

## Business Service Portal



Received via the European Prize for Innovation in Public Administration.

**Organisation:** Austrian Ministry of Finance

**Country:** Austria

**Level of government:** Central government

**Sector:** Economic affairs, General public services

**Type:** Digital, Public Service

**Launched in:** 2010

**Link to the innovation's website**

# Description

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The Austrian Business Service Portal (BSP) offers businesses information that is relevant to them, allows them to submit data to meet their information obligations and uses online procedures to interact with the authorities on all matters important to them.

Previously, businesses in Austria had to sign on to each application separately and administer a large number of access codes and user authorisations. A similar situation exists with respect to the information offered. This represented a considerable burden for businesses interacting with public authorities.

The goal of implementing a business service portal as a new e-government interface application is to create a central access point for business e-government applications that are provided by the public authorities. The BSP is jointly coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF) and the Federal Chancellery (BKA).

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## Why the innovation was developed

The BSP is a key measure of the programme “Reducing Administrative Costs for Businesses”, starting in 2006. Austria offers a very highly developed and efficient e-government system. However, there are not enough horizontal elements: e-government applications have different access requirements, and businesses must deal with different user administration systems. A similar situation exists with respect to the information offered. This represents a considerable burden for businesses interacting with the public authorities. International experience shows that a portal offering information and single sign-on functionality can significantly reduce the burden on the business sector. Therefore, in 2009 the Council of Ministers approved the idea to start the BSP.

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## Objectives

Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve user satisfaction, Support economic growth

- Provide a significant contribution in terms of one-stop shopping in the B2G area.
  - Make basic, specialised and expert information on federal law available, based on the TOP 500 reporting requirements.
  - Create a single sign-on access to the main BtoG e-government applications provided by the federal government.
  - Offer services focusing on sole proprietorships and SMEs.
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## Main beneficiaries

Businesses, Government bodies, Government staff

- Austrian businesses: about 400 000 entities (core target group), but more than 1 million entities including registered associations are potentially beneficiaries.
  - Austrian public administration.
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## Existing similar practices

### Wirtschaftskammer Österreich

In other countries' public administrations

Austria

<http://portal.wko.at/wk/startseite.wk?ftyp=2>

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### Altinn

In other countries' public administrations

Norway

<https://www.altinn.no/en/?epslanguage=en>

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### Gov.uk (former Businesslink)

Great Britain

<https://www.gov.uk/>

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### Business

In other countries' public administrations

New Zealand

<http://www.business.govt.nz/>

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# Results

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## Results not available yet

No overall survey concerning the aspects mentioned has been carried out, but Phase 1 of the BSP was audited and given good marks by the Austrian Court of Audit and the Internal Audit Department of the Ministry of Finance. The Court of Audit stressed the following points in its report: "administrative reform initiative," "federal authority register," "... the importance of the Business Service Portal project as a key measure for simplification of administration for businesses."

# Development

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## Design

The idea was developed in public administration by the Ministry of Finance in co-operation with the Federal Chancellery. In 2009 the Council of Ministers approved the idea to start the BSP.

Currently, phase 2 of the BSP has started.

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## Testing

- Crucial to involve businesses:
    - Think aloud tests and focus groups with selected group of companies.
    - Challenge especially the registration and log-on process and the administration area (available after log-on).
    - Input also on the information part of the portal.
    - Results feed back into an iterative development process.
  - Development cycle: For the IT-implementation, a standard testing procedure has been developed including automated test cases.
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## Implementation

### Tools used:

- Programme and project management: The BSP is set up as a Program. It is organized and structured according to IPMA standards. The BSP received the Project Excellence Award 2012 for the quality of its programme and project management from project management Austria (PMA).
- All documents are stored and managed in the open text content server. Access is controlled via an access management system.
- Organisational and technical connection of around 20 e-government applications using a model developed in-house for this purpose, while complying with national (PVP) and international (SAML 2.0) standards.
- Development, technical implementation, testing and system release is based on standard processes of the Austrian Federal Computing Centre.

### Resources used:

- Estimates prepared for the Austrian Business Service Portal Act (USPG) were approximately 10 000 to 12 000 person-days.
  - External costs for the first phase of the portal were estimated to be EUR 7.9 to 9.5 million. Actual costs for the first phase were below the estimates.
  - Annual operating costs were expected to be EUR 2 to 2.5 million, including material and software costs (starting when the first phase is in full operation).
  - The participant database required for the Business Service Portal is provided for an amendment to the Austrian Federal Statistics Act (BStatG).
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## Diffusion

- Communication and marketing campaign in order to disseminate the BSP to its target group = businesses.
  - Legal framework provided by the Austrian Business Service Portal Act (USPG): determines the collaboration on federal level.
  - Organisational framework: Involve political and high-level management from the start, ensure on-going support.
  - Implementation of a central business register in order to be able to offer single sign-on.
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## Challenges and solutions

- Decentralised editorial process of providing information – challenging and needs time to develop within the administration, especially the use of a content management system.
  - Iterative development process needs time which is often not available in tight time schedules, but can save money in the end.
  - Quality of data provided by registers to the central business register is not always good, data clearing processes were implemented.
  - ICT is a means to an end but does not solve process deficits resulting from organisational and/or legal issues, address those in another way.
  - Design the process without being too much influenced by technical solutions/frameworks.
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## Partnerships

### The Austrian Economic Chamber and the Federation of Social Security Institutions

Other Public Sector

Important partners who support the BSP in terms of marketing and communication, on the other hand they have important e-government applications and information services which need to be part of the BSP to offer businesses the services they need in one spot.

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# Lessons Learned

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## Lessons Learned

- Involve political and high-level management from the start, ensure on-going support.
  - Legal framework is helpful.
  - Manage expectations on both sides - administration and businesses; ICT can do a lot but not solve everything.
  - Organisational/legal aspects are more challenging than the technical implementation.
  - Cooperation is a central element of the BSP, aimed at providing assistance with the informational and transactional sections.
  - Collaboration across the federal government and with regional authorities (Länder and municipalities) is key for administrative reform, but takes time.
  - BSP was an enabler to create a central business register – first time to match businesses from several registers under one unique identifier! Requirement for single-sign-on functionality.
  - BSP provides central components i.e. identity management – built once, used by many! Saves costs for further development of e-government applications.
  - Full integration of users previously registered with other e-government applications (e.g. FinanzOnline).
  - Organisational and technical connection of around 20 e-government applications using a model developed in-house, while complying with national (PVP) and international (SAML 2.0) standards.
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## Conditions for success

- Political/management support.
  - Organisational/legal framework.
  - Financial and human resources.
  - Close cooperation with key stakeholders of the innovation.
  - Marketing and communication.
  - Clear vision and smart objectives/targets.
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## Other information

The project is being implemented in a number of phases, with periodic project controlling and an annual evaluation:

- 1 January 2010: Information portal goes online with basic information at [www.usp.gv.at](http://www.usp.gv.at).
- The information offered is expanded significantly during the course of 2010. Content is combined across all authorities and prepared in the form of business situations. In 2011, custom-tailored information is offered to businesses with respect to their information and reporting requirements.
- 1 September 2011: BSP as a single sign-on transaction portal. Start of pilot operation with continuous expansion of functionality.
- 23 May 2011: First phase enters full operation. BSP is available as a single sign-on information and transaction portal.

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