PLATFORM ALLOWING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE E-SERVICES TO LINK-UP AND OPERATE IN UNISON

PES X-Road platform

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Following the economic crisis of 2008 and the resulting augmented levels of unemployment in the country, the workload of the PES had increased. The aim therefore of the PES was to improve the effectiveness and quality of services.

The practice consists of creating a secure system to store data concerning employed and unemployed people. The information collected by the PES is shared with other public organisations and ministries. In this way, services to users can be improved and delivered more efficiently.

Name of the PES	Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (*Eesti Töötukassa*)
Scope of measure (a pilot project or a national reform)	The practice is part of a national level platform, in place since 2001, which encompasses data collected by different public administrations in different registers (population register, health insurance register, education register, business register, qualification register, social insurance board register) and several private sector organisations.
When was the practice implemented?	The practice began in 2003 and is still ongoing.
What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?	The main drivers of the practice were: ▸ A law was passed by the government (Public Information Act, 15.11.2000, RT I 2000, 92, 597) stating that the existing registers containing citizens' data must be exploited to improve the services. ▸ The increased unemployment rates following the 2008-2009 economic crisis led to an increased workload for the PES; PES was required to improve its efficiency and the quality of the services offered.
Which organisation was involved in its implementation?	Estonian PES (Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund) Other organisations involved in the practice include ministries and other public institutions, the Estonian Data Protection Inspectorate, and private partners (IT companies in particular).
Which groups were targeted by the practice?	The X-road platform provides services to all PES customers (mainly jobseekers and employers).
What were the practice's main objectives?	The main objectives of the platform are: ▸ to increase the efficiency of the overall system; ▸ to facilitate relations between PES and its customers; ▸ to improve the quality and speed of services provided by PES; ▸ to motivate PES employees by freeing up their time to work more with customers and on the aspects of their work where they can have a real impact; ▸ to reduce fraud.
What activities were carried out?	The main activities of the practice consisted of the following: ▸ First, PES was required to create their own secure online platform which needed to follow the same system and structure of the general X-road platform so that both were compatible. The X-road platform was already in place for other public organisations and ministries, and therefore, PES needed to integrate its platform to the general one. In order to set up the platform, the Estonian PES collaborated with private organisations and developers. ▸ The PES collected data from their customers on employment related aspects such as unemployment status, social benefits received, etc. ▸ After the creation of the PES platform, it was ready to be integrated into the general X-road platform. The PES then negotiated agreements with other national public administrations in order to share the available data. These agreements allow public organisations (and some private companies) to exchange information on their users; for example, PES provides data on social security to other public organisations. ▸ Finally, the PES platform was integrated into the general X-road platform and users began using the PES services remotely.

What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?	The team involved in designing and setting up the platform was composed of five employees from the PES IT department and around 20 external developers. The PES platform within the general X-road platform is currently managed by two members of staff.
What were the source(s) of funding?	The funding comes entirely from the PES own budget which is part of the government's budget.
What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?	The main outputs of the practice were: ▸ The number of people using PES services has increased (e.g. the number of visitors of the PES public website has increased from 1 882 986 in 2010 to 3 463 457 in 2016). ▸ The time necessary to register a new user to PES has been reduced significantly – currently the registration procedure takes around 10 minutes. ▸ PES has reduced the time required to take decisions on individual cases; for example, the decision on whether to provide unemployment benefits is taken within 14 days. ▸ Detection of fraud (mainly in relation to unemployment benefits) has improved due to enhanced communication between different public organisations' registers. ▸ Data from the PES are more easily accessible to other public organisations (e.g. the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication; Ministry of Social affairs). ▸ The amount of paper-documents produced has significantly decreased as over 95 % of decisions are now being sent out digitally.
What outcomes have been identified?	The main outcomes include: ▸ Customers only need to provide their data once – information, initially collected by a public authority, is then shared with the other public organisations. ▸ Efficiency was increased both in terms of collecting data from customers and in terms of providing services to them in a simpler and faster way. ▸ The increased efficiency of the system allows PES employees to reduce the time previously spent on collecting data and to focus more on counselling activities. ▸ In line with the above point, the motivation and satisfaction of PES employees has increased as they can dedicate more time to supporting PES customers. ▸ The quality of data has increased as it now only has to be entered into the system once by the initial public authority, thus ensuring its consistency within the system.
What are the lessons learnt and success factors?	The main lessons learnt include: ▸ Trust relations need to be built among public administrations in order to collaborate and share data in an effective manner. ▸ Adequate technologies are needed to build a system that works efficiently and that is secure. ▸ Having the appropriate laws in place is crucial to establishing the most suitable and secure framework in which online services are created and public administrations share citizens' data.