

Unified public service number 115



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Organisation: Federal Ministry of the Interior

Country: Germany

Level of government: Central government, Local government, Regional/State government

Sector: General public services

Type: Digital, Organisational Design, Public Service

Launched in: 2009

Overall development time:

7 years

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

The 115 telephone number offers a direct line to the public administration for citizens and businesses, no matter which agency or office is responsible for dealing with the matter in question. The 115 number is in operation Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 18:00. Calls to 115 are registered nationally and routed to the regional call centres, where calls are picked up within 30 seconds. If a question cannot be answered immediately, the citizen will receive a response within 24 hours during regular operating hours, by e-mail, fax or phone.

115 service centres use a common database and cover administration on the federal, regional and local level. The project is steered by committees consisting of representatives from all federal levels and financed by the federal and regional level, whereas the local level provides services centres.

Why the innovation was developed

115 offers a direct access to government services for citizens and businesses without having to know the competences within one or several administrations. Various factors led to the development of 115: (1) a spirit of modernising government services through e-government; (2) low customer satisfaction with public services.

Objectives

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

- Increase citizen satisfaction through the public provision of information via one single service number.
 - Save costs through cooperation between municipalities in the provision of shared call service centres.
 - Improve the quality of answers through a common database.
 - Identify relevant and important topics for citizens and businesses.
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Main beneficiaries

General population, Government bodies, Government staff

German residents: Currently, 23 million citizens can call 115.

Existing similar practices

Centralising telephone-based public services

In public administration of my country

Local governments

The idea of centralising and professionalising telephone-based public services has been developed primarily on the local level. Thus, there have been local public service numbers prior to 115 which have aimed at the same goal but were not able to offer access to public services outside the own jurisdiction.

311

In other countries' public administrations

Administration of New York City

3939

In other countries' public administrations

French government

Similar telephone-based public services can also be found in other European countries and abroad.

http://www.115.de/cln_349/nn_739980/SharedDocs/Publikationen/DE/service__download/studie__einheitliche__behoerdenrufnummern__in__der__europaeischen__unic

Results

Efficiency

Municipalities cooperate in service centres and therefore do not have to provide an own service centre.

Service quality

Accessibility:

- The 115 number is in operation Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 18:00.
- 75% of 115 calls are responded to within 30 seconds by service centre staff.
- 65% of queries can be solved during the initial contact. Otherwise, the citizens will get an answer within 24 hours by e-mail, fax or phone.

Other:

The common database improves the quality of the answers.

User satisfaction

The common database improves the access to the public services and the quality of the answers and therefore the user satisfaction.

Other improvements

The common database improves the quality of the answers and therefore the employee satisfaction.

Evaluation

No, but the evaluation has started.

Development

Design

ISPRAT e.V. developed the initial idea to create a German version of the 311 number in New York. ISPRAT as a registered association organises research projects specifically targeted to bridge academic science and practical experience.

The goal to develop the unified public service number 115 was set at the first national information technology forum (Nationaler IT-Gipfel) in 2006.

An agreement between the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Land Hessen to set up a joint task force with the assignment to outline, develop, test and evaluate the 115-Service in a prototypical mode was signed. Therefore, the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the Land Hessen and top officials in the Federal Ministry of Interior were involved in the design phase.

Research on similar projects in public services abroad was conducted to get inspiration to close gaps at home.

White papers were drafted to substantiate the idea and get political decision makers to take up the idea and fund the further development.

Design time: 2 years

Testing

- Set up of a task force and recruitment of participating agencies and offices which were willing to contribute to a prototypical 115-service.
- Specify, obtain and test the needed central technical infrastructure.
- Agreement of all participants on a unified service agreement.

Testing time: 2 years

Implementation

Tools used:

- Detailed concept regarding organisational, technical, legal and financial aspects of the implementation.
- Working groups and meetings as mostly informal ways of negotiation.
- Collaboration platform based on Microsoft share point.

Resources used:

- Ca. EUR 2 million per year in operation costs.
- Ca. EUR 8 million for development in 2009 - 2011.
- New technology and staff.

Implementation time: 3 years

Challenges and solutions

- Decision to actually set up a project team and organise political support for a unified public service number. Solution: think big but start small, begin with the willing, and prove your value.
 - Coming to a mutual understanding regarding the organisational, technical, legal and financial aspects of the implementation in the context of a multilevel project with independent actors and without a centralised authority for policy making.
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Partnerships

National, regional and local administration

Other Public Sector

115's service covers the national, regional and local level. Therefore, cooperation among these levels occurs permanently.

Lessons Learned

Conditions for success

- Political support for innovative projects.
 - Will to work across boundaries of administration.
 - Funding.
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Other information

Courage, political will, manpower and negotiation skills as specific resources that were required to develop the innovation.