of governments. Operational legal issues could relate to administrative arrangements within governments, such as the extent to which data can be shared (and for what purposes). In both cases it is important to identify potential barriers early and ascertain whether they can be changed and if not, how that might affect the feasibility of one-stop shops (Box 2.9).

Box 2.9. Identifying legal barriers early in the design/development process: the case of the German "information portal for employers"

In the early stages of the project that led to the establishment of the "information portal for employers", a feasibility study was conducted. The purpose of the study was to collect suggestions for the simplification of the existing procedures from stakeholders and experts and assess these suggestions according to a fixed set of criteria. Besides a focus on the reduction of compliance costs, the assessment also took into account potential legal implications such as on information security and data protection.

One of the findings from the assessment was that for legal reasons, technical questions on individual cases cannot be dealt with conclusively on the website of the information portal, but still had to be processed by the individual organisations. As a result, a disclaimer was added to the website that makes users aware of the fact that the information of the portal only provides guidance and cannot replace a proper legal assessment of individual social insurance cases.

Source: (Informationstechnische Servicestelle der Gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung GmbH (ITSG), 2013[23]), Information portal for employers' responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

One potential source of constraint is the historical traditions and path dependencies of the machinery of government (Askim et al., 2011[24]). The design of one-stop shops may challenge the "way things are done" within governments, especially where one-stop shops are based on life events that inevitably cross agency boundaries. This raises a number of related issues about solving such difficulties through the use of joint decision making bodies, resource allocation, and the like. The case studies highlight that the creation of a framework to foster co-operation between agencies in the implementation of one-stop shops is a critical success factor. The framework should clearly state the roles and responsibilities for the government agencies involved in the one-stop shop design and operation (Box 2.10).

Box 2.10. One-stop shop legal frameworks with various partner agencies: the case of Service Canada

Service Canada was created in 2005 and is a single point of access for many of the Government of Canada's largest and most well-known programmes and services, for example, the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and Employment Insurance.

Partnerships between Service Canada and other government departments or levels of government are managed through agreements which set out the framework for the partnership, including roles and responsibilities, privacy considerations, cost-recovery, and more. The partner maintains responsibility for the programme/overall and Service Canada takes on the responsibility for the delivery to Canadians (e.g., Service Canada delivers passport services in Canada on behalf of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada). Agreements are not legally binding between federal institutions, but instead act as an understanding between the organisations.

Source: Service Canada responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

The design of one-stop shops might cause governments to consider how their current policies may hinder one-stop shops from reaching their potential. The case studies illustrate a strong outward commitment to the "only once" principle of communicating information to governments. However, information sharing and privacy arrangements may not be fit for purpose where one-stop shops are based on a multi-agency model which may by design necessitate more open communication and decision-making. In the case of digital one-stop shops additional issues are raised such as electronic data submission, data exchange, electronic signature systems, information sharing, and potential delegation of responsibility (United Nations, 2005[9]). By way of example, the UK Government Digital Strategy put in place a process for the Cabinet Office to work with departments with the objective of removing legislative barriers (Box 2.11).

Box 2.11. Removal of legislative barriers in the GOV.UK context

The UK published its Government Digital Strategy in November 2012, which, among other things sought to "remove legislative barriers which unnecessarily prevent the development of straightforward and convenient digital services". The strategy lead to a series of actions with the Cabinet Office responsible for working with departments to achieve the removal of remaining legislative barriers. Individual departments publicly reported their progress with some conducting reviews of the stock of regulations. The process also had an effect on organisational culture within departments, for example the Department of Energy and Climate Change stated that "when drafting new legislation, policymakers will work with digital service delivery as a consideration from the outset, in order to minimise incidents of unnecessary obstructive legislation in the future".

Public progress reports were released that detailed how and where departments had changed laws to ensure they were not hindering the potential development of digital solutions. The reports highlighted that by delivering services digitally, expected savings were in the range of GBP 1.7 to GBP 1.8 billion per year.

Source: (UK Government, 2012[25]), (UK Government, 2013[26]), (UK Government, 2013[27]).

Proper safeguards and mechanisms should be put in place to protect users' privacy and store and protect user data appropriately, irrespective of the form that the one-stop shop takes. Consequently, countries have created formal requirements, including legislation, to protect citizens across: data collection, data storage, data sharing, data processing and, data opening, release and publication. In order to address

issues relevant to privacy and consent, some governments established data rights for businesses and citizens. Namely, they provide access to:

- which data government organisations hold about them
- which public organisations have the right to access their data
- which public organisations have made use of their data and for what purposes
- which public organisations have made an enquiry about their data
- the right to provide (personal) data only one time to the government
- the right to consent or refuse permission for data they provide to one public institution to be shared with and reused by others (OECD, 2019[28]).

In the case of the United Kingdom and Canada, they have consistently done so for both citizens and businesses. They have established practical mechanisms by which citizens and businesses can exercise the right to know which data government organisations hold about them. This is handled through Freedom of Information legislation in the United Kingdom and, under the Privacy Act and Access to Information Act in Canada.

In Portugal, it is possible for citizens and businesses to query data and in some specific cases, to consent and refuse permission for the citizen or business data they provide to a given public sector organisation to be shared with and reused by other public sector organisations (OECD, 2019[28]).

In the specific context of the case studies, the Tax Administration as part of the one-stop shop Altinn developed tax returns for employees and pensioners. Forms were pre-filled with information from the Population Register, employers, and banks – so that a number of citizens were only required to click “sign and submit” and the form was complete. Legislation was changed in 2008 to go to the next step – the requirement for signing and submission was no longer needed unless there had been changes. Now around 70% of employees and pensioners use the so-called “silent acceptance” mechanism.

Flexible legal frameworks offer opportunities for the sharing of experiences and help to create a community of one-stop shop practices. A number of other shared experiences have been highlighted in the case studies (Box 2.12).

Box 2.12. Opportunities for sharing experiences and creating a “community of one-stop shops”

BizPaL (Canada)

The National BizPaL Office (NBO) is responsible for managing the centralised governance structure of the BizPaL website. It established relationships with federal departments that were outside of those relating to BizPaL itself. For instance, Agriculture and Agri Food Canada had approached the NBO for advice and lessons learned on the creation of BizPaL as they embarked on the creation of a similar tool called AgPaL.

Primary Authority

Frequent events are run by the Office for Product Safety and Standards (the administrators of the scheme) with a wide invitation to users of Primary Authority, in which feedback is sought. It is a mechanism that gives officials a quick feedback loop, to ensure accountability, to keep providers and users up to date on new opportunities, and to share best practice.

Source: (Government of Canada, 2011[19]), Primary Authority responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Co-operation and co-ordination

- ***Entities responsible for planning one-stop shops need to have strong communication and feedback channels with those responsible for implementation***
- ***Focus on building strong relationships and permanent communication channels between all the participating agencies and other stakeholders***

Related principles: Leadership; governance

A central aspect of one-stop shops from the client perspective is about seamless government, particularly where one-stop shops cut across government portfolios and/or various levels of government. From the client's point of view, government co-operation and co-ordination occurs behind the scenes – their primary concern is whether they can easily and quickly receive accurate advice and guidance to complete regulatory requirements. From the government standpoint however, co-operation and co-ordination represent key risks to the design and operation of one-stop shops.

Considering the government agencies involved is a necessary part of establishing one-stop shops. For instance, whether a one-stop shop is to be designed around user-centric approaches such as life events e.g. buying a house, starting a business etc; whether the one-stop shop could be designed with joined-up government services in mind; or whether there are elements of overlap between the two. At this stage it is also critical for governments to view "what they do" as end-to-end delivery of an amalgam of individual government services. This necessitates consideration of how different government agencies will co-ordinate their actions and co-operate with other agencies, both those involved and not involved in the one-stop shop. Some potential solutions highlighted from the case studies include joint management and decision-making processes to ensure that individual agencies have sufficient "buy-in", and at the same time also helping to provide clear lines of accountability (Box 2.13).

Box 2.13. Selected decision-making models in one-stop shops

BizPaL (Canada)

The BizPaL steering committee is the main decision making body, providing strategic direction, and ensuring that business objectives and jurisdictional initiatives align. Each jurisdiction at the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal levels are entitled to one seat on the committee. Members represent their respective jurisdictional views and provide a broader national perspective to guide the governance of BizPaL in horizontal issues to support effective and seamless service delivery. The committee develops policies, procedures, guidelines and other documentation it deems necessary for the successful operation of BizPaL.

Altinn (Norway)

The Brønnøysund Register Centre (BRC) has been responsible for the management, operation and further development of Altinn, on behalf of the co-operating agencies and the municipalities, since May 2004. Nevertheless, the co-operation – and the organisational interoperability – has been central to the whole process.

The Director General of the BRC is responsible for the final strategic decisions, supported by the Altinn Guidance Council which is made up of nine government bodies. In turn the Council is supported by an Executive Committee comprising lower level representatives and was established as a preparatory body for the Council. This is integrated with the operational side of Altinn. The BRC's Digitalisation Department is responsible for the day to-day administration of Altinn and information management. Two technical working groups relating to service management and technical architecture provide input on the service delivery and future development arms of the Altinn platform, respectively.

Source: Altinn responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, (Government of Canada, 2015[20]).

Examples exist of formal collaboration between various parties. For example, recent changes to the German Social Code effectively created an administrative one-stop for the various agencies involved relating to disabled persons. It meant that a single application was sufficient to commence the required examination and decision procedure, whilst allowing the various actors – the welfare office, the integration office, the pension insurance, the Federal Employment Agency, the accident and long-term care insurance – to remain responsible for the provision of different benefits and services (Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) Neuntes Buch (IX), n.d.[29]).

Of course governments can themselves create much more informal networks bringing together potentially relevant agencies so as to assist users. For instance, the Taking Care of Business initiative in Ireland provides an opportunity for businesses to meet with State Agencies and Offices to learn what assistance is available to them. The 2018 meeting saw more than 25 State bodies participate to provide information to SMEs, start-ups, and entrepreneurs (Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, 2019[30]).

One important observation is that all the stakeholders involved in the implementation or the management of a one-stop shop should be periodically informed about the project objectives, the planning and evolution of the project and the results achieved. This is especially important for officials and public servants involved in organisational changes. It requires open lines of communication and feedback to managers from staff "on the ground" who are responsible for the day-to-day operations.

Box 2.14. Government co-ordination: the case of the Primary Authority (UK)

Businesses and local authorities are required to apply for their partnerships using an IT system provided and managed by the administrators of the Primary Authority. After the partnership is established, the local authority and business manage the relationship themselves. They are encouraged to agree on methods of communication prior to establishing the partnership. All advice that is provided to businesses by a primary authority must be published online, via the Primary Authority Register.

The primary authority partnership – which is usually between a business and a local authority – is responsible for giving advice and guidance to the partner business in relation to the relevant function(s) – environmental health, trading standards, and fire safety specifically relating to licensing, petrol storage certification, and explosives licensing – and is also responsible for giving advice and guidance to other local authorities about how they should exercise the relevant function(s) in relation to that business or organisation.

Source: Primary Authority responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

It may be the case in practice that different levels of government have to co-ordinate tasks at the same territorial level and under the same leadership in one-stop shop arrangements in municipalities in order to best function (Christensen, T., Fimreite, A. L., and P. Lægreid, 2007[31]). Interestingly, this appears to be the case where there are not necessarily unique characteristics across geographical areas. While tailored advice can be and is provided, responsibilities that are located at lower levels of government can often provide benefits to users in the consistency of their advice that they provide as businesses often operate across geographical boundaries (Box 2.14).There are also practical considerations regarding co-operation between agencies. For instance, whether it is possible to establish that new relationships could be based on a common understanding about how to realise a one-stop shop's main goals; and/or to what extent potential structural and cultural problems could be identified early in the design, and how they could potentially be overcome (Box 2.15). Designers must pay due regard and attention to the fact that whole of government – and as a subset, one-stop shop – systems are long-term projects that take significant time to implement (Christensen, T. and P. Lægreid (eds), 2006[32]) (Pollitt, C. and G. Bouckaert, 2004[33]). Acquiring new skills, adopting a new organisational culture, and building mutual trust between agencies all require a degree of patience (Christensen, T., Fimreite, A. L., and P. Lægreid, 2007[31]). Several of the case study one-stop shops have existed for some time now, and over time, the roles and responsibilities for some of these have expanded.

Box 2.15. Establishment of technical solutions to avoid burdensome co-ordination procedures

Information portal for employers (Germany)

In the case of the German information portal for employers, the responsibilities for running and maintaining the one-stop shop are split among multiple organisations. The technical operation of the web portal itself was commissioned to an existing company under the umbrella of the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds. The employees responsible for the portal consist of technical experts for the operation and maintenance of the IT infrastructure. At the same time, the involved social insurance institutions remained responsible for providing and updating the actual content of the website.

An essential requirement was that the portal and its content could be created and updated by social security experts independently without any programming skills. For this purpose, a programme was created that automatically converted the content into the format required for the website. Thus, the maintenance and control of the content of the portal can be carried out without any intervention of the staff that are responsible for maintaining the IT infrastructure. This helps to reduce the effort to maintain the portal and ensures a rapid implementation in practice.

GOV.UK

As the central entry point for UK government services, GOV.UK is used as the publishing platform with thousands of editors across the UK civil service, which is centrally managed by the Government Digital Service team. Individual services accessed through it are delivered by teams within different departments, agencies and organisations. They work on the basis of a toolkit of resources covering matters such as: assurance, procurement, design systems, and technical solutions that offer shortcuts to teams to deliver services without duplicating effort. They do this whilst remaining consistent to quality and user experience of a single, coherent government.

Source: Information portal for employers' responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, (GOV.UK, n.d.[34]), (GOV.UK, n.d.[35]).

More generally, it is important that strong communication channels exist between management and the staff responsible for designing and operating one-stop shops. Not only does this help to build a shared sense of ownership and goals to be achieved. It is also important for the early communication of unexpected difficulties from staff to management around technical issues; and also a tops-down perspective from management regarding funding surety or changes to operations such as potential shifts in strategic direction or expansion or retraction of scope. Whilst it is important for management to be responsible for the strategic directions set, the case studies highlight that this needs to be informed by operational level staff. They can provide important insights into the operations of a one-stop shop, and for instance highlight areas where users are facing unusual difficulties which may require more investment in order to find better solutions. This also helps to build a shared sense of ownership of a one-stop shop and has been identified as a central factor to their success.

Role clarity

- ***Set clear objectives and expectations for what one-stop shops can achieve***
- ***Focus the design and structure of one-stop shops on user needs and requirements, relying on focus groups, surveys, and pilots to identify potential users' needs and expectations***

Related principle: monitoring and evaluation

One-stop shops need to have clear objectives in place prior to their establishment. This helps to ensure that users' expectations are appropriately set – and subsequently are met. It also helps to provide an important accountability mechanism when it comes to reviewing the performance of one-stop shops.

Objectives can be established through a variety of means such as operating manuals and guides, or more formally through legislation (Box 2.16). What is important is that the objectives are made publicly available.

Box 2.16. Clearly enunciated objectives of one-stop shops

The Primary Authority was created at a time when the UK Government was focussed on administrative simplification, along with several other contemporaneous regulatory reform programmes. The review that initiated the Government's drive was known as The Hampton Report. Among other things, it highlighted a number of problems with local authority regulatory services, including: inconsistency in local authorities' application of national standards; difficulties arising from the lack of effective priority-setting from the centre; and difficulties in central and local co-ordination.

As a result of the Government's acceptance of the report's recommendations, the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) was created. The impact assessment associated with creating the Primary Authority noted that the scope of the LBRO was to be expanded to specifically deal with the problems identified in the report above. To that end, the statutory objectives of the LBRO were to include:

- more consistency for businesses operating across multiple local authorities through the creation of a statutory Primary Authority Partnership scheme
- enforcement of regulation by local authorities in a way that is consistent with the Principles of Better Regulation through guidance and programme spend
- improved and more strategic policy setting by government for the enforcement of regulations by local government

The clear articulation of the Primary Authority's objectives has helped users to better understand its specific role. It will also help in trying to establish what the scheme is worth to British taxpayers, potentially through the work of the newly created intelligence unit within the Office of Product Safety and Standards.

Source: (HM Treasury UK, 2005[36]), (Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform, 2008[37]), Primary Authority responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

There are various models of one-stop shops and these need to be considered from the outset. For example, one-stop shops have been designed as first ports of call, providing information and sending users elsewhere for more detailed information; single locations where various services are delivered; or providing more comprehensive and combined services (Kubiceck, H. and M. Hagen, 2000[38]). That said, the final design should reflect users' needs and be based on end-to-end service provision as much as possible (Box 2.17). This helps to ensure a clear understanding between one-stop shop owners and their clients, in terms of what can – and what cannot – be delivered. Difficulties have arisen where users' needs were not adequately considered. For example, Industry Canada management recognised this failure and suggested that service levels would have been higher if a "better environmental scan and research on client needs [had] been done at the outset to determine if BizPaL should [have been] linked more directly to other online tools targeted to SMEs" (Government of Canada, 2011[19]).

Box 2.17. Ensuring a user-oriented design of one-stop shops

Information portal for employers (Germany)

The German "information portal for employers" assists employers and entrepreneurs to identify registration and notification requirements to social insurance organisations. Specifically, the portal should help those who have little prior experience with social security issues or who are hiring employees for the first time. The one-stop shop was therefore established with a clearly defined target group and a relatively narrow range of services in mind. The design of the portal was thus oriented towards the needs of this specific target group. The user-oriented design of the communication interface is considered as a key element of the success of the online portal. The language and the content of the portal were specifically designed to be accessible for users without prior experience with social security issues and online services. Further, the design of the portal ensures that targeted answers to user requests can be provided.

ePortugal

For the development of the portal, several design-thinking and user research activities were undertaken, leading to the creation of personas, tests and user experience-led development cycles. These activities involved end-users (citizens and/or businesspeople).

As one of many examples, the personas were actually "incorporated" by citizens and/or businesspeople that participated in the design thinking sessions, explaining their constraints with the old version of the Citizen Portal and other sectorial portals, and further proposing their ideas on what the Portal should be, among other.

There were user testing activities with other public entities, end-users, businesspeople were also consulted during the design and implementation phases. These parties mainly influenced general design decisions or functional details that emerged from usability testing.

Source: Information portal for employers' responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, ePortugal responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

A range of user research approaches can be adopted to elicit and better understand the expectations including focus groups, surveys and the like, as well as via more in-depth approaches. These should be coupled with piloting to ensure that expectations have been met (Box 2.18). These should be undertaken to help inform the objective and design of one-stop shops, and separately, should form part of more general ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Box 2.18. Understanding user needs to inform the design of one-stop shops: the case of Altinn

In 2000, an interdisciplinary reference group on electronic reporting initiated the ELMER (Easier and More Efficient Reporting) Project as a collaboration project between the Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise and the Federation of Norwegian Commercial and Service Enterprises.

The Project followed six enterprises for one year in order to map out their reporting duties, and test simple solutions for electronic reporting based on familiar technology. Among other things, the ELMER Project presented an example for design of a complex web form. First and foremost, the example demonstrated that the use of simple internet technology opens up new pedagogical opportunities which may make reporting to governmental authorities a lot easier. The ELMER Project went on to become the initial basis for Altinn when it was subsequently launched in 2003.

Source: Altinn responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Differences in one-stop shop design have important flow-on considerations. For instance informational-based one-stop shops may pay little attention to accessibility issues relating to forms or to methods of payment for regulatory requirements. That said, this does depend on the relationship between government agencies with the information and those responsible for its delivery. The case studies highlight these differences where for instance, Service Canada is responsible for the delivery of a broad range of social services in addition to delivering services on behalf of other levels of government in partnership with the various responsible organisations; whereas GOV.UK itself is responsible for a very small amount of overall service delivery, but this is for “high traffic” content which represents a significant proportion of overall users. However, it is also the single entry point through which all central government services are provided. The provision of services via GOV.UK are done so on the basis of the tooling and resources designed and provided by the Government Digital Service as the lead organisation across the government.

The specific remit of one-stop shops is important to consider. For instance, whether a one-stop shop is to have narrow or broad policy coverage, and the depth of information available to clients (Askim et al., 2011[24]). One-stop shops with a narrower reach could be those that cover one or a low number of policy areas. By contrast, one-stop shops with a broader remit cover multiple policy areas. Further, one-stop shops can provide clients with relatively more or less assistance in completing regulatory requirements. One-stop shops that are designed to provide relatively less assistance to clients tend to focus on information provision, whereby clients are directed to information that is located elsewhere. An example could be a landing internet page that provides weblinks to additional information sources on different websites. By contrast, one-stop shops that are established to provide relatively more assistance to clients are ones that tend to provide information but also offer advice and specific guidance on an individual basis. One interesting observation has been that a number of one-stop shops separately service both citizens and business “under the one roof”, even though their administrative formalities for those clients are vastly different (Box 2.19).

Box 2.19. Case study examples of combined business and citizen one-stop shops

Altinn (Norway)

The one-stop shop solution Altinn fulfils the most sophisticated one-stop shop model. It is a common web portal for transactions and information, but it is also a platform where governmental agencies can develop and run their services.

The service owners have developed about 1 000 forms and services on the Altinn platform. Citizens and companies find these services in the forms overview on the website. The users, that is both businesses and citizens, can both submit forms and receive messages from the public agencies in their Altinn inbox, i.e. a digital dialogue.

Altinn has paid especially close attention to collaboration between the various agencies, with joint reporting and feedback adapted to the user's business processes, cutting across formal organisational boundaries between government agencies and administrative levels. This has provided opportunities to disseminate practices across governments and to discuss experiences which can potentially be integrated into other parts of the government.

GOV.UK

GOV.UK is the starting point for 152 essential government services and includes many policy areas such as taxation, transport, and the welfare sector. It provides information, guidance and services for citizens and businesses, as well as detailed guidance for professionals, and information on government and policy.

An early operating principle was to not make a distinction between "business" and "citizen" needs, as at different times an individual will be one or the other. It was considered that individuals should not have to understand how government structures itself in order to accomplish their goals. Rather, the important issue was structuring content so each audience understood through context what was useful to them.

Source: Altinn responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, GOV.UK responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Governance

- ***Design a governance structure for one-stop shops where all agencies participate at an executive level and high-level political commitment can be obtained***
- ***Develop governance mechanisms that allow operative decisions to be taken by a single organism leading a one-stop shop***

Related principle: leadership

Irrespective of whether one-stop shops offer relatively less or a vast range of assistance to clients, governance issues need to be considered by designers. They vary depending on the type of one-stop shop structure. For instance, the governance issues that arise under a model with relatively few agencies at the same level of government are likely to be less complex than those relating to one-stop shops that involve a large number of agencies. However research suggests that organisational issues are often more difficult to resolve than technical ones, the most difficult of which is to transform the traditional departmental view into a more collaborative environment with shared goals (OECD, 2013[8]).

A further consideration is the level of government involved. There is a potential trade-off between the central government need for standardisation and subnational government's need for local adaptation and flexibility (Askim et al., 2011[24]). In some countries where responsibilities are devolved or shared with subnational governments, there may be additional considerations around the type of appropriate legal model that best facilitates the smooth operation of one-stop shops (Askim et al., 2011[24]) (Sullivan, H. and C. Skelcher, 2002[39]). For example, there is no formal governance structure between GOV.UK and the UK devolved administrations, who each have a certain level of autonomy to digitise their local service provision. This has for instance allowed users to be directed to the devolved administrations where content substantially differs from that of GOV.UK, as well as presenting specific information in Welsh. At the municipal level, the Local Government Declaration is illustrative of local authorities voluntarily embracing the broader cultural change in service delivery espoused by GOV.UK (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018[40]).

An example from the case studies is the governance model adopted by the Canadian one-stop shop BizPaL (Box 2.20). Flexibility and discretion at the devolved levels appear to be important ingredients to allow for the delivery of tailored services. This was certainly the case for BizPaL where the partners involved noted that the model had given them sufficient flexibility for them to tailor their approach to their own local requirements, whilst also providing opportunities "for all three levels of government to gain a greater appreciation of each other's operating environments and challenges" (Government of Canada, 2011[19]). On the other hand, consistency of advice was a central reason for the establishment of the Primary Authority in the United Kingdom.

Box 2.20. Illustrative example of a one-stop shop governance model

BizPaL is jointly managed by a partnership involving governments at the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal levels. This multi-jurisdictional partnership operates under a shared governance and costing model, outlined through the Intergovernmental Letter of Agreement.

Innovation Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada provides leadership for the initiative on behalf of the Government of Canada. ISED is the steward of the BizPaL service and houses the National BizPaL Office (NBO).

The NBO is responsible for managing the centralised governance structure, providing expertise and development for BizPaL federal content, and design/development of the website. The BizPaL content is integrated into each of the respective provincial, territorial, and municipality partner's websites.

The BizPaL Steering Committee is the main governing body responsible for decision-making. The SC members represent their respective jurisdictions (ISED, Federal Departments, Territories/Provinces, Municipalities), and provide a broader national perspective to guide governance of the BizPaL service and horizontal issues through a whole-of-government and consensus-based approach.

The multijurisdictional partnership is supported through a specific account to which annual contributions are made by each partner. Activities to be carried out by the partnership are articulated in the budget which is approved by the committee. The cost model agreed upon is based on population and covers the costs of system hosting, maintenance and activities related to the centralised function of the BizPaL service.

Past reviews had found problems with the governance structure, including:

- pressures emanating from the partnership's growth that have implications for the ongoing funding model
- a narrow access to strategic advice and less than optimal structural relationships that hamper the effectiveness of BizPaL's governance processes
- linkages between segments of the support areas within the NBO have been blurred as a result of organisational and staffing changes

A range of recommendations were made to improve the governance of BizPaL and future reviews noted that the BizPaL model has worked well. Its success was attributed "to the commitment and collaborative efforts of the partners involved". It was also acknowledged that NBO staff had led the partnership well, by co-ordinating activities and seeking to build consensus on issues. Some provincial and territorial interviewees commented that BizPaL "has been the best example of federal/provincial/territorial co-operation they have ever been associated with and have suggested the adoption of the BizPaL approach to other federal/provincial/territorial initiatives."

Source: (Hallux Consulting, 2008[41]), (Government of Canada, 2011[19]), BizPaL responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Additionally, there are a series of matters relating to the operation of the one-stop shop "model", for instance, around how to distribute decision-making abilities such as funding allocations and potential areas for expansion. A range of potential solutions exist such as lead agency models, and memoranda of understanding between the partner agencies. These potential models can also cover facets such as the degree of discretion in resource allocations, management, recruitment, and overall organisation (Askim et al., 2011[24]).

Inter-agency integration raises governance issues that should be considered as part of one-stop shop design. For example, where the degree of integration is low – in the sense that services are collocated but are separately managed – raises different issues compared with a relatively higher level of integration between government service delivery agencies. Examples of the latter are joint management boards, joint budgets, and joint recruitment strategies as part of one-stop shop design (Askim et al., 2011[24]). Such an approach may lead to additional perhaps unforeseen benefits via "breaking down silos" through a more connected government approach (PWC, 2016[42]).

Public consultation

- ***Undertake public consultation to ascertain whether one-stop shops are the best solution from the users' perspective***
- ***Plan and execute a pilot phase to test the services before they go live, ensuring that they meet users' expectations***
- ***Follow a phased approach for the implementation of one-stop shops, ensuring that lessons from one phase are taken into consideration for the implementation of following phases***

Linked principle: monitoring and evaluation

As is the case with regulations more broadly, actively engaging all relevant stakeholders during design processes helps to "maximise the quality of the information received and its effectiveness" (OECD, 2012[7]). It also helps to ensure buy-in from affected parties, and create a sense of shared ownership. For one-stop shops, public consultation is particularly relevant to the undertaking of feasibility studies; the types of communication mediums most likely to be of use to clients; and participating in periodic reviews of the operation of one-stop shops. The focus of these activities should be to reduce administrative burdens to the minimum necessary, which takes time and is often an iterative process. That is why monitoring and evaluation are important to the continuous improvement of one-stop shops (see next section).

One-stop shops are not a policy panacea. Designers need to consider whether a one-stop shop is the best solution as a means to reduce transaction costs for the target audience. There may be a number of plausible alternatives and these ought to be publicly canvassed allowing clients to help explain their real life experience, and in so doing, assist in determining the optimal solution. In general, it would be expected that feasibility studies would cover matters such as the scope of the one-stop shop; the level and nature of demand for the service; alternative implementation scenarios and their associated costs; risks; an assessment of the reasonable timeframe required; and overall management strategy (United Nations, 2005[9]). The case studies indicate that it is relatively common to establish one-stop shops through pilot projects. Apart from the obvious financial implications, this places a strong results-orientated discipline on agencies from the outset. This was especially the case with the German information portal for employers and the creation of GOV.UK.

Public consultation can assist designers after one-stop shops have gone "live" to help establish the extent of potential problem areas that may have developed, as well as providing a sound basis for the potential expansion and/or amalgamation of/with other government services (Box 2.21). However, it would be incorrect to conclude that one-stop shops should expand their scope automatically as a result of positive past performance. Mission creep of one-stop shops can be a significant issue and this is why significant scope changes need to be evidence-based as part of a broader impact assessment process (see next section).

Box 2.21. Examples of piloting one-stop shop expansions

Primary Authority (UK)

Primary Authority was the second iteration of a local authority advisory scheme. Home Authority, the non-legislative precursor to Primary Authority, had been running successfully for a number of years. This effectively piloted the principles and administration of such a scheme.

As the scheme grew, additional features, such as "co-ordinated partnerships" for trade associations and franchises were piloted before legislation was enacted.

Primary Authority is a voluntary scheme, and so there was no risk of pushing businesses into a scheme that would not be beneficial to them. As numbers of participants in the scheme grew, and feedback was received, it was clear that the implementation had not created any issues.

Service Canada

Service Canada has adopted a culture of experimentation. This was not borne out of a formal strategy, but more from a recognition that its role is to best serve client needs. For example, the Enabling Accessibility Fund will experiment with new approaches to increase the number of eligible youth participants who partner with and support an organisation in submitting a proposal for funding consideration under the Youth Innovation Component. In addition, the programme will explore opportunities to implement a new intake mechanism to find efficiencies and better respond to the needs of applicants. In addition, the Department is conducting experimentation and testing new approaches to reduce administrative burden and barriers for organisations serving vulnerable populations in accessing grants and contributions programmes. This culture of experimentation aligns with the Government of Canada's emphasis on continuous learning and innovation.

Source: Primary Authority responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, Service Canada responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

It is important to adopt a phased approach in the implementation of one-stop shops. Such an approach helps to better facilitate understanding of users' needs, as well as identifying difficulties and challenges that can then help to provide important learnings for future developments at later phases. An example highlighted in the case studies include the experience of GOV.UK in establishing its step by step navigation tool. It was designed as a way of presenting end-to-end journeys on GOV.UK, by grouping guidance and transactions into a series of steps (GOV.UK, n.d.[43]). It was recognised that government services are not necessarily immediately intuitive to those seeking the service. It was highlighted for example that in order to hire someone in the UK it required input from five separate government departments. A conscious decision was made to organise content around user needs rather than around the existing structure of government. As a result, rather than having content organised by department, content on GOV.UK was organised into a single site-wide system of user-centred topics (GOV.UK, 2018[44]).

A number of the case studies have undertaken public consultation aimed at improving the quality of service delivery (Box 2.22). Such an approach ought to also allow for operational staff to discuss matters with management. This may help in the early identification of problems, eliciting user feedback, and assist in setting strategic direction.

Box 2.22. Illustrative public consultation undertaken as part of one-stop shops

Primary Authority (UK)

Public consultation undertaken as part of an impact assessment process for the creation of the Primary Authority highlighted two important issues, namely the:

- risk of a lack of take up in the Primary Authority scheme owing to costs involved for local authorities
- unintended consequences following from a too wide-ranging role for the Primary Authority in scrutinising enforcement actions by other local authorities.

As a result of the consultations, local authorities were given the power of cost recovery, and the Primary Authority was given a more focussed power to approve enforcement action on the basis of consistency of advice already given.

The Bill introducing the changes also included a statutory review clause where it was expected that the review would, among other things, address the scale of take up, as well as the effectiveness of the cost recovery mechanism.

Source: (Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform, 2008[37]).

Communication and technological considerations

- ***Utilise communication methods that will be of most benefit to users whilst also taking into account potential accessibility issues***
- ***Where information and/or assistance is provided via multiple channels, customise content so as to best assist users***

It is important to first recall that there is no one approach which fits all countries or the different levels of government within one country. The design of communication methods needs to reflect the particular national context and be fit for purpose. Within that, it should be recalled that one-stop shops are a delivery vehicle for broader government service design. It is critical to first identify the purposes of the one-stop shop and then the mix of methods that will be appropriate to best meet that objective.

Designers need to give appropriate thought to the “face” of the one-stop shop. For instance, where one-stop shops provide information to clients that allows them to navigate to additional information, consideration needs to be given to how this can best be facilitated. It could, for example, be that a physical shopfront is most appropriate, or a central landing webpage, or a combination of communication mediums may be necessary. One-stop shops’ communication methods should be determined by user preferences. Challenges have been experienced where communication mediums were not appropriate as they were not based on users’ needs. Designers need to know about the ways in which users interact with government agencies so as to ensure that users’ expectations are met (Box 2.23).

The majority of the case studies provide services through multiple communication channels. Generally, this has involved a combination of physical shopfronts, call centres, and online platforms. Some specific communication methods solely exist to assist certain user groups. For instance, in Portugal the Citizen Spot was specifically created as a face-to-face one-stop shop to assist people who either cannot access or do not feel comfortable using the internet. It provides a broad range of services, for example assisting citizens with driving licence applications, the tax authority, and declarations to the public healthcare system. The Citizen Spots allow for a better, quicker and closer service with clients, as well as helping to promote digital literacy (Administrative Modernisation Agency, 2016[45]).

Box 2.23. Examples of better understanding users' communication attitudes and preferences

Altinn (Norway)

The Norwegian one-stop shop Altinn has adjusted its visual identity online since it was created in 2003. Originally, it was based on the ELMER framework, in part as a result of an in-depth study undertaken to ascertain the actual regulatory compliance experiences of six businesses over a 12 month period. Over time, Altinn's look and feel has changed. In interviews and user tests that were conducted, it was found that people were fearful of making mistakes when they were in Altinn. An additional finding was that there was often too much information available for the average users' needs.

As a result, Altinn was relaunched with a new design and more human language as a solution to the identified shortcomings. The new design is brighter with a more user friendly colour palette, and a simpler interface that involves a clear interaction of elements and illustrations on landing and information pages.

BizPaL (Canada)

As part of an evaluation into the operation of BizPaL, research was undertaken to gain a better understanding of the needs and expectations of business owners as well as professional intermediaries such as accountants, lawyers, and economic development staff. The research comprised of focus groups and interactive user tests and among other things found that:

- the internet and in-person contact are generally considered the most efficient ways to access business information from government
- users expected to be able to receive general market intelligence, and regulatory and financing information
- users considered that the internet had the potential to reduce paper burdens and speed up application processes
- some users expected concrete information related to regulatory requirements, including information on the specific level of government to deal with on a given regulation, or baseline information so as to understand the regulations from various levels of government

In response to the review, BizPaL commenced a process to allow for transactions to take place online. Despite user preferences for internet means, a recent review found that only 3% of BizPaL's permits and licences database can be downloaded, completed electronically, and submitted online. Around three-quarters of all permits and licences relate to the municipal level.

Source: (Government of Canada, 2011[19]), (Government of Canada, 2015[20]), Altinn responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, BizPaL responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Usability and accessibility issues more generally were a strong feature incorporated into the early design of ePortugal. Portugal has an Accessibility and Usability Seal that identifies and distinguishes the implementation of best practices in both websites and mobile applications. The Seal was developed by the Administrative Modernization Agency (AMA) and the National Institute for Rehabilitation, with the aim of making the use of online public services more efficient and simpler to the citizens, and was targeted specifically at those with disabilities and the need to interact with their computers or mobile devices through assistive technology. In addition to the Seal, ePortugal offers specific user-support channels for citizens and businesses, namely the helplines, but also the Chatbot using artificial intelligence. The Chatbot named SIGMA helps the users to get information about the services available on the portal, and through the Chatbot, users can also ask to be contacted by one of the existing helplines for a more personalised service.

For multi-agency one-stop shops, the case studies indicate that navigability is important for users. For example, in devising the "face, look, and feel" of GOV.UK, substantive rounds of development and feedback helped to eventually settle on the initial design, but it was certainly not a straightforward process. Projecting a similar outward design allows users to feel comfortable that they are dealing with the appropriate authorities and maintains confidence in the system. However it is also recognised that content may need to be customised where clients need more or less assistance in completing regulatory formalities in a particular area, when compared with other areas.

The case studies highlight that multi-agency one-stop shops provide differing levels of service across the total range of services provided. For instance, Service Canada provides service online, by phone, or in person in both official languages. Service Canada services are not all currently available end-to-end online. As Service Canada expands online services, some programmes may have more online services and online information than others. There are also specialised Service Canada call centres, offering more specific support and information on a number of more complex programmes and service processes. The level of service across the range of services or channels can depend on factors like complexity and volume.

One critical aspect of communication relates to data. Clients should only need to provide information to agencies once, which can then potentially be used for multiple purposes. These could be developed in-house or via partnerships with other government agencies. In this regards, it appears necessary to ensure that universal mechanisms exist for user identification and authentication. In Norway for example, the authentication solution ID-porten is used as a common log in to access public services. There are currently five different electronic IDs: MinID, BankID, BankID for mobile phones, Buypass, Commfides or Buypass ID for mobile phones (Box 2.24).

Box 2.24. Identification and authentication mechanisms in one-stop shops

Altinn (Norway)

Users have been uniquely identified by their social security number since Altinn's commencement in 2003. The Norwegian Population Register was the source for this information. Originally Altinn had to establish the authentication mechanisms, and there now exists a national service for authentication (ID-porten). Given Altinn's range of services, it has also been important to know the individual(s) responsible for operating business enterprises. For this purpose, Altinn has used the Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities.

The identification of persons and enterprises is necessary to be able to prefill forms with the information already known by the public sector, and to give them access to their personal or enterprise information, complete with all their previous dialogue history with Altinn.

GOV.UK

The Government Digital Service that is responsible for GOV.UK pioneered development of GOV.UK Verify, which was designed as a digital identity infrastructure, which could be used as part of GOV.UK's services and throughout other areas of the UK government.

It aims to provide a safe, secure, and simple service that will enable people to prove who they are online so they can access the services they need. Seven private sector "identity providers" have been certified to meet "government standards". A user of digital public services may use an identity provider to verify his or her identity (e.g. set of questions, financial information, photo, etc.). Each identity provider has different ways to verify the identity. The resulting digital identity is maintained by the identity provider and may be used in any subsequent transaction. The GOV.UK Verify team delivers the integration point

to government services. Private sector companies deliver the identity provider technology and operational environment.

Service Canada

Employment and Social Development Canada's first department wide data strategy is designed to improve the management of data on an enterprise scale. A Data and Privacy committee has been established as part of Data Governance to ensure that we leverage the data to improve the client experience while making data more secure. Data Stewardship is underway so that data can be accessed, authenticated, and used in ways that allow the organisation to better serve clients while putting the mechanisms in place to clarify what data we have and how we can use it (e.g., mastered data enables a "Tell-us-once" approach and seamless service across channels with more privacy and security safeguards). The department is also looking into creating a role-based model that improves data access and analytics while minimizing the privacy and security risks because data access is standardised, data is stored in secure environments and data replication is minimised.

Source: Altinn responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, GOV.UK responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, Service Canada responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Service Canada is currently involved in the MyAlberta Digital ID (MADI), which is a pilot led by two federal agencies in collaboration with the Province of Alberta. It involves the federal acceptance of a provincial trusted digital identity in accordance with the Pan-Canadian Trust Framework. MADI allows users to have simplified, streamlined and seamless interaction with provincial and federal online services. Users sign in using their provincial identity and from that they can immediately access and enrol in federal programmes and hence only need one username and password to access both provincial and federal online services.

Since one of the overarching rationales for one-stop shops relates to joined-up government, consideration ought to be given to issues of interoperability. Specifically issues relate to technical considerations, such as those relating to the system that produces the data, and the formats in which it is published concerning questions of data quality. Others are more semantic in nature in terms of metadata or for multiple language production of material (van Ooijen, Ubaldi and Welby, 2019[46]). It is also worth pointing out that the principles associated with governance and leadership are both relevant to the issue of interoperability.

Issues of interoperability apply to both single and multi-agency one-stop shops as the information collected by single agencies may still be of use to other agencies in other policy areas. Considering interoperability broadly, such as via implementing a platform that can be used for other initiatives may reduce resource requirements at a later stage (United Nations, 2005[9]). For online one-stop shops information collecting and sharing are particularly relevant to reducing transaction costs for users. For instance, recent legislative changes now allow Service Canada to collect information on behalf of other government departments (Box 2.25).

More generally, in order to improve interoperability, a number of governments have adopted a "tell us once approach", whereby information is provided by either citizens or business to an agency for a specific purpose, and then that information can be utilised by other areas of government.

Legislation in Portugal implements the "only once" principle meaning citizens do not have to supply the same document twice (or more times) to government. Portugal's Interoperability Platform for the Public Administration (iAP) facilitates the exchange of service related information within government and, following the Resolution of the Council of Ministers 42/2015, of 19 June, extends this to private sector suppliers (Presidência do Conselho de Ministros, 2015[47]). The iAP is a central, services oriented platform, providing the Portuguese Public Administration with shared tools that enable, in an agile and cost-effective way, automated electronic services. It comprises an integration platform, authentication provider,

payments platform, and SMS gateway. The iAP has enabled the Portuguese Public Administration to move away from a traditional approach based on point to point connections without shared services, to a central platform with shared webservices. It is based on reference architecture according to a set of rules, standards and tools that facilitate the interoperation of the various systems that support Public Administration services.

Box 2.25. Information collection and sharing changes: the case of Service Canada

Created in 2005, Service Canada is a single point of access for many of the Government's largest and most well-known programmes and services (e.g., Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, and passports).

Service Canada is an institution under the federal department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and operates within the legislative mandate of the Department of Employment and Social Development Act (DESDA). Amendments to DESDA allow ESDC to provide service delivery services for various levels of government including:

- federal, provincial, territorial, municipal governments
- other partner entities authorised by the Governor in Council
- specified Indigenous organisations
- non-profit corporations or public bodies performing a function for various levels of government.

Additionally, amendments make it easier for businesses to interact with ESDC through the use of the Business Number (single identifier for businesses) which is already being used by some federal departments and jurisdictions. These amendments have been in place since June 2018, and Service Canada has already begun to leverage these authorities.

Source: Service Canada responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

The Primary Authority in the UK has a strong information sharing focus. For example, the Primary Authority partnership between Monmouthshire County Council and SA Brain & Co Ltd (a Welsh brewery) created both the Food Safety Management System and the Food Safety Policy as part of its partnership. Both of these documents are available for other local councils to use as the basis for carrying out inspection and enforcement activities across more than 250 pubs owned by the company throughout Wales. This has helped to improve the food safety rating of a number of pubs, and at the same time has reduced business compliance resources (Office of Product Safety and Standards (UK), 2019[48]).

The case studies suggest that information collection and sharing represent an area of potential growth for one-stop shops, increasing their public value. For instance, there was an original need for GOV.UK to have some sort of authentication mechanism. While it could have purchased something from the market, it was decided to develop the infrastructure (and hence expertise) in-house via the creation of GOV.UK Verify. After its successful development in the GOV.UK context, it now provides access to 16 government services, helping to reduce costs in other areas of government. One interesting example was the use of the BizPaL database to identify opportunities for "regulatory transformation" (Box 2.26).

Box 2.26. "Regulatory transformation" opportunities as a result of BizPaL

When BizPaL was launched a logic model was created so as to assist in future reviews of the service's effectiveness and efficiency. One aspect was to "support Smart Regulations and Paper Burden Reduction initiatives" by analysing opportunities for "regulatory transformation", which meant identifying areas where regulatory burdens could be reduced.

The Strategic Policy Sector of Industry Canada used the data in the BizPaL database for the federal, provincial, and territorial Committee on Internal Trade. It researched the extent to which business licencing arrangements act as a barrier to inter-provincial trade in Canada. It concluded that the BizPaL database was the only viable source of reliable and comparable information across a wide range of industry sectors. The data was used to create a "burden index" by sector, by jurisdiction. When the data were combined with business statistics, the report was able to identify businesses sectors, both nationally and regionally, that were heavily burdened by licencing requirements.

Source: (Government of Canada, 2011[19]).

The introduction of IT systems has been an important theme in the case studies. The experience of Canada's BizPaL indicated that while a technological solution may be appropriate, as services mature, they may no longer be fit for purpose (Box 2.27). This highlights that it is important to appropriately plan for the design, development, testing, and improvement of such systems. The case studies illustrate that while digital service delivery is becoming more commonplace, IT issues still exist with physical one-stop shops. As such, IT staff need to be well integrated with the overall management of one-stop shops. They should help to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of various solutions, recognising that technological developments can often occur reasonably quickly. One aspect highlighted is that it is therefore important to as much as possible offer some degree of technological flexibility when making investment decisions. This was highlighted in the successful take-up of BizPaL by other Canadian jurisdictions, and remains a central tenet of the operation of GOV.UK where it has looked to develop its own products and share these with others (see below).

Box 2.27. Information technology experiences: the case of BizPaL

One particular challenge for the Canadian BizPaL service concerned the choice of technology. Categorising it as in some way being constrained by its own success, it was noted that BizPaL was built on a non-relational, centralised database, using an easily distributable html approach. While this gave users quick access, it was soon identified that a more sophisticated web services option could be developed for some partners to deliver BizPaL within their jurisdictions. Additional challenges arose due to the growth in partnerships, placing further pressure on adopting either a unified or multifaceted technical solution. The limitations of the underlying technical architecture was acknowledged, and funding was provided to begin to address the issue.

BizPaL has a small specialised team responsible for IT, which has over time morphed into a design orientated, future-looking group. The team responsible are not just developers, but they also play important roles in the strategic development of BizPaL, especially with regards to researching new technologies. The result of the investment is that BizPaL is now well placed to respond to any technical issues quickly. Moreover, as the IT develops and changes, BizPaL benefited from this knowledge when it updated its systems. The transition to a new operating system was much less arduous than similar changes had been in the past, and this was attributable to the in house expertise and experience that had been created.

Source: (Hallux Consulting, 2008[41]), (Government of Canada, 2011[19]), BizPaL responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

A number of the case study one-stop shops deliver services online, and further some are accessible only through online means. Given the depth and breadth of online forms and methods of communication – and the substantive past and ongoing investment by a number of countries in recent years – it is not possible to exhaustively discuss online issues in the context of one-stop shops in this report. What is clear is that a number of issues exist ranging from technological decisions, interoperability, and privacy and security of data to name a few (Box 2.28). This section therefore highlights some of the experiences that have emerged in the context of the case studies. It is not suggested that the solutions here are necessarily the right ones for each one-stop shop – domestic context and the existing technological framework are unique features that are instrumental in determining whether a particular solution may work in the circumstances.

Box 2.28. Some indicative technology considerations for online one-stop shops

The Norwegian one-stop shop Altinn highlighted the following key functionalities since its launch in 2003:

- Runtime environment for operating the services. This allows for instructions or commands to be sent from Altinn's own applications at the request of users when completing administrative requirements. Altinn is currently developing a completely new service development solution, Altinn Studio, which should be operational in 2020. The Altinn Studio platform will provide support for modern, responsive design, as well as allow for automatic testing, and the self-service migration of services into the cloud-based runtime environment.
- Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for integration with professional software systems for business and industry. This has been the single most important factor for Altinn's success. For services like tax returns, VAT and annual accounts, as much as 90% of the data is transferred directly from the businesses own software systems via the Altinn APIs and also to the connected governmental agencies. The APIs have also been important source of innovation in the way that Altinn delivers its services.
- Single sign-on by means of widespread authentication solutions. Four security levels for both login and digital signature. End users have been uniquely identified by their social security number via the Population Register.
- Powerful authorisation solution built on roles in national business registers. The creation of Altinn was based on the amalgamation of five existing business registers, thereby establishing the Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities. Altinn's authorisation module is currently being further developed into a more comprehensive solution, with the possibility of including more public (and possibly private) registers.
- Prefilling of forms based on central registers and the agencies' own data sources. This was an important development to reduce demands on users in instances where data already existed on government systems. It also gave users access to their personal and if applicable, enterprise archive which stored all previous communications.
- Storage solution for the user's own submissions and messages. From 2005, agencies could send messages to users' message boxes in Altinn. Users had access to their own personal mailbox and one associated with their business, if applicable. Messages could also be distributed via Altinn's APIs, so that they could appear in companies' business systems.

Source: Altinn responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Technological solutions for one-stop shops also potentially provide for wider economic benefits elsewhere within government. With the creation of the Government Digital Service in the UK, there was an entity responsible for investing and disseminating good service delivery practices (Box 2.29).

Box 2.29. GOV.UK examples of reusing technological solutions for online one-stop shops

The UK Government design principles, published in 2012, reflected the lived experience of the Government Digital Service (GDS) team in developing GOV.UK. There were 10 design principles created, and in the online context the most important are to: "build digital services, not websites", and "make things open: it makes things better".

On the former, GOV.UK highlighted an example of digitalisation of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. In practice it required a complete reworking of the interaction between the government and (usually) motor traders. There were around 5.5 million sales of motor vehicles per year in 2014 when the digitalisation work was undertaken. With helpful guides along the way to assist first time users (along with a call centre) – all of which were the results from user research and constant iteration – the complexity of completing the service was removed. It meant that it reduced a three week paper process down to a couple of minutes; remembered motor trader's details so they could complete multiple transactions at one time; and also sped up the process of receiving refunds on vehicle tax, improving business cash flow.

With regards to the latter, GDS highlighted work undertaken at the Home Office to improve its frequent traveller system for passengers from selected countries. The project involved revamping the existing, non scalable, cumbersome system to a more user-friendly system for both passengers and for border force staff. One problem was that software was needed to help identify all the different possible visa documents that might be used by travellers. However another area of the Home Office had already built the product catalogue via code and their work was shared saving considerable time and resources. The back end process changes for case file management were designed in such a way that it has the potential to be reused elsewhere in government.

Source: (GOV.UK, 2012[49]), (GOV.UK, 2014[50]), (GOV.UK, 2014[51]).

One-stop shops also can help to realise further gains in the private sector. For instance, Altinn launched user-driven consent, as an extension of its authorisation solution in 2016. This turned out to be a small revolution in digital transformation in Norway. User-driven consent has opened new opportunities for data sharing, especially between the public and private sectors. The finance sector was the first to take advantage of the opportunities, with the consent-based loan application, which allowed users to get loan commitments from their bank within a matter of minutes. The loan applicant authorises the tax administration to share data on income, wealth and loans with the bank, which can then assess loan applications automatically.

Human capital

- ***Allocate sufficient resources to change management, and design tailor-made programmes for training one-stop shop staff***
- ***Focus training not only on technical competences, but also on interpersonal and social skills***

A critical element in the operation of one-stop shops is its people. It is therefore important to ensure that the project team has sufficient resources and appropriate staff. As part of this, where one-stop shops emerge from existing government services, consideration needs to be given to matters such as change management, and the design of tailor-made programmes for training the staff. Training ought to be broader than technical competencies and especially for physical one-stop shops should also include interpersonal skills as the staff are often the face of the organisation (PWC, 2016[42]). A broader consideration is that one-stop shops also offer governments the opportunity to promote a cultural transformation in the provision of public service delivery.

In recognition of the fact that administrative structures pre-date one-stop shops, change management is an essential element. It requires both managers and staff to embrace change – that is, the benefits to users and to governments of improved service delivery – of introducing one-stop shops in the first place. It is necessary to overcome inertia issues within government and to ensure that staff adopt of a service-centric culture. These may be harder to overcome in instances where long-standing processes are challenged, or where governments have been slow to react to identified issues. This was certainly the experience of the Portuguese Administrative Modernization Agency when it launched the Digital Mobile Key (Box 2.30).

Box 2.30. Illustrative experience of change management in Portugal

Created in 2007 within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Administrative Modernization Agency is the Portuguese public body in charge of public services modernisation and administrative and regulatory simplification.

The Digital Mobile Key (DMK) is the National mobile eID solution which allows citizens to electronically identify themselves in most public, and some private companies' websites in order to perform digital services, through their smartphones, tablets or laptops. By using the DMK, citizens can access and perform hundreds of online public services in an easy and secure way, using a solution that brings greater convenience for citizens when interacting with the public administration, as well as the private sector.

Apart from AMA's leading role, the Agency has partnered with several important national entities such as the Social Security, the Shared Services of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice, among others, that eventually made the DMK available in their websites to facilitate interactions with citizens.

One thing learnt was the importance of engaging all the relevant stakeholders from the beginning. It was important to have them feel that they were part of the solution, and that their points of views were considered. The entities using the DMK were renouncing part of the control they had in terms of security of their online platforms, so it was important that they trusted the DMK, and that they felt comfortable using it.

In order to achieve the necessary changes within the public administration for DMK to become a viable authentication instrument, it needed to be disseminated and adopted by several public entities. Since some of these entities feared to lose some control of their online platforms and security protocols, that was not always easy to do. It took a lot of negotiation to make them realise that this was an initiative

that would benefit all. That this was successful was only because of a flexible and hardworking team, able to provide out-of-the-box thinking, who were committed to satisfying citizens' needs.

Source: (OECD, 2018[52]).

It is critical that one-stop shops focus on a customer/client-centric culture (PWC, 2016[42]). This helps to form the basis for establishing a range of client-based performance metrics to assess and evaluate the one-stop shop's performance, which is discussed below. Ultimately this requires frontline staff to understand clients' experiences in using one-stop shops. In turn, this requires staff to both appreciate the likely means by which clients arrive at the one-stop shop, and their likely information deficit. Management play a crucial role in recruitment and identification of talent, and also through providing appropriate coaching and training opportunities for staff. Additionally, management need to align organisational strategy with delivery capacity (PWC, 2016[42]). This necessitates decision-making and resource balancing on the part of management to ensure that the scope of one-stop shops are consistent with their resourcing to deliver the key services to clients. The case studies have highlighted quite divergent approaches. On the one hand, the German information portal for employers did not require any additional formalised training structures for staff owing to the design of the one-stop shop, since the required IT skills were already available in the organisation. At the same time, an IT solution was developed that negated the need for staff that provided the content for the platform to become technically familiar with the operating system. On the other hand, some of the case studies have created bespoke training institutions for their staff (Box 2.31).

Box 2.31. Formal training for one-stop shop staff

Service Canada

Service Canada has put a focus on human resources management and development, considering that its employees must be equipped with appropriate skills, attitudes and behaviours, and that they need to share the values and beliefs of Service Canada. Service Canada College was established in 2005 as the corporate learning institution, and provided consistency in the courses and programmes for Service Canada employees. The reason for its creation was that at the time there was a significant amount of variance in the quality of service delivery. The objective of the College was to provide reliability and professionalism to service delivery through the promotion of the principles of Service Excellence. The key offering of the College was the Service Excellence Certification Program. It is an applied learning programme that includes on the job coaching, in class instruction and follow-up online sessions, complementing functional and operational training. The service excellence stream of courses were developed and delivered in-house at Service Canada, but in 2014 were transferred over to the Canada School of Public Service and are currently available to all federal employees. The Canadian School for the Public Service was established in 2004. It is responsible for leading the government-wide approach to learning by providing a common, standardised curriculum. It offers subject specific courses at the federal Government of Canada level including courses in its digital academy, Indigenous learning, and public sector skills.

ePortugal

The Administrative Modernisation Agency (AMA) Academy initiative was created in 2019, building on previous training approaches. It aims to give everyone the opportunity to share, participate and collaborate on the development of knowledge, learning and skills and betting on new areas and training methodologies.

A series of learning communities have been established and include face-to-face learning, e-learning, coupled with on the job training, self-training initiatives, microlearning, and social learning.

Key success factors of the AMA's training programme have included: the involvement of all agents (Board of Directors, Management Units, Entities, Trainees); utilising a multidisciplinary team for delivery; the use of simple technology, that is both intuitive and interactive; a training model tailored to the target audience and particular context; diverse approaches to the design of teaching materials; and continual evaluation of learning and its effectiveness.

Source: (Canada School of Public Service, n.d.[53]), (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018[54]), Service Canada responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, (Agência Para A Modernização Administrativa, 2019[55]), ePortugal responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Monitoring and evaluation

- ***Establish quantitative and qualitative indicators and evaluation methods to test the success and quality of the service provided to users***
- ***Implement continuous improvement processes***
- ***Ensure that significant changes to one-stop shops are subject to both appropriate impact assessment and public consultation processes prior to their commencement***

Linked principle: public consultation

In the regulatory policy context, it is recognised that monitoring and evaluation form central parts of adopting a continuous policy cycle (OECD, 2012[7]). They are central as they provide the opportunity to assess whether the objectives of the regulation are being met, and whether they are being met in the most efficient manner possible. In a similar vein, the performance of one-stop shops should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that they continue to meet both users' and governments' needs and expectations.

Some of the case studies highlight that performance evaluations of one-stop shops are relatively frequent. For instance, since its creation BizPaL has been subject to the standard programme evaluation approximately every five years as is commonplace with other Canadian government programmes. Evaluations have tended be planned in advance. For instance, when the UK Primary Authority was created there was an embedded statutory review clause, and a similar approach was undertaken when the German information for employers' one-stop shop began (Box 2.32).

Box 2.32. Statutory review clause for one-stop shops: the case of the German information portal for employers

When the German information portal for employers was established as a statutory function of the involved social insurance institutions, a reporting obligation to the Federal Government was enshrined in German social security legislation. According to the relevant article, the German Association of Health Insurance Funds (*Spitzenverband Bund der Krankenkassen*) was obliged to submit a report on the usage, costs and possible further development of the portal by no later than two years after the establishment of the one-stop shop.

The evaluation report that was published in 2018 drew a positive conclusion and recommended that the portal should continue to operate and be further developed. The evaluation report discussed the possibility to move from a purely informational offer towards a more transactional website. For that purpose, users could be given the option, in addition to receiving the requested information, to directly apply for a certification or providing the necessary notifications via the portal. The report also included a number of key performance indicators, for instance the number of users and registrations, number of clicks on the various sub-pages, an analysis of the search function of the website, and overall availability of the system.

Source: (Government of Germany, n.d.[56]), (GKV Spitzenverband, 2018[57]), Information portal for employers' responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

The scope of any evaluation ought to consider whether "the stated objectives have actually been met, determining whether there have been any unforeseen or unintended consequences, and considering whether alternative approaches could have done better" (OECD, forthcoming[58]). For one-stop shops, the evaluation factors should relate back to their respective objectives, and assess whether the objective remains appropriate (Box 2.33). So for instance, when establishing the UK Primary Authority (see Box 2.36) it was foreshadowed that the review would likely address the following issues:

- the scale of take-up of Primary Authority partnerships
- the extent of the benefits to business arising from the scheme
- any unanticipated burdens on local authorities in maintaining Primary Authority partnerships
- the effectiveness of the cost-recovery mechanism in financing the scheme (Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform, 2008[37]).

Box 2.33. Evaluation of the Canadian BizPaL Service

The objective of BizPaL was to help small to medium-sized businesses comply with permit and licence requirements of all three levels of government, namely federal, provincial/territorial and municipal, by providing information to the user. BizPaL is not a transactional system; that is, it does not issue the licence or permit to the user, nor does it handle fee payments.

The review was to determine whether BizPaL had achieved its objectives, specifically whether it had: enhanced operations and implemented national rollout; promoted service and technology innovation; supported regulatory transformation; and provided for long term governance and sustainability.

The review focussed on the issues of relevance and performance. On the former it sought to answer the following questions:

- Is there a continued need for the BizPaL Service?
- Is the BizPaL Service aligned with federal government priorities?
- What is the legitimate and necessary role for Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada?

With regards to performance, the review sought to answer:

- How effective is the BizPaL Service as a business model?
- To what extent has the BizPaL Service been effective in achieving its objectives?
- What are some of the barriers to success (including to the engagement of all provinces and territories)? What are some of the factors that have facilitated its success?
- Have there been any unintended impacts (positive or negative) resulting from the BizPaL Service?
- How could the BizPaL Service be improved to enhance its efficiency and economy?

Source: (Hallux Consulting, 2008[41]), (Government of Canada, 2011[19]).

Any performance indicators ought to relate back to the objectives that are sought to be achieved. Business one-stop shops tend to be focussed on improved service delivery for SMEs and therefore factors that tend to be relevant are those relating to the ease with which users can complete regulatory requirements. The focus is usually on SMEs as transaction costs tend to be disproportionately greater for them SMEs, and thus negatively affect competition and societal welfare. For instance, in the case of the Canadian one-stop shop BizPaL it was found that "businesses with fewer than 20 employees are disproportionately affected

by compliance; a small business with one to four employees incurs at least seven times more costs per employee than its larger counterparts (i.e. those with 20 to 99 employees)" (Government of Canada, 2011[19]). For citizen one-stop shops, the main goal is usually to improve access to government services. From the government's perspective – and as discussed in the introduction – one-stop shops can be used as a means of reducing public/private transaction costs, whilst also potentially lowering government service delivery costs.

Monitoring performance requires a range of criteria or indicia to be collected over a period of time. For one-stop shops, this means creating meaningful performance indicators and continuous improvement mechanisms early in the design phase. Performance ought to be assessed at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. At the strategic level, key performance indicators and targets should be set so as to monitor the success of service improvements. At the operational level, metrics should be linked to management responsibilities and operations at the whole of government level. At the tactical level, metrics should focus on progress within the government agency or agencies involved in the one-stop shop (PWC, 2016[42]).

Although a number of potential approaches exist, common data sources tend to be user satisfaction surveys and questionnaires, mystery shoppers, and internal audits (Askim et al., 2011[24]) (OECD, 2012[59]). Additional performance metrics that are more germane to online one-stop shops include matters such as take up rates, service completion rates, and costs per transaction that can feed back into continuous improvement programmes (OECD, 2017[60]) (Box 2.34). The information received should guide the future development and simplification of existing one-stop shop services and the potential inclusion of new services in response to user demands with the overall goal of creating a service culture in the public administration, as well as seeking the continuous improvement of public service delivery.

Box 2.34. Examples of performance metrics used from the case studies

Altinn (Norway)

Since Altinn has citizen and business information based on the Population Register and Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities respectively, it can look at the take-up rates across almost the entire Norwegian population. This enables data to be collected based on age and on gender which allow the management to consider the extent to which each group uses Altinn. In turn, this helps to drive managerial decisions about potential outreach or advertising of services, and identifying potential penetration gaps across the country.

Altinn has also collected information about users' perceptions including: whether companies spend less time on compliance activities as a result of Altinn; whether it is both easy and safe to use Altinn for reporting purposes; and whether Altinn is a stable solution that is available when needed.

BizPaL (Canada)

BizPaL has developed web metrics in order to assess completion rates where businesses are able to locate the permit and licencing information they need. The metrics allow tracking on a step-by-step basis and provides accurate information on how many users get the actual results page and if not, at what step they are leaving the system. Quarterly reports are presented to internal management and help to inform decisions on system improvements.

GOV.UK

For digital services, there are four mandatory criteria that must be reported on: cost per transaction; user satisfaction; completion rates; and digital take-up. The cost per transaction varies substantially, between as little as five pence up to GBP 700. The initial transactions data were of great importance to

GOV.UK in better understanding the breadth, scope and priority of service transformation. Additional research methods include researching user experiences, using in-depth interviews, and moderated usability testing.

Primary Authority (UK)

As part of a review of the Primary Authority scheme, structured questionnaires were sent to businesses covering those currently in the scheme, those expressing an interest in joining, and those not interested in joining. The survey included questions about establishment and ongoing costs and benefits of the scheme, challenges, and experience about compliance, inconsistencies, and enforcement action. The experiences of 100 local authorities were collected through a telephone survey who hold primary authority partnerships with business.

Service Canada

Performance information includes visits to the website, social media channels and in person centres, as well as calls to the 1 800 number. Each of the department's three key service delivery channels has formal performance metrics.

Source: (Government of Norway, 2016[61]), (Government of Norway, 2016[62]), Altinn response to OECD survey, (Government of Canada, 2011[19]), (GOV.UK Service Manual, 2018[63]), (GOV.UK, 2013[64]), (Primary Authority evaluation, 2013[65]), Primary Authority responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, Service Canada responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

Implementing continuous improvement programmes is a central part of public policy. Regulations are created at a point in time under a specific set of circumstances. If those circumstances change (either because of internal or external factors), then those laws may no longer be the best solution to the problem they were created to fix. Indeed, there is a possibility that they could exacerbate the situation. These issues highlighted with respect to laws in the design phase are mirrored in the service delivery context. For one-stop shops, continuous improvement processes are integral for a number of reasons. Firstly, as pointed out above, such processes provide the opportunity to assess whether the one-stop shop is functioning well, and whether it remains the most appropriate means of service delivery. Secondly, service delivery inevitably tends to have a human element to it and organisational culture goes hand in hand with continuous improvement.

The case studies indicate that important factors for one-stop shops are those that are open to ideas of experimentation and trials, have open communication and trust, and are built on user input. For instance, the survey response from the Primary Authority in the UK noted that legislation almost always contains commitments to post implementation reviews. "The Office for Product Safety and Standards [the entity responsible for the Primary Authority] has found great benefit from an even tighter feedback loop and stronger engagement with stakeholders, enabling them to develop their services and policies in an iterative and agile manner." The constant with these factors is that they are continually improved over time – and this is the most important success factor (Box 2.35).

Box 2.35. Continuous improvement in one-stop shops: experiences from selected case studies

Altinn (Norway)

An interdisciplinary reference group on electronic reporting initiated the ELMER Project. The Project followed six enterprises over a period of one year in order to map out their reporting duties, and test simple solutions for electronic reporting based on familiar technology. Among other things, the ELMER Project presented an example for designing a complex web form. First and foremost, the example

demonstrated that the use of simple internet technology opens up new pedagogical opportunities which may make reporting to governmental authorities a lot easier. ELMER has played a crucial role in Altinn's success by providing users with a common look and feel when using forms and services.

However, in the new service development platform that is being developed in Altinn, ELMER no longer plays a major role. Strong expertise has been built on modern service design and user insight, and Altinn Studio will continue to provide the forms and services with a common look and feel. ELMER has now been replaced by the Altinn Design Styleguide.

Service Canada

A range of recent improvements were made to some of the government services delivered by Service Canada recently, including:

- Employment and Social Development Canada is now offering video chat services in 32 in-person Service Canada Centres in an effort to reduce lineups and provide faster, more convenient services in person. Virtual workstations allow clients to speak face-to-face with a Citizen Service Officer who appears on screen to assist, but may be in a different part of Canada altogether. Over 3 100 Canadians have now had this experience through successful pilot projects at Service Canada Centres in Brandon and Winnipeg, Manitoba; Kingston, Ontario; St. Leonard, Quebec; Fredericton, New Brunswick; and, as of October 2018, at the new Flagship Service Centre in Toronto–North York, Ontario. The current client satisfaction rate is 93% for the video chat experience. By giving access to more people (in person and virtually), Service Canada can provide Canadians with faster service without sacrificing quality.
- The Job Bank mobile application provides an easy and convenient way for Canadians to search for jobs while they are on the go. Released in February 2018, the Job Bank application is available for both iOS and Android. As of May 31, 2019, the application had been installed over 200 000 times.

Source: Altinn responses to OECD OSS survey 2019, Service Canada responses to OECD OSS survey 2019.

In the regulatory policy context it is important to integrate impact assessment into the early stages of the policymaking process for the formation of new regulatory proposals (OECD, 2012[7]). Impact assessment processes allow for the public testing of both regulatory and non-regulatory solutions to public policy problems. The case studies illustrate that well-functioning one-stop shops are those where service delivery is user-centred. An impact assessment process is a sound means by which to have users' input help in the design of one-stop shops.

The impact assessment process can be used as part of designing one-stop shops, as well as when significant changes are made. An impact assessment process allows for users to provide information to policymakers about their actual experiences. This may assist policymakers to have a better informed and deeper understanding of the problems facing users, as well as being an important source of information to help formulate potential solutions. While these are standard aspects of good regulatory policy processes, as noted above, they are not always designed with delivery in mind. A related point is that engaging users helps to improve the acceptance of changes as they have been genuinely involved in the policymaking process.

Apart from buy-in, involving users has a large number of potential economic benefits such as:

- further reducing transaction costs to business, which can create more competitive industries, potentially lowering prices and improving societal welfare

- reducing service delivery costs to governments, for example by utilising less expensive means of providing informational and transactional services to business and citizens
- reducing compliance and enforcement costs to government (and associated fines etc. to businesses) as a result of better-informed users who are willing and able to comply
- reducing resources required over time for businesses, citizens, and governments by way of providing feedback loops where (re-emerging or new) problems can be quickly highlighted and addressed.

Impact assessment processes for one-stop shops should look to include these factors based on input received from users. Additional elements should include: a clear description of the rationale and objective(s) of one-stop shops; a critical examination of alternative solutions; the expected gains and who stands to benefit; any associated costs and who bears them; and how the performance of the one-stop shop will be assessed over time. An example of such an approach from the case studies was the establishment of the UK Primary Authority (Box 2.36).

Box 2.36. Impact assessment processes for one-stop shops: the case of the UK Primary Authority

The establishment of the UK Primary Authority in 2008 was as a result of findings from an independent review that among other things, found that fragmentation at the local government level had increased uncertainty and administrative burdens for business.

The impact assessment highlighted four key objectives of the Primary Authority: more effective priority-setting by central government; more consistent levels of inspection and enforcement; more consistency in the application of the Primary Authority Principle; and more co-ordinated risk assessment.

The impact assessment highlighted the expected costs and benefits of the Primary Authority's establishment including separate assessments of the expected co-ordination roles, civil sanctions, and regulatory burdens. The impact assessment explicitly noted impacts that could not be monetised, which for local authorities was potential economic and development benefits from hosting a Primary Authority partnership, and for the central government was access to enhanced advice and evidence on local authority enforcement practices. Further, it highlighted key assumptions and risks as the number of partnerships adopted, the scale of cost savings for both business and local authorities from the Primary Authority, the time and work involved to establish partnerships, and the extent to which local authorities took up cost-recovery.

A review was foreshadowed in the impact assessment, which would be conducted three years after the Primary Authority's introduction and address: the scale of take-up of Primary Authority partnerships; the extent of the benefits to business arising from the scheme; any unanticipated burdens on local authorities in maintaining Primary Authority partnerships; and the effectiveness of the cost-recovery mechanism in financing the scheme.

Source: (Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform, 2008[37]).

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3 Case studies

BizPaL (Canada)

Background

BizPal was established in 2005 as a pilot project with a lead group of participating governments of two provinces and one territory. Initial federal government funding was CAD 2.5 million in 2005.

The growth of BizPal has been fairly organic as other levels of government have seen the benefits that BizPal has brought to businesses. Increasing participation from the municipal level of government has been the sole responsibility of provinces and territories. One difficulty experienced early on with the rate of growth was that there was a very high focus placed on expanding the reach of the programme, to the detriment of the quality of service that could be provided. This approach however has largely disappeared as the programme has matured, with a much increased focus on the content provided to users.

Level of government

BizPal currently involves the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments. There are currently 17 Federal ministries/agencies that contribute content. All provincial and territorial governments are currently involved in BizPal, along with 1 058 municipalities and four Indigenous governments covering 80% of the Canadian population.

Clients

Its clients are businesses, in particular small and medium enterprises.

What does it do?

BizPal enables Canadian businesses to readily identify which permits and licences are required as well as how to obtain them in order to start and grow a business. Over 14 450 permits and licenses across the various levels of government are registered in the BizPaL data base.

How does it operate?

BizPaL is jointly managed by a partnership involving governments at the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal levels. This multi-jurisdictional partnership operates under a shared governance and costing model, outlined through the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Intergovernmental Letter of Agreement (ILA).

Innovation Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada provides leadership for the initiative on behalf of the Government of Canada. ISED is the steward of the BizPaL service and houses the National BizPaL Office (NBO).

The NBO is responsible for managing the centralised governance structure, providing expertise and development for BizPaL federal content, and design/development of the website. The BizPaL content is integrated into each of the respective provincial/territorial and municipal partner's websites.

The BizPaL Steering Committee (SC) is the main governing body responsible for decision making. The SC members represent their respective jurisdictions (ISED, Federal Departments, provinces/territories, municipalities), and provide a broader national perspective to guide governance of the BizPaL service and horizontal issues through a whole-of-government and consensus-based approach.

The multijurisdictional partnership is supported through a Specified Purpose Account (SPA) to which annual contributions are made by each partner.

Activities to be carried out by the partnership are articulated in the SPA budget which is approved by the SC.

The cost model agreed upon is based on population and covers the costs of system hosting, maintenance and activities related to the centralised function of the BizPaL service.

Type of service offered

BizPal covers a broad range of policy areas. At the federal level, information is available in areas such as international trade, fishing, and the environment. At the provincial/territorial level, information is available on exploration and mining, gambling, real estate, pesticide use, and child care among others. At the municipal level, information is more specialised and includes zoning and development, road use, home-based businesses, and food premises.

Information is provided to prospective or existing businesses about the licencing and permit requirements of these various policy areas/activities. In that sense, the information offered is shallow in that actual assistance to complete the regulatory requirements is not currently provided by BizPal. That said, BizPal is currently investigating opportunities where it can become a transactional one-stop shop by additionally providing advice and guidance to its business clients to assist them with their regulatory obligations.

Currently, services are offered on an integrated basis so that a business in one geographical area can obtain a list of the requisite regulatory information that it needs to complete at the municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal levels.

Communication mediums

BizPal is an online only tool for Canadian businesses.

BizPal is currently an informational one-stop shop in that it presents the regulatory requirements that exist in terms of requisite licences and permits. It does not however actually provide assistance to businesses in the completion of their regulatory requirements. That said, this is currently an area that BizPal is looking to expand into, thus offering more assistance to businesses. As a potential transactional one-stop shop, BizPal is currently evaluating the most appropriate model. However it is important to BizPal that any transactional based one-stop shop allow for interoperability given the breadth and depth of its permits and licences database.

Selected features

Governance

- BizPal has a range of objectives stemming from the *Department of Industry Act 1995* to provide co-ordinated support for small and medium-sized businesses. Additionally, BizPal's operations have been found to be consistent with federal priorities related to supporting small business and the reduction of red tape, and are in line with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's priorities related to assisting Canadian businesses to be competitive. However, due to its governance structure in the Canadian system of government, the mandate only applies at the federal level. This has resulted in challenges as the goals of each jurisdiction, be they federal, provincial/territorial, municipal or Indigenous governments do not always have mandates or priorities that align together.

Monitoring and evaluation

- BizPal has instituted a programme of monitoring and evaluation. Google Analytics are used to record usage by clients. This data are analysed to determine where resources can be better allocated across the range of information that BizPal provides. Annual performance management frameworks are supplied and reviewed.
- BizPal has been reviewed on a number of occasions and is subject to a five-yearly review programme to ensure that continued funding remains justified. The Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses conducted a review. Cost value analysis is conducted, as are client audits. An extensive client experience audit is scheduled for 2019.

Other matters

- Users can submit complaints via a generic email account on the website. Reports identifying broken links are conducted for the partnership. Each jurisdiction has the responsibility to update its content within a specific timeframe. Usability testing is conducted regularly.
- In addition to a possible expansion to a transactional service, BizPal is currently undertaking a marketing campaign to improve businesses' awareness of their services. Additionally, BizPal is expected to be updated through new designs and improved search results to the tool.

Key learnings

- One key observation is that a flexible governance model to support swift changes (explained above) has been instrumental to BizPal's smooth operation and expansion over time.
- Periodic reviews of the BizPal service have helped to ensure that it remains a justified public expense. They have also helped to highlight both challenges and solutions to various problems that have been experienced over the years ranging from early BizPal growth targets, to technological solutions, and the appropriateness of the governance model as more jurisdictions join. This has in part helped to foster an open and consultative culture within the organisation.

Service Canada

Background

Service Canada's origins date back to 1998 when the Government of Canada began developing an integrated citizen-centred service strategy based on detailed surveys of citizens' needs and expectations. Service Canada was created in 2005 and is a single point of access for many of the Government's largest and most well-known programmes and services (e.g., Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS), Employment Insurance (EI), and passports). It manages 1 800 O-Canada (call centre), Canada.ca (web presence), and in-person points of service through which Canadians can access information on Government of Canada (GC) programmes.

Service Canada is an institution under the federal department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and operates within the legislative mandate of the Department of Employment and Social Development Act (DESDA).

Level of government

Changes were recently made to DESDA which allow ESDC to provide service delivery services for various levels of government including federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, and to any other partner entity authorised by the Governor in Council.

ESDC also partners with other levels of government to provide in-person services in a single location. For example, the City of Ottawa, the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada have a co-located site where clients can access federal, provincial and municipal services.

Clients

Service Canada delivers a range of programmes and services that affect Canadians throughout their lives and help them move through life's transitions, from school to work, from one job to another, unemployment to employment, from the workforce to retirement.

What does it do?

Service Canada delivers some of the Government's largest and most well-known programmes and services for example:

- New-borns and children, e.g., Social Insurance Number
- Youth, e.g., Canada Apprentice Loans
- Adults, e.g., Employment Insurance
- Supporting employers, e.g., Temporary Foreign Worker Program
- Reaching vulnerable populations, e.g., Indigenous programmes, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Employment Insurance Sickness, Canada Pension Plan - Disability
- Seniors, e.g., Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security
- Not for profit and for-profit organisations, and academia through grants and contribution programming
- All Canadians, e.g., passports

How does it operate?

Expenditure authorities, through ESDC, come from annual appropriation acts or other specific statutes such as the Employment Insurance Act that authorise payments which are approved by the Parliament of Canada through the annual budget expenditure process. Funding is annual, but could be multiyear or statutory under special operating exceptions.

Partnerships between Service Canada and other government departments or levels of government are managed through agreements which set out the framework for the partnership, including roles and responsibilities, privacy considerations, cost recovery, and more. The partner maintains responsibility for the programme overall and Service Canada takes on the responsibility for service delivery. Agreements are not legally binding between federal institutions, but instead act as an understanding between the organisations.

Type of service offered

General information about Service Canada programmes and services can be accessed online, by phone, and in person in both official languages. However, as Service Canada transitions to a “digital first” service model, service delivery varies from programme to programme. In 2017-18, ESDC started to implement the Service Transformation Plan (STP), a roadmap for the transformation and modernisation of ESDC’s services in the coming years. For example, in August 2018, the Department implemented Automatic Enrolment for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) programme, which builds off the success of the launch of Automatic Enrolment of the Old Age Security (OAS) programme. As of April 30, 2019, more than 1.1 million seniors have been advised they do not need to apply for the OAS benefit since auto-enrolment began in 2013. Approximately 15 000 seniors each month are now advised they will be automatically enrolled for the OAS and the GIS.

Communication mediums

With respect to online services, Service Canada maintains a digital presence on Canada.ca from which general information on programmes and services is found. The department further has separate online tools enabling citizens and businesses to view and update their information as well as conduct transactions online.

With respect to telephone services, the 1 800 O-Canada service provides general information on Government of Canada programmes, services and initiatives as well as information on how to access them. Services are available from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., local time. As well, the Call Centre network consists of specialised networks dedicated to helping Canadians access information related to Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS), in addition to services for employers. Clients can receive and update EI, CPP and OAS information. In particular, its EI section provides access for clients to receive latest and past claim information (e.g. claim status, aligned messages, additional claim details, and payment information), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

With respect to in-person service delivery, services can be accessed at any one of Service Canada’s 611 Points of Service; 209 of these provide services in both official languages, while all 611 Points of Service make services available in either official language by telephone. Currently, there is an option being piloted of Video Chat that provides Canadians visiting select Service Canada Centres (SCCs) with the option of being served using Video Chat technology by Citizen Services Officers located in different offices in the region. This improves access to agents, and allows workload distribution in high volume offices.

Service Canada also uses social media outlets to communicate general information.

Selected features

Co-operation and co-ordination

- ESDC and Service Canada have traditionally had a culture of experimentation. This was not borne out of a formal strategy, but more from a recognition that its role is to best serve client needs. For example, the Enabling Accessibility Fund will experiment with new approaches to increase the number of eligible youth participants who partner with and support an organisation in submitting a proposal for funding consideration under the Youth Innovation Component. In addition, the programme will explore opportunities to implement a new intake mechanism to find efficiencies and better respond to the needs of applicants. In addition, the Department is conducting experimentation and testing new approaches to reduce administrative burden and barriers for organisations serving vulnerable populations in accessing grants and contributions programmes. This culture of experimentation aligns with the Government of Canada's emphasis on continuous learning and innovation.

Role clarity

- Service Canada is developing simple, practical, standardised approaches for engaging the public and other end users in the development of ESDC policies related to its programmes and services. This is being done to help ensure that clients are driving how we do business. For example, in 2018, the department conducted in-person focus group sessions with youth clientele regarding employment. Additional sessions were conducted with a variety of client groups including Indigenous peoples, recent immigrants, people with disabilities and people living in remote areas.
- A Client Centric Policy Playbook has been launched by the department in order to provide ESDC employees with insights, best practices, tools and resources for engaging clients.

Human capital

- Service Canada has put a focus on human resources management and development, considering that its employees must be equipped with appropriate skills, attitudes and behaviours, and that they need to share the values and beliefs of Service Canada. Service Canada College was established in 2005 as the corporate learning institution, and provides consistency in the courses and programmes for Service Canada employees. The reason for its creation was that at the time there was a significant amount of variance in the quality of service delivery. The objective of the College was to provide reliability and professionalism to service delivery through the promotion of the principles of Service Excellence. The key offering of the College is the Service Excellence Certification Program, that it is an applied learning programme that includes on the job coaching, in class instruction and follow-up online sessions, complementing functional and operational training. The service excellence stream of courses was developed and delivered in-house at Service Canada, but in 2014 it was transferred over to the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) and is currently available to all federal employees.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Evaluation information includes visits to the website, social media channels and in-person centres, as well as calls to the 1 800 number. Each of the department's three key service delivery channels has formal performance metrics.
- The department also conducts annual client experience (CX) surveys with Canadians to understand how clients perceive their service experience with Service Canada.

- In addition, the Policy on Results obligates internal evaluation to evaluate programmes regularly and to conduct full programme evaluation research studies to examine their effectiveness and efficiency in achieving outcomes. For example, recommendations from the Employment Insurance Automation and Modernization evaluation led to the enhancement of programme delivery and service to Canadians. Service Canada responded to this evaluation finding by dedicating resources to three key initiatives focused on the modernisation of Information Technology infrastructure, namely:
  - Migrating to a centralised, hosted call centre telephony platform
  - Streamlining Information Technology infrastructure, and
  - Enhancing security.
- A multi-year evaluation of the service delivery channels is currently being completed

Other matters

- Different systems were developed over the years to satisfy the needs for making services available digitally. Examples of systems are My Service Canada Account (MSCA), Job Bank, Grants and Contributions, Records of Employment, EI applications and reporting systems. A key priority continues to be the streamlining of provision of digital identification as well as integration of services in order to better serve individuals and businesses with work underway. For example, through the My Service Canada Account, clients can securely access tax and benefit information on their Canada Revenue Agency MyAccount through a single secure login. Clients do not have to go through a revalidation step once they logged in securely in either account. Canada Pension Plan clients are also able to update their direct deposit information using either account and have this information shared with the other department in near real-time.
- Service Canada has launched a Benefits Delivery Modernization initiative, which is a business-led transformation programme in collaboration with IT experts, that aims to modernize the service delivery of EI, CPP and OAS. The new core technology and redesign of businesses processes will allow increased policy agility and streamlined processing of EI, CPP and OAS benefits through data sharing, policy and legislation simplification across programmes.
- As part of the Call Centre Improvement Strategy the Department is implementing a Hosted Contact Centre Solution (HCCS) in EI Call Centres, CPP/OAS Call Centres and Employer Contact Centres. The HCCS is a modern and supported technology that will provide enhanced functionalities to support future business requirements for phone services.
- Protecting the Department's programmes and services from errors, fraud and abuse is an important business activity. The Department has shifted its focus from a "pay and chase" approach to an "integrity-by-design" approach. Instead of focusing on addressing issues identified post payment, integrity-by-design aims to integrate control measures from the inception of a programme or service all the way through its lifecycle. This provides a more comprehensive approach, placing emphasis on preventing/deterring, monitoring/detecting and enforcing/addressing error, fraud, and wrongdoing or abuse/misuse in services and benefits delivery.
- The department has established a client journey mapping capacity within the department to better define and understand client interactions with the department and the underlying processes that support them.

Key learnings

- The ability to adapt and transform quickly to client needs and expectations is critical to ensure the delivery of high quality and client centric services.

- All service channels are critical to ensure that government services are reaching all Canadians. In-person service including outreach, call-centres, partnerships with organisations, as well as digital service, must work in parallel to ensure no client is left behind.
- Consolidate resources such as front-line staff, policy/programme experts, IT resources, and enablers in order to co-create solutions and foster greater innovation.
- Build a strong enterprise foundation and identify investment requirements early, to ensure sustainability and ongoing renewal of core systems.
- Collaborate with a wide array of partners with diverse skill sets in order to support service transformation required for one-stop-shops. Learning from others is a critical success factor.

Informationsportal Arbeitgeber (Germany)

Background

The establishment of the information portal for employers (*Informationsportal Arbeitgeber*), which first went live in January 2017, was part of a longer-term effort to digitalize and simplify notification requirements for employers to social insurance organisations. The German social insurance system and services are financed by employers as well as through contributions deducted from the salary of insured employees. In that context, employers face a number of notification and reporting requirements to the various social insurance organisations (health and long-term care insurance as well as, accident, pension and unemployment insurance) that form the German statutory social insurance system. These notification procedures had been gradually converted into to purely electronic transmission already since 2006. While this transformation was generally considered successful, it provided further impetus for the simplification and optimisation of reporting and application procedures.

With the purpose to identify further areas for improvement, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs conducted a project that lasted from 2012 and 2014 and resulted into the decision to create the one-stop shop. A central finding of the simplification efforts was the need to provide information concerning the various pillars of the German social security system in a more integrated way. The project supported by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs identified that especially employers in small and medium-sized enterprises were often overwhelmed with the complexity of regulatory requirements and various procedures. Further, the project revealed a lack of support specifically at the stage of the data collection on the employer's side, prior to the actual transmission of data to the social insurances.

In December 2014, the federal government officially adopted the one-stop shop as part of its wider government strategy of administrative simplification and the reduction of compliance costs for businesses. With the "Key Issues Paper to Further Reduce Burdens for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises", the federal cabinet adopted a wide range of measures with the goal to reduce bureaucracy and red-tape. In addition to the introduction of the information portal, these measures included for instance the further development of one-stop shops for the creation of businesses (*"Single Point of Contact 2.0*"). The portal was finally legally established in 2016 through an amendment of Volume IV of the German Code of Social Law (*Sechstes Gesetz zur Änderung des Vierten Buches Sozialgesetzbuch und anderer Gesetze*).

A first evaluation report from 2018 drew a positive conclusion and recommended that the portal should be continued to be operated and further developed. In the first year of its implementation, around 150 000 visitors of the portal were registered, with numbers forecasted to rise in 2018.

Level(s) of government

The portal is operated and supervised jointly by the umbrella organisations of four pillars of the German social insurance system: the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds, the German Pension Insurance Association, the Federal Agency for Employment and the German Social Accident Insurance. Although these bodies are public-law corporations, they organize and provide the respective parts of the social insurance system according to the principle of self-government. While the state prescribes the legal framework, the insured as well as the service providers organize themselves in associations to provide social insurances in their own responsibility.

Clients

The target group of the one-stop shop are employers, and especially start-ups and SMEs, who are hiring employees for the first time and / or need assistance to fulfil their legal requirements with regards to the different branches of the social security system. However, the portal is generally freely accessible to everyone.

What does it do?

The information portal assists employers and entrepreneurs to identify registration and notification requirements to social insurance organisations. The portal is especially designed for those who have little experience with social security issues. The website also provides general information on notification requirements and contributions law.

How does it operate?

The involved social insurance institutions operate the information portal jointly through a Steering Committee that consists of representatives from their respective umbrella associations. The Steering Committee convenes as required and decides annually on the budget plan and the service portfolio of the portal. The costs for the operation of the portal are distributed proportionally according to a fixed key that is formalised in the law that established the one-stop shop.

The management and technical operation was commissioned to an existing working group of the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds. This working group had been already responsible to conduct the initial study to identify ways to simplify social insurance related notification requirements as well as to design a prototype of the website. The individual social insurance organisations are responsible for providing and updating the content of the website.

Types of services offered

At the time of its inception, the one-stop shop was purely of informational nature and had narrow focus on a specific type of services in the area of social security. For the actual application and notification processes, the users are directed to the website of the relevant social security organisation via weblinks. However, it is currently being considered how to expand the functions of the portal in the future, and specifically to move from a purely informational offer towards a more transactional website. For that purpose, it is planned that users will also have the option, in addition to receive the requested information, to directly apply for a certification or provide the necessary notifications via the portal. The possibility to establish an integrated platform for both informational as well as application purposes had already been considered as part of the impact assessment and development of the portal and was explicitly noted in the federal government's Key Issues Paper from 2014.

Communication mediums

The one-stop shop serves as an integrated virtual "front-office". It displays the obligations employers face when registering employees and notifying social security contributions to the various social insurances. The information provided are exclusively delivered via the online digital platform. However, the information portal does not replace the existing virtual and physical offers of the individual social insurance organisations. Rather, it aims to bundle information on a single web portal. This helps to avoid that employers need to conduct time-consuming research via different sources. At the same time, it should help to reduce the amount of requests that are currently being directed to the information hotlines of the individual social security funds.

The information portal is structured according to the concept of "life events". Visitors of the website can for example chose between events such as "new employer", "illness of a worker" or "opening of another enterprise". Users are currently directed through the portal through an interactive sequence of Yes/ No questions. The final goal is to provide a summary of all relevant information and a checklist with next steps that fits to the concrete situation and problem the employer faces. In case the request cannot be clearly assigned to a specific situation, the user is referred to corresponding further information via a web link.

In case of technical problems, users can also directly contact the operator of the website via an online contact form.

Information on the website is only provide in German. However, it is currently being considered to add a multi-language capability to the website. This would enable to translate the entire content into one or more official European languages. The underlying technology is already embedded in the current version of the portal.

Selected features

Political commitment

- Political commitment was ensured through a cabinet decision to set up the information portal for employers in 2014. As a result, the information portal was legally established as a joint task of the involved institutions. Thus, the purpose of the portal, the governance structure and roles of the involved social insurance organisations as well as a fixed financing key was firmly enshrined in the German social security code.

Public consultation

- Stakeholders were engaged at multiple stages of the process to develop the one-stop shop, including at the problem identification stage. For instance, experts and affected stakeholders were involved at an early stage via a standardised survey and workshops to document the relevant procedures and to identify the resulting compliance costs. Further, involved stakeholder were invited to submit proposals for the optimisation and simplification of the identified procedures. For the actual design of the web portal, valuable input was provided through a co-operation with other agencies that provide services for employers.

Legal framework

- During the assessment of different options as part of the feasibility study, stakeholders raised the concern of providing legally secure information through the one-stop shop. For legal reasons, technical questions on individual cases cannot be answered conclusively on the website, especially because no legally binding answers can be given by the moderators of the information platform. As a result, a disclaimer was added to the website that makes users aware of the fact that the information of the portal only provides guidance and cannot replace a proper legal assessment of individual social insurance cases.

Monitoring and evaluation

- A continuous monitoring and an evaluation of the functioning of the portal provided input whether to further operate and develop the one-stop shop. Already when establishing the information portal as a statutory task of the social insurance institutions, a reporting obligation towards the Federal Government after two years was introduced. To fulfil this obligation, a number of key performance indicators were established. These included for instance the number of users and registrations, number of clicks on the various sub-pages, an analysis of the search function of the website and

availability of the system. One result of the evaluation was that the portal is mostly used during the week. This lead to the conclusion that the website is preliminarily used by employers for work related purposes. Another finding was that, although the portal was mostly accessed from Germany, a considerable number of users also accessed the portal from other, non-German speaking countries.

Other matters

- The establishment of the one-stop shop was only the final step of a longer lasting effort to reduce compliance costs for employers. It has proven as particularly useful that, prior to the actual establishment of the one-stop shop, an in-depth analysis of existing procedures and requirements had been conducted, including a baseline calculation of compliance costs. On the basis of this baseline assessment, an analysis of various options how to address the problems that had been identified was conducted.

Key learnings:

- The user-oriented design of the communication interface is considered as a key element of the success of the online portal. The language and the content of the portal were specifically designed to be accessible for users without prior experience with social security issues and online services. Further, the design of the portal ensures that targeted answers to the user's request can be provided.
- An essential requirement was that the content of the portal can be created and updated by social security experts independently without any programming skills. For this purpose, a programme was created that automatically converts the content into the format required for the website. Thus, the maintenance and control of the content of the portal can be carried out without any intervention of a programmer. This helps to reduce the effort to maintain the portal and ensures a rapid implementation in practice.
- A key feature of the one-stop shop is that the information portal can be simultaneously displayed and used from the websites of individual social insurances. One of the aims connected to the establishment of the central portal was to reduce the amount of information and complexity that was already provided on the various websites that are operated by the different insurance carriers. The portal was therefore designed with the possibility to be connected and embedded on other websites. The interface can be adapted according to the look and feel of the website of each of the individual insurances, e.g. by adapting the design and embedding the logo. This has proven to be of particular added value, since the individual insurances can offer their customers additional, tailor-made information while the users do not realise that they are visiting a different website. According to the evaluation report from 2018, 44 health insurance companies had already put in place such an extended connection to the information portal.

Tu Empresa (Mexico)

Background

The website www.tuempresa.gob.mx was launched on 2009 aimed to facilitate the procedures for the constitution and operation of businesses. At the beginning, procedures related to the use of denominations or corporate names had no charge and no time restrictions. Citizens provided their data only once and the website transmitted electronically such information to the agencies responsible, and each agency processed the procedures of their responsibility and created a "Company deed" to be submitted to a notary or registered securities broker and to constitute their businesses.

In 2015, as part of the National Digital Strategy, the website tuempresa.gob was incorporated to the platform GOB.MX, since March 2016 with the amendment of the General Law of Commercial Companies, the Corporate Name can be authorised; the Company deed of "*Sociedad por Acciones Simplificadas* (Simplified joint-stock company) (SAS)" can be obtained, in addition to allow obtaining the Federal Taxpayer Registry (RFC) issued by the SAT (Taxpayer Administration System), e-signature, and employer registry before the IMSS (Mexican Social Security Institute).

In the period from January to May 2017, the website tuempresa.gob.mx received 348 722 requests in total for denominations or corporate names, of which 85 056 were authorised.

Level of government

It is currently only operational at the federal government level/Mexican federal agencies.

Early stage efforts have been started to link web pages of procedures issued by the subnational governments; in particular those in charge of granting licenses or permits to operate businesses; however, they have not been concluded to date, but this is a mid-term goal expected to be achieved.

Clients

Its clients are citizens that require information to register and operate a business in Mexico.

The web page tuempresa is for corporate persons and not for natural persons, which implies that a lot of citizens of SMEs intending to operate with the mode of natural persons with business activities cannot start their company through the website.

What does it do?

The website tuempresa is designed to guide citizens according to the three main stages of their business – opening, operation, and closure.

How does it operate?

In 2015, the website was integrated to the National Digital Strategy which defines the technical aspects for interoperability and usability.

One of the advantages of the website is that with the e-signature or electronic signature issued by the SAT, users are identified, have access to their information, and data is interoperable for the agencies participating in the website.

The e-signature is useful for authenticating taxpayers, as the main security item.

Type of service offered

The website provides information on the procedures for opening, operating, and closing a business; the website tuempresa, however, only manages the following procedures:

- Authorisation for using a denomination
- Constitution of Companies, referring to the modes of “Simplified joint-stock company (SAS)” or the typical Commercial Companies
- Notice of Denomination Use
- Incorporation to the Public Registry of Commerce
- Registration to the Federal Taxpayer Registry
- Employer registry at the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)

Regarding the procedures for operating and closing a business, the website provides the links to the specific websites to perform the corresponding procedures.

As for the operation of businesses, there is a link to the Public Registry of Commerce, Digital Mexican Business Information System, National Register of Foreign Investment, and Movable Property Collateral Registry, and the Commercial Companies Publication System.

And for closing a business, there is a link to the simplified procedure for the dissolution and liquidation of businesses.

Communication mediums

It is an online only tool for Mexican businesses operating at the federal level.

Selected features

Political commitment

- For launching the website, it was necessary the political engagement of the highest level, since it was necessary that several federal government agencies converged for offering on-line procedures in one unique access point operated by the Ministry of Economy.
- Another aspect that required political commitment at the highest level was the amendment to the General Law of Commercial Companies on 2016, which enabled the Ministry of Economy to issue the Authorisation for the use of a denomination of a company

Altinn (Norway)

Background

Altinn started in 2003, as a collaboration on reporting between three government Agencies. Sixteen years later, the Altinn collaboration spans all major government agencies and furthermore serves the municipalities. All Norwegian enterprises and about 90% of the working population have switched from paper to digital dialogue via Altinn.

2005: Altinn was expanded from being a reporting solution to becoming a dialogue solution when creating the Altinn message box. From 2005, the agencies could send messages to the users' message box in ALtinn. And the users had both their private mailbox and mailboxes for the roles they had in business. The messages were also distributed via Altinn's APIs, so that they could also appear in the company's business system.

2005: The Tax Administration developed Tax Returns for employees and pensioners (citizens) in Altinn. The form was pre-filled with information from the Population Register, employers and banks so that very many did not have to do anything other than clicking "sign and submit".

2007: Altinn was extended with regulatory information written in plain language to help SMEs. The information was regularly quality assured by the agencies that managed the regulatory area.

2008: Legislation was changed so that taxpayers no longer have to sign and submit the Tax Returns if they have no changes to the pre-filled tax notification. Today, 7 out of 10 employees and pensioners use so-called "silent acceptance".

2009: Altinn was appointed Point of Single Contact (PSC) under the EU Services Directive. (248/5000)

2010: A new, modernised Altinn Platform was released, named Altinn II, with six different service types:

- Submission service
- Message service
- Access service
- Authorisation services
- Transmission service
- Collaborative services

The main idea was that there is possible to standardize the ways public sector exchange information with other entities in public or private sector. In Altinn II it was also established as a principle that all functionality in the portal should also be available from open APIs.

2010: The innovation@altinn programme was established. The programme benefits from input provided by service owners through strategic meetings, as well as from annual surveys to different user groups, and industry meetings.

2011: The information portal in Altinn (before logging in) was considerably expanded by adding two more portals with business information into Altinn.

2015: The a-ordning is a co-ordinated service used by employers to report information about income and employees to the Labour and Welfare Administration, Statistics Norway and the Norwegian Tax Administration.

The information is submitted electronically, either machine-to-machine via the employer's payroll system (integrated via Altinn's APIs) or via web forms in Altinn. The Norwegian Tax Administration administers the service on behalf of the other public agencies.

2016: Altinn launched its own payment solution, so that users can pay a fee for, for example, patent applications to the Norwegian Industrial Property Office.

2016: Altinn launched user-driven consent, as an extension of the authorisation solution.

Level of government

As of May 2019, 57 agencies, directorates and municipalities are involved in the Altinn collaboration. In addition, more than 400 municipalities use Altinn to send letters and messages to citizens and businesses in their Altinn inbox.

Clients

Altinn was originally a portal and platform for dialogue between business and the public, but also contains key services for private individuals, such as tax returns, requests concerning choice of name, application for sickness benefit etc.

When it comes to information about duties, rights and opportunities, there is mainly information for the business community on Altinn.no, while residents can find information on Norge.no and on the government agencies' own websites.

What does it do?

The Norwegian one-stop shop solution Altinn fulfils the most sophisticated one-stop shop model. It is a common web portal for transactions and information, but it is also a platform where governmental agencies can develop and run their services.

The service owners have developed about 1 000 forms and services on the Altinn platform. Citizens and companies find these services in the forms overview on altinn.no.

How does it operate?

The Brønnøysund Register Center has been responsible for the management, operation and further development of Altinn, on behalf of the co-operating agencies and the municipalities, since May 2004. Nevertheless, the co-operation - the organisational interoperability - has been central to the whole process.

The Norwegian Tax Administration led the first Altinn project in 2002/2003 and has always accounted for 80-90% of the transaction volume through Altinn. Statistics Norway is the agency that has the most services on the platform. Both these and the other service owners in the Altinn collaboration have considerable influence on strategy and further development of the platform.

The Altinn Governance Structure comprises the Director General of the Brønnøysund Register Centre (BRC) who makes the final strategic decisions, supported by the Altinn Guidance Council which comprises nine Altinn Government bodies. The BRC User Council is an advisory body and comprises selected end-users and organisations, primarily representing businesses, the organisations representing accountants and auditors, and representatives from several Government bodies.

The annual expenditures for management costs and basic maintenance costs of Altinn are funded by specifically allocated amounts in the annual government budget on a multiyear basis.

Funding of development costs are applied for on an annual basis, by a separate application to the respective ministry. If approved, the funds will be included in the government budget for the succeeding year. The platform is developed according to the needs of the end users and service owners, and it is possible for service owners to fund concrete development projects on the platform as long as the functionally is in accordance with the general strategy.

Operating costs are covered by the government entities that are service owners in Altinn. The service owners pay their share of the annual operating costs based on how many transactions their services generate on the platform.

Type of service offered

Altinn is both an informational and transactional web portal. The users (businesses/citizens) can both submit forms and receive messages from the public agencies in their Altinn inbox, i.e. digital dialogue.

Altinn has replaced physical offices. Norway is a very elongated country with a scattered population. While, for example, the Tax Administration previously had tax offices in all Norwegian municipalities, digitisation has meant that the need for the physical presence has now been drastically reduced. 100% of the business community uses Altinn for reporting and dialogue with the public, and about 90% of the working population have switched from paper to digital dialogue via Altinn.

Altinn is integrated with the municipalities for some citizen services. For instance, development applications by citizens can be lodged with the relevant municipality, but in addition, the service is also linked to architects. Lastly, Altinn's peer-to-peer service allows citizens to notify their neighbours of the application for the purposes of public consultation.

Communication mediums

Altinn has its own support centre, for requests by phone and email about how to use Altinn. In addition, service owners have their own support for governmental and legal issues. The Altinn support centre can easily redirect users to the different agencies' support centres. The users may also use the Altinn app.

The Start and Run of Business section of Altinn also has its own business support desk that guides entrepreneurs and SMEs by phone and email. They also regularly offer start-up seminars across Norway.

The Starting and running a business section contains comprehensive and co-ordinated information across agency boundaries, quality assured by the agency that is responsible for the laws and regulations.

Information provided by Altinn is at a general level, with links to more detailed information on the agency's own website, or to the web portal www.lovdata.no that contains all national laws and regulations.

Selected features

Leadership

- As Altinn has had an incremental development based on common needs, the co-ordination has emerged without being part of a master plan.
- With the upgrade of Altinn to Altinn II, it became a suitable platform for a co-ordinated service on setting up and running a business in Norway, named "Start and run Business". In 2011, the transition of these web-services was completed. To ensure that information quality was established and maintained, a quality assurance system was established. Key factors in this are an editorial board and explicit procedures for content creation and approval from information owners (competent authorities). The procedures have developed over time as technology and user needs have changed. The editorial board remains operational in 2019.
- Users experienced major performance issues with the new Altinn II platform at peak load events like the annual disclosure of tax settlement notices. An investigation concluded that the project had too much focus on functionality at the expense of non-functional requirements, such as performance. Capacity was increased, and today, the capacity of Altinn is high and sufficient.

Co-operation and collaboration

- Altinn has paid particular attention to collaboration between the various agencies, with joint reporting and feedback adapted to the user's business processes, cutting across formal organisational boundaries between government agencies and administrative levels.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Altinn collects a range of usage statistics:
  - Approximately 95% of citizens of working age use Altinn. Data on users' age as well as gender are available.
  - Altinn is used by 100% of businesses for tax returns and annual accounts, with some 99% using it for VAT. It is also heavily utilised for shareholder register statements (98%), bankruptcy proceedings (95%), and co-ordinated register notifications (91%).
- The EU Single Digital Gateway team conducted an evaluation of the user-friendliness of all European contact points in 2018. The user tests ranked the information content under "Start and run Business" in the Altinn information portal as the best in Europe.

Other matters

Technological considerations

- Users are uniquely identified by their social security number from the Norwegian population register. Authentication of users is established by a national service for authentication (ID-porten) which is an interface and technical solution that accepts several ID authentication solutions developed by the private or public sector. It has also been very important to know who is responsible for operating a particular enterprise. For this purpose, Altinn uses the Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities.

Expansion of services

- Altinn is currently looking to expand its services based on various life events. Individual service owners are responsible for devising the life events that best suit them. One area currently under investigation is to facilitate the administrative proceedings after a death, which would bring together a range of public and private services.
- Altinn's authorisation module is being further developed into a more comprehensive solution, with a direct look at even more public (and perhaps even private) registers than today.
- Altinn is currently developing a completely new service development solution, Altinn Studio, which should be operational in 2020. The Altinn Studio platform will provide support for modern, responsive design, as well as allow for automatic testing, and the self-service migration of services into the cloud-based runtime environment.

Key learnings

- A key factor has been that the design of Altinn from the outset was on business needs. This has helped to ensure that Altinn remains user-focussed and subject to change as user needs differ over time.
- The integration of Altinn with professional software systems has been the single most important factor in Altinn's success as a one-stop shop.

- The Tax Administration as part of the one-stop shop Altinn developed tax returns for employees and pensioners. Forms were pre-filled with information from the Population Register, employers, and banks – so that a number of citizens were only required to click “sign and submit” and the form was complete. Legislation was changed in 2008 to go to the next step – the requirement for signing and submission was no longer needed unless there had been changes. Now around 70% of employees and pensioners use the so-called “silent acceptance” mechanism
- Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for integration with professional software systems for business and industry. This has been the single most important factor for Altinn’s success. For services like tax returns, VAT and annual accounts, as much as 90% of the data is transferred directly from the businesses own software systems via the Altinn APIs and also to the connected governmental agencies. The APIs have also been important source of innovation in the way that Altinn delivers its services.
- Powerful authorisation solution built on roles in national business registers. The creation of Altinn was based on the amalgamation of five existing business registers, thereby establishing the Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities. Altinn’s authorisation module is currently being further developed into a more comprehensive solution, with the possibility of including more public (and possibly private) registers.
- Prefilling of forms based on central registers and the agencies’ own data sources. This was an important development to reduce demands on users in instances where data already existed on government systems. It also gave users access to their personal and if applicable, enterprise archive which stored all previous communications.

ePortugal

Background

ePortugal.gov.pt was developed to aggregate the three main government digital portals “Citizen Portal”, “Citizen Map” and “Entrepreneur’s Desk” under a single domain for government services in 2019.

- Citizen Portal: provided services specifically for citizens (national and foreign). For example: request a passport, renew driving license, and request a residence permit renewal.
- Entrepreneur’s Desk: provided services for businesses. For example: industrial licensing, start a company, etc.
- Citizen Map: georeferencing of physical locations to perform public services and a portal where people could get their tickets for some specific physical service counters, namely those located on the Citizens Shops

It combines in a single governmental programme the objectives of better regulation, reduction of administrative burden, service interoperability, procedures digitisation, red tape cutting, and digital government promotion.

ePortugal.gov.pt is the Point of Single Contact under the EU Services Directive and the Single Digital Gateway to access electronic public services. It promotes the dematerialisation and simplification of services, as well as bringing the public administration closer to citizens, businesses and society at large. The portal is available to everyone, while offering the possibility to create an account choosing from six registration and authentication mechanisms available. Some of these require a prior registration on the national electronic authentication system, autenticação.gov.

The National Digital Strategy outlines how the single domain was created in order to organise information and electronic services around both life and business events. The domain is intended to meet citizens’ and companies’ expectations and demands, pursuing the citizen-driven approach that the Portuguese government has been implementing for the past number of years.

ePortugal was developed under the SIMPLEX+, the Portuguese simplification and modernisation programme that follows a citizen-driven approach with the ultimate goal of having citizens’ and businesses’ everyday life and their interaction with the public administration as seamless as possible. Since 2016, SIMPLEX+ launched a total of 602 simplification measures, and in 2019 a new version was launched, iSIMPLEX, where the “I” stands for innovation. With 119 planned projects, the iSIMPLEX is based on 5 main areas: once only; sharing and reuse; digital by default; behavioral economy; and emergent technologies.

Level of government

ePortugal.gov.pt operates at the level of both central and local government (municipalities) administration in Portugal, providing services to both business and citizens.

Clients

Its clients are both Portuguese businesses and citizens, as well as visitors to Portugal.

What does it do?

ePortugal.gov.pt is the starting point for over 1 000 essential government services, providing information, guidance and services for citizens and businesses, as well as detailed guidance for professionals and specific groups such as employees, migrants and others and information on government and policy. The

services offered are provided by 590 entities, from both the central government (17 ministries), local government and private entities.

How does it operate?

The Administrative Modernisation Agency (AMA) is the sole entity responsible for the management and co-ordination of ePortugal.gov.pt having the responsibility to obtain, update and upload content of services and entities of all the Public Administration. At the operational level, the AMA co-ordinates the collection and gathering of information from the different entities and publishes the content regarding the services available.

The portal uses several digital infrastructures and platforms, which are at the core of the Portuguese digital transformation efforts such as:

- the **national e-id and authentication provider** (autenticação.gov), providing access through the Portuguese Citizen Card and the Digital Mobile Key (DMK).
- The former effectively allows citizens to securely perform various operations without the need for face-to-face interaction. It has a smart card format and it integrates in a single document the Civil Identity Card, the Social Security card, and the National Health System and User, and the Taxpayer identification cards. In order to use its electronic features, a card reader is required.
- The latter is a national mobile eID solution which only requires a mobile phone. The DMK system allows secure access to most public, and some private companies' websites by relying on a customised keyword (a 4 to 6 digit PIN) chosen by the user which generates a temporary code numbers sent via SMS or push notifications to the user's smartphone.
- the **Interoperability platform – iAP**: this is part of the government's efforts to achieve a fully digital public administration. The idea behind this is that connecting the multitude of public entities and digital platforms that accumulate public information allows public services to exchange data in real time, facilitating the "only-once principle", whereby citizens don't have to provide information that is already in a public administration database.
- the **national Catalogue of Entities and Services**: located inside iAP, this is the central repository of information about public organisations, services, points of care, websites, apps, etc.
- **SIGA, the ticket dispenser system:** part of the social security platform, it is used for most public services in Portugal and is also accessible through the ePortugal.gov's map application.

ePortugal acts as the central point to access information regarding all public administration services, directing citizens to either online services or physical locations if the specific service has still not been digitalised.

The portal offers a channel of direct assistance with the Citizen Helpline and Business Spot Helpline, both ran by AMA. These operate by email and phone offering the possibility to contact them directly or to request a contact, by filling out a specific form. The Chatbot SIGMA, based on artificial intelligence, is another user-supported channel. It helps the users to get information about the services available on the portal, and through the Chatbot, users can also ask to be contacted by one of the existing helplines for a more personalised service.

Type of service offered

Being the entry point for over 1 000 services, ePortugal's scope is extremely broad and includes both informational and transactional services aimed at facilitating citizens' access to all public services. As for those which are not available online, guidance is provided mainly through the Citizen Map section and largely refers to so-called Citizen Shops which are physical one-stop shops spread across the country, where several Portuguese private (mostly commodities suppliers) and public entities have their own physical counters and human resources providing their services, with a face-to-face approach.

Communication mediums

ePortugal.gov.pt is an online service which also provides guidance about services requiring physical interaction. It presents information regarding all public services, independently of the channel used to perform them. In addition, when the service can be done through different channels (online, face to face, etc), the ePortugal.gov.pt has information regarding all the channels available for that particular service. For example, for the renewal of the Citizen Card, the portal provides information on what is required to do this service in person and what is needed to be done online.

Selected features

Role clarity

- The rationale for the creation of ePortugal.gov.pt was to increase the accessibility and interoperability of public services. This was achieved by joining in a single portal informational services (irrespective of the channel used to provide the services) and transactional services for citizens and businesses. Examples of the latter include making changes and requests regarding the Citizen Card, requesting certificates and business licenses and permits. At the same time, role clarity has been maintained by retaining an internal distinction between the Citizen Map and "Business Spot" (previously called "Entrepreneur's Desk").

Human capital

- The portal draws from the pre-existing human resource structure that is located at AMA. There are several AMA teams working with the ePortugal.gov.pt: these are dedicated to the digital management of the portal, and maintaining relationships with citizens and businesses and cross-sectorial tasks, mainly aimed at digitalising services and marketing strategy purposes.

  Before the launch of ePortugal, several people from the AMA teams had a one-day training with the company that had developed the technological part of the portal to familiarise them with the new system. AMA is also continuously looking to expand its in-house technical expertise in order to both improve its efficiency as a provider of digital solutions and to assist other organisations in their process of digitalisation of services.
- The AMA Academy develops projects in the areas of formation, qualification and development of skills for the Public Service Network and for the Public Administration as a whole. In this context, it developed specific pedagogical contents concerning ePortugal.

Public consultation

- There were user testing activities with other public entities, end-users, and business people were also consulted during the design and implementation phases. These parties mainly influenced general design decisions or functional details that emerged from usability testing.
- For the development of the portal, several design thinking and user research activities were undertaken, leading to the creation of personas, tests and user-experience led development cycles, based on the collection of feedback from end-users (citizens and/or businesspeople).

Co-operation and collaboration

- While the infrastructure largely relies on a central uniform basis country-wide, synergies among different levels of government allow for some room for manoeuvre for local government administration (municipalities) to implement customised solutions (e.g. unique forms or special customised taxes). This is reflected accordingly on the ePortugal platform.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The portal features built-in feedback visualisation and export tools and has been configured for analytics tracking. A wide range of statistics are being collected as part of an ongoing process of review of monitoring and evaluation practices. Among these are: page views, sessions, visitors, registered users, number of authentications, most viewed pages, most viewed services, most performed services, and user satisfaction.
- Every user can leave feedback about the content of the portal: the user can assess whether the information is useful, and, if not, leave a message with suggestions.

  The feedback mechanism is available on every page of the portal.

  Feedback left in the portal by its users is taken into consideration to rectify information that may be out of date, to simplify the language in order to make the information more objective and clear, and, whenever possible, if some information is not available in the portal, to publish new services.
- There is also an electronic form for complaints, compliments and suggestions ("Livro Amarelo" – Yellow Book), and the citizen and businesses helplines.

Other matters

- LabX is the Experimentation Lab for the Portuguese Public Administration. It is led by an AMA team, which started in 2016 to embed a culture of experimentation in the Portuguese public administration, (re)designing public services around the citizen's needs and expectations and promoting an evidence-based approach to policymaking.

  It intends to be a safe space for experimentation, a disseminator of innovation, a promoter of citizen participation and a pivot for the innovation ecosystem.

Key learnings

- The role of AMA was of paramount importance for the realisation of ePortugal, providing both the human capital and the administrative expertise and, most importantly, taking over the everyday management and constant updating of the portal. The latter point is particularly important as the work on the portal is never finished and it is always necessary to create new content, update information, and to adapt the portal to users' needs and requirements.
- The portal's development greatly benefited from strong political commitment. It was part of the SIMPLEX Modernisation and Simplification Programme and a highly visible piece of public service delivery and digital transformation. This visibility has not wavered in recent times since the portal continues to evolve and host new digital services.
- ePortugal acts continuously as a central piece of government co-ordination between different entities, regarding the aggregation and cataloguing of information about public services. For these purposes to be achieved effectively and in order to improve interoperability, it is of key importance to develop comprehensive feedback tools together with a constant monitoring and evaluation of trends and turnout, which subsequently feed into a redesign of the services.
- Key success factors of the AMA's training programme have included: the involvement of all agents (Board of Directors, Management Units, Entities, Trainees); utilising a multidisciplinary team for delivery; the use of simple technology, that is both intuitive and interactive; a training model tailored to the target audience and particular context; diverse approaches to the design of teaching materials; and continual evaluation of learning and its effectiveness.

GOV.UK

Background

GOV.UK was part of the government's "Digital Strategy". GOV.UK replaced the two main government digital brands "Directgov" and "Business Link" as a single domain for government in 2012, thus enabling access to all departments', agencies' and arm's length bodies' digital information and transactional services to citizens and businesses, using one web address.

GOV.UK went live in 2010 as the UK's single government website creating a central place for citizens to access factual, relevant information about the government. Thousands of individual government websites and all the existing content was rewritten or republished to reflect user needs.

The single domain for government was created to provide value to the taxpayer by reducing the need to learn government structures and providing a consistent user experience with access to joined-up government services.

Level of government

GOV.UK operates at the federal government level in the United Kingdom.

Clients

Its clients are both businesses and citizens, as well as visitors to the United Kingdom.

What does it do?

GOV.UK is the starting point for 152 essential government services, providing information, guidance and services for citizens and businesses, as well as detailed guidance for professionals, and information on government and policy. It currently has 25 Ministerial departments and 405 other agencies and public bodies.

How does it operate?

Individual departments are responsible for managing their own services. GOV.UK and services are developed in line with the published service standard and with assisted digital support if necessary. The site is maintained by the Government Digital Service (GDS), where all government departments and agencies have a presence on GOV.UK.

There are over 500 000 web pages on GOV.UK. The GDS is responsible for writing and maintaining the content of just 1% of these pages, which meets the most common user needs. This includes clear explanations on how to claim benefits, renew car tax, and start a business. GDS writes the content and departments check the factual accuracy. This section of GOV.UK gets between 70 and 80% of all traffic. This content is referred to as "mainstream".

The remaining 99% of web pages on GOV.UK are written and managed directly by teams within departments and agencies, using the publishing tools that GDS builds, maintains, and improves. This covers things like government policy, detailed guidance for specialist users, news, speeches, and announcements and consultations. This content is referred to as "Whitehall". Individual departments and agencies are responsible for writing and updating Whitehall content that they own.

GOV.UK was built using agile methodologies and built to meet user needs, not government needs. Users no longer need to know which government department they need to deal with. They're simply dealing with government, and GOV.UK makes that easier.

Type of service offered

As the entry point for 152 essential government services, GOV.UK's remit is extremely broad and includes many policy areas such as taxation, transport, and the welfare sector.

Communication mediums

GOV.UK is an online only service.

Selected features

Role clarity

- An early operating principle was to not make a distinction between "business" and "citizen" needs, as at different times an individual will be one or the other. It was considered that individuals should not have to understand how government structures itself in order to accomplish their goals. Rather, the important issue was structuring content so each audience understood through context what was useful to them.

Human capital

- GDS provides content training for around 115 people per month and facilitates cross-government networks for the 3000+ content designers, including collaboration on content, training, events, recruitment, secondments and shadowing. This has also reduced the learning curve when digital staff move departments.

  Content designers adhere to a strict house style requiring content to be checked by another designer prior to publishing. This has led to a more consistent style over time. Publishing on the single domain allows departments and agencies to collaborate on content, reduce duplication and provide simpler and clearer content for users.

Public consultation

- All businesses and citizens are simply collectively considered "users", user research participants are drawn from everywhere. The various cross-government networks (such as content design, service design, and user research) regularly share their experience through meetups and blogs.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Feedback buttons for users can be found on every page of GOV.UK. For example, the feedback button data allowed determining whether users found the new Step-by-step approach valuable. To date, 5 859 users have given a feedback on "Apply for a standard visitor visa: step by step", with 77% saying they found it useful.
- GOV.UK is constantly being updated and improved in response to user feedback and changing circumstances. This is a continuous process. The design process is iterative where prototypes are tested with users in a user research lab.

  The development of GOV.UK is done in consultation with other government departments and agencies, however it is iterated to meet user needs and not government needs.

Other matters

- "Step by step" navigation is a new feature on GOV.UK that allows any service to be represented as a series of simple steps. At the moment, the GOV.UK team is scaling up this approach to some of the most complex areas of government including visas, childcare, and exporting goods.

  The learnings are being shared with other governments and a range of organisations that might benefit from this approach. There have been talks with other public and third sector organisations including the UK's Citizen's Advice Bureau and the New Zealand government about how a similar approach might work. The step by step navigation project has been designed to be replicated across government. There are already 18 examples live with more in progress and planned for the future.

Key learnings

- GOV.UK would not have been possible without the creation of the Government Digital Service (GDS), an agency working at the heart of UK government in the UK Cabinet Office. GDS is working with departments and agencies to curate content (both Whitehall and Mainstream) and transactions that pertain to a given task for users so that complex processes are presented in clear, manageable steps. Examples are based on life events and include: learn to drive a car; apply for a standard visitor visa; and get your business ready to employ staff.
- The establishment of a one-stop shop is a highly iterative process. From the conception to testing and piloting, onto going live, collecting and incorporating feedback, as well as technological advancements means that the development and improvement of one-stop shops never really ends.
- Having a team that are willing to experiment, make mistakes, and learn from them is critical to improving service delivery over time. Likewise, management need to be supportive of – and ensure strong political buy-in – for such an approach.
- Sharing experiences with others has presented opportunities to utilise existing solutions in more innovative ways, saving both time and resources. Creating a culture where staff can openly discuss both failures and successes has helped to increase awareness of shared challenges as well as the search for solutions.

Primary Authority (UK)

Background

The establishment of Primary Authority occurred when at a time the UK Government was focussed on administrative simplification, along with several other contemporaneous regulatory reform programmes. However, the largest driver for the establishment of the Primary Authority was in response to feedback from both businesses and local authorities that legislation was interpreted and applied inconsistently across the UK.

The *Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 (UK)* legally established the scheme, making available a single, reliable source of tailored advice for businesses trading across multiple local authority areas. Primary Authority commenced in 2009 and the numbers of businesses taking advantage of the scheme quickly grew.

In 2013, the scheme was extended through the *Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2012* (UK) to groups of businesses, who collectively share an approach with regards to compliance, such as trade associations and franchises. This gave many more businesses access to reliable, consistent advice through their trade associations or franchises. The number of businesses benefitting from Primary Authority advice increased dramatically, from just over 1 500 to around 25 000 businesses.

Feedback from business, local authorities acting as primary authorities and local authority inspectors highlighted that a number of administrative improvements could be made to the scheme, and a further extension would be beneficial. Following intense stakeholder engagement, the scheme was yet again extended through the *Enterprise Act 2015 (UK)*. This gave every business trading in the UK access to tailored and legally assured advice, and brought national regulators into the scheme to provide additional support to local authorities delivering Primary Authority.

The current version of Primary Authority came into force on 1st October 2017, which saw numbers of businesses with the legal surety of the advice they were following increase from 25 000 to around 85 000.

Over the past decade, Primary Authority has also expanded its scope. It originally covered predominantly trading standards and environmental health matters, but was extended to include age restricted sales of alcohol in 2011, and to cover specific elements of fire safety in 2013. In terms of scope, the primary authority partnerships originally mainly focussed on enforcement actions, but was expanded in 2011 to better include inspections by the relevant regulatory authorities. The partnerships were expanded in 2011 to also include franchise-based businesses.

Level of government

Primary Authority involves both national and local governments. Advice is provided by local and fire authorities. There are currently over 208 authorities acting as primary authorities as at September 2019.

National regulators, including the Food Standards Agency, the Office for Product Safety and Standards, the Health and Safety Executive, and the Gambling Commission are currently listed as “supporting regulators”, meaning that they are able to provide advice to businesses through their primary authorities.

Clients

Its clients are businesses, in particular small and medium enterprises.

What does it do?

Primary Authority provides assured regulatory advice to businesses. The advice is relevant to businesses, and anyone trading in the United Kingdom. Primary Authority advice is available in the following areas: environmental health, trading standards, and fire safety specifically relating to licensing, petrol storage certification, and explosives licensing.

How does it operate?

The Office for Product Safety and Standards, part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, are the administrators of the scheme.

Businesses and local authorities are required to apply for their partnerships using an IT system (the Primary Authority Register) provided and managed by the Office for Product Safety and Standards. Assistance is also available via the Primary Authority helpline for those who cannot use the digital service.

After the partnership is established, the local authority and business manage the relationship themselves. They are encouraged to agree on methods of communication prior to setting up the partnership. All advice that is provided to businesses by a primary authority must be published online, via the Primary Authority Register.

The primary authority partnership – which is usually between a business and a local authority – is responsible for giving advice and guidance to the partner business in relation to the relevant function(s) (eg environmental health etc) and is also responsible for giving advice and guidance to other local authorities about how they should exercise the relevant function(s) in relation to that business or organisation.

Businesses pay local authorities, fire services, and national regulators, on a cost-recovery basis, for the provision of Primary Authority services. This is designed to protect front-line services and to provide advice to businesses at a reasonable cost.

Guidance has been created by the Office for Product Safety and Standards, to explain how Primary Authority works, and how a business, local authority, fire service and national regulator should operate within the scheme.

Guidance is also provided for central government policy officials to explain how they should interact with the scheme and how their policy areas can be brought into scope of the scheme.

Type of service offered

Primary Authority services currently covers the areas of environmental health, trading standards, and fire safety specifically in the areas of licensing, petrol storage certification, and explosives licensing. While these areas may seem rather specialised, they are the responsibility of a number of different ministries across the UK.

Communication mediums

The services of the Primary Authority are primarily delivered via an online digital service. Additionally, the Office for Product Safety and Standards provides a helpline. These services relate to the creation of primary authorities which are then in turn responsible for providing the relevant information.

Local authorities also offer their own digital, telephony and physical shopfronts for the Primary Authority services that they deliver to their business clients. The Primary Authorities are then responsible for providing legally assured information about what various UK businesses need to do in the above areas of competence to be in compliance with the law. That said, the Primary Authorities are only responsible for the provision of advice, they do not actually provide assistance to businesses to complete their regulatory requirements.

Selected features

Political commitment

- The continual turnover of Ministers presents a challenge for the Primary Authority. As a very small entity in the British civil service, it is a continual challenge to educate decision-makers about the specific roles of the Primary Authority.
- Primary Authority has become an attractive political avenue for decision-makers to find out about regulatory burdens and impacts "on the ground". It is attractive as the main clients of the Primary Authority are SMEs which are typically difficult for decision-makers to reach.
- During the initial take-up phase, significant pressure was applied to have a target number of businesses in place by 2020. However, the target was not substantiated by an evidence base, and in any event, it does not appear that the target was reasonably robust, notwithstanding the increased scope of the Primary Authority in recent years.

Leadership

- The cost-recovery funding model has presented a challenge for some local authorities. This is particularly the case in Wales where it is not commonplace for the local authorities to charge users directly for their services. As a result, the Office for Product Safety and Standards has conducted extensive outreach programmes to assist local authorities understand how they can best structure such regimes, and also to explain to affected businesses what the benefits of the scheme are.

Public consultation

- At every stage of development, Primary Authority's scope has been driven by strong stakeholder engagement. This has been facilitated formally and informally, through public consultation means via impact assessments conducted on potential changes to the scheme; to the establishment of various working groups both overall and in specific areas such as supermarkets.
- The current size of the Primary Authority means that there are limits to what it can reasonably be expected to achieve in terms of scope of services offered. One concern is that if the scheme were to be increased at relatively short notice, the Primary Authority is not currently well-placed to process a potential deluge of applications. It has therefore been important to clearly communicate to decision-makers what the resource implications of any potential expansion would be. Historically, this has been done through a transparent impact assessment process where both internal and external stakeholders have had the opportunity to comment on the need for change, and any associated resource implications.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The use of a Primary Authority by various businesses is now used as a factor in calculating the relative risk profile of businesses for compliance and inspections by relevant UK regulators. Those businesses that have formed a partnership under a Primary Authority are subject to less frequent inspections, relative to other businesses.

  One of the bases for this risk-based approach has been as a result of feedback from regulators. It was found that around two-thirds of regulators involved in the Primary Authority considered that general levels of compliance had improved. Further, where breaches were identified, three-quarters of regulators stated that outcomes were improved in that businesses in breach were easier to deal with in terms of improving their compliance.

- One difficulty experienced by the Primary Authority has been trying to establish what the scheme is worth to British taxpayers. To that end, it contracted a report in 2015 to assess the value of Primary Authority. It has now created an intelligence unit within the Office for Product Safety and Standards which is currently undertaking work to assess the value of the Primary Authority.

Key learnings

- Clear communications with clients has been vitally important. The role of the Primary Authority has at times been misunderstood by business as providing services in a broader range of areas than it actually covers. This has required staff at the Primary Authority to undertake active engagement and dialogue with the business community to ensure that its role is properly understood.
- Establishing a community of practice has been an essential part of securing continued buy-in from local governments and from business clients. It has also provided the opportunity to discuss challenges and share solutions in a collaborative manner.

Annexe A. Cross-border services in the European Union

The Services Directive

History

The Services Directive (2006/123/EC) is part of the process of economic reform launched by the Lisbon strategy in 2000, aiming to make Europe the world's most competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010. It was first proposed in 2004 under the leadership of the former European Commissioner for the Internal Market Frits Bolkestein. It followed a process of revision and was eventually approved and adopted by the Council and European Parliament on 12 December 2006. The Services Directive was to be completely implemented by the Member States by 28 December 2009.

Objectives

The Lisbon Strategy required a reinvigorated push towards the completion of the internal market. Continuous growth of the service sector was contributing to increase the awareness of the untapped potential that liberalising services would bring in terms of employment and overall economic growth. A 2002 report of the Commission on the state of the internal market for services revealed over ninety obstacles to the internal market in services, resulting in considerable costs for companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engaged in cross- border service activities. Service users, in particular consumers, were also found to be affected by the internal market barriers through their impact on prices. The directive was designed to eliminate several burdensome legal obstacles with the aim to foster cross-border economic activity and competition. More specifically, the directive set out a legal framework that would facilitate the following:

- For businesses:
  - Eliminate the obstacles to the freedom of establishment for service providers
  - Remove the barriers to temporary service provision in other member states
  - Simplify procedures and formalities for establishment in another member state
- For consumers:
  - Strengthen rights of consumers and businesses receiving services
  - Enhance information and transparency on service providers
  - Widen choice and strengthen competition leading to lower prices

The Points of Single Contact

One of the pillars of the Directive was for Member States to establish Points of Single Contact (PSCs) by the end of 2009.The PSCs are e-government portals providing information on legal and administrative requirements and access to electronic procedures to complete necessary formalities online. Instead of interacting with different national public authorities, PSCs allow users to obtain all the necessary

information and to complete the whole procedure online. They act as an online interface between the business and the government and are part of the Member States' eGovernment agendas. The full implementation of the PSCs has so far proved to be a challenge. To make the PSCs more responsive to the businesses' needs, the Commission and the Member States agreed on a *PSC Charter* in 2013, setting out four standard criteria for improving and benchmarking the PSCs – i.e. quality and availability of information, transactionality of e-procedures, accessibility for cross-border users, and usability.

- A key assessment of the PSCs was undertaken in 2012, when the Commission conducted an extensive study which revealed that most Member States were still struggling to comply with all requirements of the Services Directive.
- Another similar assessment carried out in 2015 highlighted the persistence of significant space for improvement, with an average accessibility score of the PSCs of 54% and some elements clearly underperforming such as *Accessibility for cross-border Users* (41%). On the other hand, the best performing PSC features were *Usability and transactionality of e-procedures* (61%) followed by *Quality and availability of information* (57%).

The PSC Charter also specified that the 2015 assessment would not constitute a final deadline but rather a target date for making further progress towards more comprehensive and user-friendly PSCs. Given the considerable scope for improvement, the Commission will continue to assess PSCs on a regular basis thereafter, at sufficiently long intervals to allow for the inclusion of additional enhancements.

The assessment of the PSCs carried out in 2017 and reflected in the Single Market Scoreboard shows that some of them are performing reasonably well (European Commission, 2019[1]). Although Member States have improved the availability of procedures that are at least partially online, access from other Member States continues to be a considerable problem, in particular the use of e-signature and e-ID. In addition, only one third of PSCs provide sufficiently detailed information about procedures.

In addition to the monitoring to be carried out by the Commission, the PSC Charter also invites Member States to closely follow the performance of their electronic Points of Single Contact and to test them against the actual business needs as much as possible.

The single digital gateway

On 2 October 2018, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a Regulation establishing a single digital gateway. This project effectively builds on the existing capacity of PSCs and constitutes a further step in the consolidation of the Single Market for services.

The single digital gateway will become the online access point for EU citizens and business in need of information to get active in any EU Member State. It will be known and promoted to citizens and businesses as "Your Europe". It will provide reliable and verified search results about rules, rights, procedures and high-quality assistance services. In addition, users will be able to perform a number of these procedures fully online and enjoy the benefits of the once-only principle.

- By the end of 2020, citizens and companies moving across EU borders will easily be able to find out what rules and assistance services apply in their new residency
- By the end of 2023 at the latest, they will be able to perform a number of key procedures in all EU member states without any physical paperwork, like registering a car or claiming pension benefits.

Within the single digital gateway, Points of Single Contact are listed among assistance services that have been established by the Union law and therefore should be part of the gateway from its launch, such as EURES.

- The European Network of Employment Services (EURES) is a European Cooperation Network formed by public employment services. Trade unions and employers-organisations also participate as partners. The objective of the EURES network is to facilitate the free movement of workers within the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland. On EURES website, employees have the option of looking for a job and employers can advertise vacancies on the EURES-website.

Other assistance and problem-solving services offered by the Commission, Member States or private entities can join the gateway provided that they fulfil the criteria laid down in the regulation. It is expected that users will get, through the gateway, easy access to the following services:

- The European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) is a network of consumer centres in the EU, Iceland and Norway, which provides information on consumer rights and assists in resolving disputes where the consumer and trader involved are based in two different European countries.
- The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) helps businesses to innovate and grow on an international scale. It is the world's largest support network for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with international ambitions. The Network is active in more than 60 countries worldwide bringing together 3 000 experts from more than 600 member organisations. Member organisations include technology poles, innovation support organisations, universities and research institutes, regional development organisations and chambers of commerce and industry.

Reference

European Commission (2019), *Single Market Scoreboard: Performance per Governance Tool - Points of Single Contact*, https://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/performance_by_governance_tool/points_of_single_contact/index_en.htm. [1]

OECD Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Policy

One-Stop Shops for Citizens and Business

One-stop shops have emerged as a way for governments to provide better services and improve regulatory delivery to citizens and business. The OECD *Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Policy: One-Stop Shops for Citizens and Business* offer a set of practical considerations for designing, operating, and reviewing one-stop shops. The Principles are based on a series of case studies and cover a wide range of tools and institutional arrangements to help governments improve their one-stop shops. This report is part of a series on "best practice principles" produced under the auspices of the OECD Regulatory Policy Committee. As with other reports in the series, it extends and elaborates on principles highlighted in the 2012 *Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance*.

Consult this publication on line at ***https://doi.org/10.1787/b0b0924e-en***.

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The Brønnøysund Register Centre

PRINT ISBN 978-92-64-35709-9

OECD*publishing*
www.oecd.org/publishing