

# clarity

Open eGovernment Services

The Open eGovernment domain is rapidly evolving in Europe. Best practices, tools and applications are emerging that will help public administrations transition their policy and services. CLARITY supports the Open eGovernment community in Europe and champions their progress, with the aim to improve the quality of decision-making and promote greater trust in public institutions.



## About Clarity

*Clarity* is an EU-funded project, managed by Trilateral Research, that seeks to champion best practices in open government initiatives to increase transparency, efficiency and trust towards eGovernment applications.

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# Gap analysis Open eGovernment Services

## Citizen centred design of services:

Many governments continue to design and deliver services based on their own requirements and processes instead of focusing on the needs of their citizens. There is a clear need for a more citizen inclusive approach to service design.

*Suggested target area for R&D:* Development and promotion of, service design methodologies which are specifically made for co-creation of public services. It is important that methodologies consider different groups within society, e.g., migrants, elderly, disabled and computer illiterate, and that public servants are trained in their use.

## ICT skills and access:

Research has found that both public servants and citizens lack of ICT skills hinder the up-take of open eGovernment services in Europe. Furthermore, the 2016 European Benchmark Report reveals that only 1/3 of public service websites are mobile friendly. As mobiles are fast becoming the main device through which people access the internet, it is imperative that more services are provided through mobile friendly websites or apps. *Suggested target area for R&D:* Research into what specific skills are needed by public servants on different levels. Using the evidence to formulate teaching and training materials that are level and need specific. Providing different ways of learning and providing

access to ICT learning materials through different platforms. Development of mobile friendly websites and service apps to open access to a greater number of citizens.

## eDemocracy and civic participation:

How can your services cater for people with disabilities' Although public administrations provide a great majority of their services online, there is still a lack of use of eDemocracy tools to better reach citizens and involve them in decision making processes. In our research, we have come across a variety of eDemocracy tools and approaches, some of which we list in Chapter 5. *Suggested target area for R&D:* Evidence based guidance on how to better incorporate eDemocracy applications into public service provision is needed. Development of eDemocracy tools is underway and should be supported and accelerated. However, a shift in public service delivery and governance needs to accompany a move towards eDemocracy so that citizen input is adequately taken up and used.

## Language and accessibility:

Language support is under developed and used overall and this requires attention as this results in hindering access to services to non-native speakers. Language support should translate website text but must also include translation of forms and present information on translation services in a more accessible way. As for accessibility for disabled citizens, this does need considerable attention from eGovernment providers as accessibility options are often few and ill-locatable on government service web-portals.

*Suggested target area for R&D:* Development of translation applications that are precise is needed, as it is of vital importance that information and advice regarding public services is correct in multiple languages. Regarding accessibility for disabled people we found that accessibility options are often hidden at the bottom of web pages and it is not very clear how to use them. We however, would

recommend extensive R&D to take place in this area to ensure that disabled citizens are able to take up open eGovernment services. Any work in this area would need to take into account user perspectives and their various different needs and the contexts within which they operate to develop a meaningful approach to accessibility to open eGovernment services.

### Openness and open data:

As recounted in the CLARITY deliverables, there is a need for more openness in eGovernment on all levels. Openness fosters transparency of governmental processes, open data furthermore will fuel data driven innovation and development of new public services by citizens and businesses. Open source software, open standards and open API will result in more open and scalable ICT systems for public service delivery. This will pave the way for integration of systems and further driving the implementation of the once-only principle for citizens and businesses. *Suggested target area for R&D:* Research into how openness can function within eGovernment setting, development of business models and privacy and data protection models to enhance trust. Awareness raising and training among governments (national, regional and local) on how openness works to improve processes and services. Collecting and presenting of good practice examples to highlight benefits.

### Access to citizen data:

Allowing citizens to “own”, use and amend their data could go a long way to make them more invested in the services they use and more trusting of government. Allowing citizens to amend their data would also cut down on information queries by governments and allow for faster resolution times. *Suggested target area for R&D:* Understanding in more depth how people think about their data in relation to public services and how they would like to interact with it. Research to understand how citizen controlled data is

understood and accepted in government is also vital to drive this trend forward.

### Once-only principle:

Citizens still need to submit their data more than once in their dealings with public service providers. The once only principle is one of the key targets of the EU eGovernment Action plans and the process towards it is slow. The EC eGovernment Benchmark Report 2016 suggests that currently only 49% of services are modelled on the once-only principle.<sup>2</sup> *Suggested target area for R&D:* Our review of literature and our expert interviews indicate that the key barriers to implementing the once-only principle issue stems from old legacy systems relying on different data formats, which cannot be integrated. Suggested target areas would thus be focused on advancing technologies of data brokering and data flows between different systems, as well as building and procuring systems that are more open and can be interconnected. Further development and implementation of eID will also help accelerate governments towards fulfilling the once-only principle.



Read the full gap analysis on [www.clarity-csa/resources#deliverables](http://www.clarity-csa/resources#deliverables)