



CoP Public Infrastructure and Social Services

Example of Good Practice

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The municipality's online document management & service provision systems

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1. Introduction

The unified online document management system (*Lietvaris*) that is currently being implemented in Tukums, is aimed at streamlining the provision of services in Tukums municipality. Such a system is in principle available to all municipalities in Latvia, as its implementation is a paid service provided by a private company. According to representatives of the municipality, *Lietvaris* is a way to supplement the national online service portal *latvija.lv*, which is linked to the municipal website. Consequently, these two distinct systems are seen as two sides of the same “coin”. These systems are intended to make service provision more efficient and improve the delivery of services to people living in more remote parts of the municipality. It is a good practice example as it illustrates the use of online tools to facilitate (i) the provision of public services and (ii) the navigation of online resources.

2. Project Intention / Background information

Tukums municipality was established in 2009. It is located in the Western part of Latvia. It is part of the Zemgale historical and cultural region and the Pierīga statistical region. The total number of inhabitants (as of 1 January 2020) is 29 943. However, the number of people living in more remote parts of the municipality of Tukums has declined, and this has made the maintenance of infrastructure and provision of public services in these areas costly and inefficient.



Nonetheless, one of the goals outlined in the municipality’s sustainable development strategy is to maintain connections between, and provide services to communities located in different parts of the municipality irrespective of whether they live in cities or any of the parishes.



Figure 1: Administrative division of Latvia (Tukums in orange)

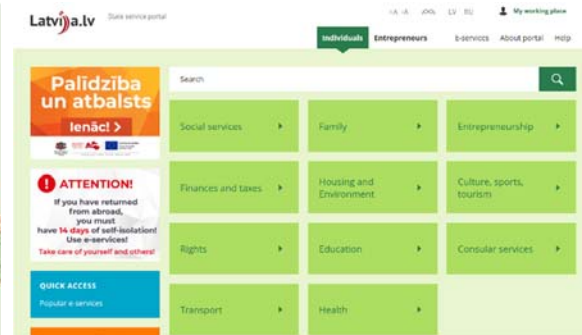


Figure 2: Latvija.lv, the state service portal

Compared to other municipalities in Latvia, Tukums has been active in the deployment and use of ICTs in official contexts. A survey carried out in 2016¹ found that just under half of all respondents (45%) used the official website to obtain information about the work being done by the municipal government, and a similar share of respondents (49%) noted that they would be happy to receive public services online (SKDS 2016). Furthermore, recent data published by the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia suggest that the number of individuals interacting with public institutions may have grown (Central Statistical Bureau 2018).

The reasons for the implementation of the online document management & service provision systems were essentially twofold. Firstly, online facilities allow local residents to spend less time interacting with the local government. Secondly, the document management side allows to simplify the internal processes within the municipality as the system is used to streamline communication and the exchange of internal documents (e.g. reports, forms) between different departments. The target group is, therefore, different for each side of the system – public servants use *Lietvaris*, while local residents use the facilities that allow them to access services online. Certain aspects of the system are currently in the process of being implemented, though feedback from the users has been positive so far. The municipal website is financed by the municipality, as is the document management system, which is developed by a private company, while the state service portal is maintained by the State Regional Development Agency of Latvia.

¹ This was a statistically representative survey. A total of 405 inhabitants of Tukums above 15 years of age were interviewed about the way they interact with the municipality.



3. Main Description

The document management system is currently in the process of being implemented in Tukums municipality. The municipality has engaged the services of *ZZ Dats* to implement this system. While it is still under development, the position of the municipality is that municipal employees will be comfortable using it. Furthermore, the system should speed up internal processes in the municipality, hopefully leading to better administration of public services. Nonetheless, there might be issues with people lacking the necessary skills to use the system effectively. What is more, as it is a new system, the initial stage of implementation will likely be hampered by technical difficulties and issues that had not been identified in the development stage.



Figure 3: Website of Tukums municipality

Similarly, the information about online services provided through *latvija.lv* and the municipality that can be accessed via the website of the municipality has improved access to public services and made it easier to navigate the online system. The system allows residents to access different services (e.g. receive construction permits, obtain a visa), so it is not tied to a particular sector.

The impact of the municipality's online document management & service provision systems on the sustainability of the municipality and urban-rural relations more broadly will likely be expressed via improved efficiency and access. Specifically, they can be regarded as labour saving tools that allow (i) people from remote areas to access public services without having to travel to Tukums and (ii) municipal employees to work more efficiently. However, many of the services that can be accessed via the municipality's website are ultimately maintained by the central government of Latvia, which should be borne in mind when attempting to transfer this practice to another municipality.

4. References

Central Statistical Bureau (2018) Contacting or interacting with public authorities or public services over the Internet by individuals for private purposes (% of total population within the corresponding group), available at: <https://www.csb.gov.lv/lv/statistika/statistikas-temas/zinatne-ikt/datori-internets/tabulas/itmg140/sadarbiba-ar-valsts-vai-sabiedrisko>

SKDS (2016) Apkopoti iedzīvotāju aptaujas rezultāti (2016), [A summary of the results of the survey], available at: http://tukums.lv/images/stories/2016.gads/Aktu%C4%81li/SKDS_aptaujas_rezult%C4%81ti.pdf

