

eBalduque



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Organisation: Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism

Country: Spain

Level of government: Central government

Sector: General public services

Type: Data, Digital, Organisational Design

Launched in: 2012

Overall development time: 2 years

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Description

In order to meet the objectives of the European Digital Agenda 2015-2020, the Spanish Digital Agenda 2013 fosters the development of technological projects in essential public services such as education, health, and justice, pushing forward to a “paperless administration.”

In this framework the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism, through the Unit of Information Technology and Communications, has implemented various technological initiatives, one of which is the development of a software tool to facilitate the indexed and packaging of electronic records, called “eBalduque”, which enables electronic preparation of administrative files and their electronic referral to other administrative units, as well as the courts. Its name recalls the use in Spain of the balduque or red tape with which the Council of State and the law courts involved administrative files, since Felipe II times.

The eBalduque implies a quite important impact on the organisation, given that it allows the elimination of paper, achieving a “0 paper” administration and facilitating the transfer and exchange of records between administrative units, especially with the administration of justice. It also streamlines the processing, and decreases the response time to citizens, as well as supports coordination between the different administrative units which make up records, using the same software tool. The eBalduque simplifies and speeds up the work, facilitating relationships with the administration of justice, as the files are sent in electronic format with a hyperlinked index that provides direct access to the document. Finally, it reduces the environmental footprint of the administration, with an estimated saving of 26 tons of paper in this term (2012-2016).

Why the innovation was developed

- Before the innovation: The resolution of an appeal was a formal and complex process. The Ministry had an intensive regulatory activity in critical economic sectors. The Appeals Unit has been supporting new technologies in order to reduce the lead times of processing. The previous procedure caused different management problems, such as: The processing unit must custody and archive great amounts of documentation during a long time. The process of obtaining each copy of a file was very expensive. The file indexing and page numbering had to be carried out manually. The generated files format was not unique. The IT unit was charged of creating a paperless process.
- After the innovation: It saves estimated costs of EUR 2.1 million (2012-2016). It reduces the environmental footprint of the administration with an estimated saving of 26 tons of paper in this term. It decreases the response time to citizens. It is aligned with the Spanish Government Digital Agenda, paperless administration policies and CORA Commission guidelines (Comisión para la reforma de las Administraciones Públicas - Commission that support the reform of public administrations) aiming to avoid any duplicity of administrative actions; achieve simplification of administration; improve the management of common media and services; and optimise institutional administration.

Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency

- It facilitates the transfer and exchange of files between administrative units, especially with the justice administration.
- It simplifies and speeds up the procedure as the files are sent in electronic format with a hyperlinked index that provides direct access to the documents.
- Users can also take advantage of electronic edition capabilities like search and copy-paste tools.

Main beneficiaries

Civil Society, General population, Government bodies, Government staff

- Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism, including all its management and administrative units.
- Courts of Justice.

Results

Efficiency

- Return on investment of 1.566%, i.e. saving of EUR 15.66 by each invested euro in the development of the eBalduque tool.
 - Estimated savings of EUR 2.1 million by the reduction of time needed to accomplish administrative tasks.
 - Estimated savings of 26 tons of paper.
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Effectiveness

- A 58% increase in the number of electronic files sent to Courts of Justice with eBalduque format, between 2012 and 2013.
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User satisfaction

- The high level of satisfaction with the new procedure and the tools that support it has been clearly transmitted by the Appeals Unit. It has allowed them to cope with an increasing number of appeals especially in this time of reduced budgets and human resources.
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Evaluation

The innovation has been evaluated by the Spanish AEVAL Agency as a candidate to the 2013 Management Innovation Awards, obtaining a secondary prize.

Development

Design

It was an initiative carried out by the Appeals, Complaints and Relations with the Law Courts Unit and the IT Unit. While the Appeals Unit has defined the new procedure from a legal and administrative point of view, the IT Unit has designed and developed the application and collaborated on the technical support of the new procedure.

Testing

- At an initial stage, the new procedure and its related tools were only used by the Appeals Unit in order to test the procedure and the tools that support it.
 - At a second stage, the innovation was explained to those Management Units with high participation in files to be referred to the Courts of Justice. With the results of this testing, the procedure was finally fixed and the tools adapted in order to be spread all over the Ministry Units.
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Implementation

Tools used:

- Technical tools: ROAD (Administrative units internal registry and official messaging system), P@C (Digital signature corporate platform), ARCE (Digital documents corporate repository), eBalduque (Corporate platform for creating digital indexed files).
- Administrative tools: New procedure for the generation of administrative files to be referred to the Courts of Justice.
- Other tools: Working guide published in the Ministry intranet, training days about the procedure and its related tools, user support service.

Resources used:

- Four technical people (only 1 full-time).
 - EUR 150 000 as initial cost.
 - EUR 12 000 as estimated annual maintenance cost.
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Diffusion

- The software of some of the tools involved in the procedure has been distributed to other ministries and public organisations that have requested it.
 - The initiative was presented in the XI TECNIMAP (Jornadas de **TEC**Nologías de la Información para la **M**odernización de las **A**dministraciones **P**úblicas – IT Conference for the Modernisation of Public Administrations).
 - The Appeals Unit has been invited to a SIMO TCI Conference (Feria Internacional de Informática, Multimedia y Comunicaciones - International Exhibition of Information, Communication and Multimedia) organised by the Ministry of Justice in order to explain the innovation.
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Challenges and solutions

- The lack of clearly defined and known procedures was solved by the definition of a new efficient and effective mandatory electronic procedure, spread out by means of training sessions, and detailed instructions and guides about the procedure and the related tools.
- The difficulty of the procedure for those units with a high number of appealed files was solved by means of training and consulting actions in order to organise and achieve the tasks required.
- The reluctance of the Courts to accept the new file format was solved by means of senior management meetings, fitting the final result in order to fulfill the usability needs of Justice Courts.

Lessons Learned

Conditions for success

- It is possible to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of whichever procedure, no matter its complexity level if the involved people want to do it.
- The best solution from a technical point of view is not always the most efficient one.
- To change a collaborative procedure it is necessary that one of the main actors takes the initiative, achieves a proof of concept and persuades its partners.

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