

Citizens Spots

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Organisation: Agency for Administrative Modernization (AMA)

Country: Portugal

Level of government: Central government

Sector: General public services

Type: Digital, Public Service

Launched in: 2014

Overall development time: 2 year(s)

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

The Citizens Spot is a natural evolution of existing AMA services like multi-service working position or desk (“Balcão Multi-Serviços”, or “BMS”). The BMS was a service counter delivering services provided by different public administration bodies at the same physical place, by the same employee.

The “Citizen Spot” (“Espaço do Cidadão”) is a single service desk with a specialised attendant, capable of delivering to any citizen a large number of services related to both the public administration and the private sector. The delivered services are essentially those already available on various websites but that citizens may not feel capable or comfortable with using directly, and alone. The “Citizen Spot” is therefore a shared service among the entities that provide online services and its specialised attendant acts as a “citizenship mediator” between the citizen and the required online service, providing assistance about what exists and how to use it.

This new service combines assisted online digital services with onsite and involves the participation of a wide range of partner organisations in the creation and management of the new service network.

Why the innovation was developed

- The innovation was developed to response to an external change (changes in laws and regulation).
 - Response to a need to be closer and more accessible to all citizens, no matter their location.
 - Promote the internet as basic instrument of interaction with the Portuguese public administration.
 - Response to excessive work volume in public service centers.
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Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve social equity, Improve user satisfaction

- Proximity to public services: ensure accessibility and proximity to public services for all citizens and businesses.
 - Territorial cohesion: the expansion of the Citizen Spots Network covers 278 municipalities in mainland Portugal. The number of posts to be installed will vary depending on the population of each municipality.
 - Reduce digital divide: this service will be made with dual computer screens to allow citizens and companies follow the procedures to learn how to perform them independently, promoting digital literacy.
 - Collaboration: the Citizen Spots are implemented and developed through partnerships with entities of the central and local government, the third sector, industry associations and other entities providing public services.
 - Provide an efficient service: the operational costs of the “Citizen Spots” are covered by the partners, sharing these over the network of involved entities, and contributing to its long range sustainability.
 - Reduce the work volumes of existing services and consequent waiting times.
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Main beneficiaries

Businesses, Civil Society, Elderly people, General population, Government staff, Low-income groups

- Citizens are able to access public entities more simply and solve minor problems faster, in a more personalised way.
- This service is provided by trained mediators using dual computer screens so that citizens can learn how to access the services independently themselves (if it service is already available online);
- These changes will ease the workload of public citizen services that often have high work volumes, espeically those in metropolitan areas.
- Public entities will be able to dedicate their resources to their own essential functions.
- Local Government: The Citizen Spot Network is in partnership with local governments. It will support local entities' involvement in the quality of life of their local population.
- Private entities which provides utilities and ticketing system.

Results

Efficiency

- The network has limited financial costs.
 - It has helped to maximise the usage of the already available resources, mainly those which belong to the local administration.
 - The Citizen Spot Network is based on partnerships with various entities (public and private). These partners provide and manage the necessary facilities and human resources, while AMA and the central administration services provide only support and back office functions.
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Effectiveness

- Reduction in waiting times for public services.
 - Since the implementation of the first Citizen Spot the service has been used 317 616 times (293 993 times in a service provided by the local entities and 23 623 times in the post office network).
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Service quality

Accessibility:

- The Citizen Spots will be dispersed throughout the territory. By the end of this year it is expected that there will be around 1 000 Citizens Spots, promoting physical proximity to citizens.
- One of the innovations principles is distribution based on demography and population need
- Facilitating access for disabled users is a priority.
- The places chosen for the installation of this service tend to be areas accessible by public transport.

Responsiveness:

- This model is designed to reduce waiting times;
- Crescent supply of services at each spot.

Reliability:

- Citizens Spot's staff are trained to provide the same service in the same way across the network.
 - The security of sensitive operations is supported by advanced electronic identification tools already available in Portugal and developed by AMA, namely the PIN-protected national identity card ("Cartão do Cidadão"), the associated Digital Mobile Key (DMK) ("Chave Móvel Digital"), a system associating a personal identification number to a mobile phone, or analogous instruments from other member states.
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User satisfaction

Development

Design

Citizen Spots were an evolution from the existing from BMS (multi-service desk) project. It was developed by AMA under guidance of the Cabinet of the Secretary of State for Administrative Modernisation.

It was a response to develop the most rational way to exploit the full potential of new information and communication technologies, streamline and meet citizens' needs, considering their demographics, knowledge and requirements.

Design time: 7 month(s)

Testing

- The innovation was tested with the Portuguese postal service (CTT). This partnership was possible due to the coherence, synergy and commitment that were achieved by the entities involved.
- The post offices that were involved in the project provided a part of the service to carry out this innovation by transferring physical space, staff and tools.
- AMA only provided staff training and software.
- Through this partnership it was possible to evaluate the project with a very low cost to AMA and a diversification of the CTT's service supply. This was beneficial for both entities.

Testing time: 9 month(s)

Implementation

Tools used:

- The management of Citizen Spots is shared between AMA and the entities operating the Citizen Spots.
- AMA provides: equipment (furniture, hardware and software) necessary for the normal functioning of Citizen Spots; the certification of organisations and the training of citizenship mediators; documentation and regulation of all public services available in Citizen Spots; backoffice management; contact centre and e-mail support, specifically dedicated to mediators of citizenship; quality management; a digital platform to develop the assisted assistance.
- Entities operating Citizens Spots ("hosting entities") provide: the physical location to install the Citizen Spot and its maintenance costs; staff (mediators); telecommunication; all other operating costs.
- The mediator training process is expected to have an increasing "maintenance" component delivered through a modern e-learning management system which can be constantly updated with new materials and is always available for consultation by the mediators.
- The communication plan is organised at national and regional/local level. The media used include television, radio, print media, public administration sites, phones app, etc. The choice of media is based on the most suitable for the target population.

Resources used:

- This project distributes its costs over the network of involved entities, which include central and local government, third sector, industrial associations or other providers of public services.
 - Partners will provide and manage the facilities and human resources necessary for the proper functioning of the "Citizen Spots";
 - AMA covers initial startup costs, such as all necessary equipment (furniture, hardware and software) and the training of citizenship mediators. AMA regulates all public services available in Citizen Spots and provides basic back office functions such as phone and video support for mediators, evaluation of citizen satisfaction, etc.
 - Total cost for AMA is estimated at EUR 6 500 000 for the whole project (1 000 units at an average unit cost of EUR 6 500).
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Diffusion

- As this project is voluntary, the diffusion was made on a case by case basis in which the AMA sought to disseminate innovation among the various potential stakeholders.
 - This project was designed to meet the needs in different regions and entities; the agreement for each Citizen Spot is customised and independent.
 - The diffusion process included:1. Communication of innovation potential to host organisations2. Meeting to assess interests and possibilities3. Signature of protocols4. Implementation of the services5. Bilateral continuous monetization
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Challenges and solutions

- Several entities (public and private) and various services guaranteed by the same attendant, belonging to the host authorities - training and accreditation;
 - Receipt of amounts from various entities (public and private) by one entity and the subsequent need to distribute it to those which are involved in the process - AMA and host entity (where applicable, ie when there is business model of distribution revenues).
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Partnerships

Local governments and providers of public services (such as post offices); private entities or third sector entities

Other

The Citizen Spots Network will be based on partnerships with various entities (central government, local government municipalities, parishes, the third sector, industry associations and providers of public services).

Partners will provide and manage the facilities and human resources necessary for the functioning of the "Citizen Spots", so that processing and network expansion does not result in increasing costs significantly for a central body such as AMA. Also, the partner entities, through their local presence, have a greater awareness of the specific needs of the local population, and should adapt the operation of Citizen Spots to these specific local needs.

Each Citizen Spot has two working positions and can be adapted to the specific situation of each location following the wishes of each partner.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- Innovation is greater the greater the involvement of public authorities (central and local) and private actors.
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Conditions for success

- Clear communication between all the entities involved.
- Clarity on the entities' responsibilities.
- Low investment.
- Being part of a wider national strategy.
- Increase the commitment and involvement of the local administration in the citizen's needs and satisfaction.

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