



BETTER - *Stimulating regional innovation through better e-government services*

TARTU REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

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1. General information

Project name	<i>BETTER-Stimulating regional innovation through better e-government services</i>
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Municipalities of Birmingham (UK), Gävle (Sweden), Tartu (Estonia) and Nyíregyháza (Hungary) have been working together since 2019 under the leadership of Genoa (Italy) in the framework of an Interreg Europe project BETTER. BETTER offers an innovative approach to a crucial priority for the EU: encouraging public authorities to develop Regional Innovation Strategies in which e-government solutions can stimulate regional innovation chains (as well as improve their services).



The key issues of the project are:

- Physical and virtual infrastructure to support innovation.
- How to develop and apply new innovative products and services.
- Processes to support new business models and cross-sector (private-public-community) cooperation.
- People and skills to make it happen.

2. Policy Context

Policy type	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Investment for Growth and Jobs programme</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>European Territorial Cooperation programme</i>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Other regional development policy instrument</i>
Policy name	Development Plan of Tartu 2018-2025

The development plan (DP) is the main strategical document where the framework for short-term activities of Tartu is agreed, it contains specific activities for shaping the near future of

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the city of Tartu. The development plan includes budgetary strategy which is prepared to achieve the objectives set out in the development plan.

The current action plan is targeted to the **Development Plan of Tartu 2018-2025** which is the new version of the DP of Tartu 2013-2020 outlined in the application form of BETTER. DP is reviewed yearly bases. The process to prepare the new DP has started and the next version will be approved in Spring 2023. As policy owner, Tartu City Government must organize the involvement of all interested parties in the preparation of the new development plan and budget strategy by different public engagement activities.

The Development Plan of Tartu 2018-2025 includes the priority 3 “City of inspiring urban environment” that will be the focus policy instrument in the project. It contains several objectives, in BETTER the main attention will be on the objective of designing an inspiring urban environment. This action includes **the implementation of new digital solutions** that would enable better service for citizens and higher satisfaction of public servants.

The DP bases on the long-term vision of the city's development reflected in the Development Strategy Tartu 2030. It is described in section 2.5. - An inclusive and innovative society, which emphasizes the importance of citizen participation in decision-making processes, which in turn increases citizens' coherence and satisfaction with urban development. Also, the use of inclusive budgets and citizens' suggestions and new forms of participation in urban governance have emphasized.



The digital agenda has been important for more than a decade, which means that Tartu has already achieved quite a good level. However, this indicates that it is not a trivial task to design a plan and find smart ways, how the city government could use the help of citizens, local companies and research institutions to develop or redesign public services, offered by the (local) government. Therefore, it is vital to defining mechanisms for the city government to enable and boost a desired change in the future. This assignment is even more complexity, as the IT-systems created so long ago need to undergo updates today.

The more concrete challenges in relation the policy context

The participation rate of the participatory budget of Tartu has remained relatively stable over the years since its implementation in 2014, averaging 7-9% of the eligible population. The ideas presented within the process are mostly related to the physical improvement of urban space, and the average number of provided ideas has not changed significantly either. Although there are other opportunities and channels to communicate with the city and submit proposals, it is difficult to find the right one out of them and the problems or proposals submitted through these are not included in the broader analysis in general.

The reasons why the participation of citizens is relatively low, is partially due to the fact, that the engagement processes are not designed user centric. In today's situation, it is difficult for users to monitor processes because these:

- are often very long and hard to keep track of (e.g., processes of detail planning)
- are very text-dense and contain too little visualizations, graphs, maps, etc. to facilitate the adoption of information
- the public services and digitalization level varies significantly within organisation

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- systems and processes are not designed from the problem of end-users.

The number of direct and indirect public services in Tartu is very high. In the summer of 2020, a total number of almost 440 public direct services have been described, to which is added more than 240 indirect public services. With such a large number of services, it is difficult for users to find their way within them. Development decisions concerning the services are difficult to justify, as no common principles or tools have been agreed to support the choices.

The additional challenge is the insufficient skills of employees in implementing a user-centred or problem-based development process. Today the user centricity rather depends on the skills and motivation of the “service owner” of a particular service in the city government to make the service and the supporting information attractive and easy to understand for the target group. The number of services designed from the problems and real needs of end users is remarkably small.

All the above is the reason why end-users face a complex maze of services that often do not meet a real problem. This, in turn, does not create trust in the local government and reduces the desire to participate in the involvement processes.

In summary, the main areas of concern that need to be addressed systematically: there are too many fragmented public (e-)services, the quality of services varies considerably, e-services do not automatically mean they are user-centric, skills of staff to involve end-users within service development are limited, development processes are not agreed, service owners and other staff have almost no practice nor sample processes to use for problem-based / user-centred service design.

Objective

Consequently, the partner's goal in this project is a perceivable change in mind-set, focusing on innovation in the public sector, raising the skills of public sector employees, and through better user-centric services - trust towards city government.

Summary of interregional findings and most relevant best practices

Based on the learning events undertaken during the BETTER project – Thematic Events and Study Visits – the following lessons/practices were the most relevant for Tartu City Government:

Gävle



- Digital renewal programme
- Service design and e-services
- Error reporting and submit your proposal
- Data lakes

Nyiregyhaza

- Urban Dialogue
- City budget visualization and participation solutions

Birmingham

- DIPS project
- Service design in public sector

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Genoa

i. Citizen Folder

Policy relevance

The proposal will be made to add a new action and specification to the DP of Tartu to reach the policy change by improved management / governance. This covers both actions described below and it provides additional strength that the direction of user-centric e-services and more systematic engagement is a priority in the long run.



When the services are innovative and simple to use, the trust increases towards local government and participation in the public processes will become more popular in the city. All this needs a great effort and continuous contribution – the internal processes and principles must be clear and understandable as well as the staff of organisation needs new skills and support to put into a practice. Also, the understanding how to gather and process the input most effectively, what platforms and solutions to use and when is crucial.

3. Detailed Actions



ACTION 1

To develop and pilot the internal “supporting package” to achieve the service design skill growth and more effective process management of development projects in Tartu City Government.



Background	<p>There are needed very different specialists daily in local government, who, in addition to solving various field-specific problems, can also communicate excellently, co-operate with other units and solve development issues. Support units have been set up to deal with various horizontal issues, but the system is not functional without agreed co-operative processes. The skills of specialists and supporting staff to initiate and resolve development issues are crucial to fostering innovation.</p> <p>In Tartu, the missing expertise has been purchased as a service so far, rather than training and motivating one's own specialists to deal with development issues themselves.</p> <p>Within BETTER, we got a good overview of the creation, working methods and more successful development projects of Gävle Municipality's digitization unit and their Digital renewal program. Swedish partner's experience is very important for the city of Tartu, as in the spring of 2020 the public service development team (in Estonian: <i>Avalike teenuste arendamise meeskond – ATAM</i>) was established in Tartu. It is similar to Gävle digitization unit in several aspects. Currently, the operating principles and work processes of</p>
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Action	<p>Tartu ATAM are largely under development, which enables to adopt even more from the experience of the partner municipality. Another supporting fact is that Gävle and Tartu are relatively similar according to the number of citizens.</p> <p>As well, Birmingham`s DIPS project provides valuable lessons how to shape a comprehensive (skill) development program with different action packages.</p> <p>All in all, aspects to keep in mind when carrying out Tartu`s activities of BETTER RAP are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A holistic approach to problem solving, service design/design thinking principles, considering also Swedish <i>Innovationsguiden</i>. - Trust within the organization and by end-users is achievable through successful projects and consistent cooperation. - Different methodologies are used daily both to support human development and to implement development projects - Digitalisation is not a technical issue, but it is all about evolvement of society, cultural and behavioral changes, business development, processes, change management, innovation, culture and leadership - Independent funding principles from the local government budget provides significantly wider opportunities to innovate, but also to test (and fail) innovative ideas. - The principles for development project prioritization must be clear and comprehensible within and outside city government. - Courage to go small-scale testing quickly and not to waste years and invest large sums into an idea that may not success.
	<p>ACTION 1</p> <p><u>To develop and pilot the internal “supporting package” to achieve the service design skill growth and more effective process management of development projects in Tartu City Government</u></p> <p>1.1. Work out and approve principles with sample processes for public e-service development projects. <i>Outcome:</i> accepted principles and/or new processes, tools, 1 -2 sample cases.</p> <p>1.2. Compile and implement learning programme to increase the skills of service design of employees of Tartu City Government. <i>Outcome:</i> 12 -15 employees have completed the pilot programme</p> <p>1.3. Develop and test at least 1 new public e-service using the design thinking methods and principles adopted from BETTER partners. <i>Outcome:</i> Tested and launched new user-centric e-service.</p>

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	<p>Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved ability of city government employees to initiate new development processes, implement them successfully and skilfully use citizen involvement in service development processes. <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased satisfaction with the services provided by the local government. 1 user-centric e-services (new or redesigned) have implemented, which users have rated as necessary and easy to use. innovativeness.
Players involved	<p>Tartu City government will be responsible of the action 1 in cooperation with expert partners.</p> <p>Possible partners: Tartu University (Sandbox programme team), Innovation team of Riigikantselei, Enterprise Estonia (EAS).</p>
Timeframe	<p>1.1. Planning, preparations, workshops, analyse – synthesis, dissemination. September 2022 - April 2023</p> <p>1.2. Find an expert partner for learning programme; meetings to work out the programme for study seminars; carry out pilot programme. September 2022 – June 2023</p> <p>1.3. Develop and test one new public e-service Sept 2021 (in progress) – March 2023</p>
Costs (if relevant)	<p>1.1. 20 000€ (includes the working hours of employees of city government)</p> <p>1.2. 12000 – 20 000€</p> <p>1.3. – 35 000€</p>
Funding sources (if relevant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Budget Additional funding will be applied for (Interreg, Innovation supporting measures of Estonia) to train more employees and work out innovative services in cooperation local partners to accelerate and fasten the developments.

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ACTION 2

To harmonize and develop e-engagement to increase citizens` participation and it`s efficiency.

<p>Background</p>	<p>There are several opportunities for participation and reporting about issues around in Tartu on regular basis. There is "Civil Servant Answers" section on the city`s website. Problems in the urban space can be reported both on the website and by telephone via the 1789 maintenance line. From time to time, the city collects feedback and suggestions to get to know the citizens opinion about something or to solve various issues.</p> <p>All these features and channels have been largely unchanged for nearly 10 years and even longer. People do not have a clear idea of which channel to use in a certain situation. The feedback and engagement opportunities on the website are visually poor, outdated and resolved with minimal resources. There are no common processes or tools to facilitate the processing of submitted proposals and problems, data collection, regular analysis and feedback.</p> <p>The more detailed statistics is available only about the participatory budgeting. Analyzes about the use of different channels by citizens and proposals adopted are not carried out and the cross-use of received data is not a part of the everyday work processes.</p> <p>In the BETTER, we got acquainted with several solutions on how local governments and non-profit associations promote involvement. An example of this is the Gävle Error-reporting website, which provides citizens logical and visually appealing possibility to share information and problems to local government. Gävle has grouped the most common issues, which makes it much easier and faster to notify problems as well to work on these. Also noteworthy was the environment for submitting proposals or ideas to the Municipality of Gävle, where people can submit ideas. These practices are important examples to carry out developments in relation the city's involvement channels to increase the trust and to discover ideas by citizens to work with.</p> <p>The example of the Hungarian Urban Dialogue provided equally valuable places to study. In their case, the emphasis would be on a very good and user-friendly web solution, where a very strong visual design was supported by the skillful use of map data.</p>
<p>Action</p>	<p>The second action group is closely related to the first one as the outputs from here influence remarkably the content of the supporting package involvement chapter.</p>

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	<p>2. <u>To harmonize and develop e-engagement to increase citizens' participation and it's efficiency.</u></p> <p>2.1. ArcGIS Hub full implementation – Tartu City government has already started using a community engagement platform that organises people, data, and tools through information-driven initiatives. To take full advantage of it, seminars and case-studies will be organised to encourage citizens and staff of city government to use it.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> At least 1 public seminar in the period to introduce the possibilities of the platform and teach to use that, 1-2 study-videos, 1 survey or project in the platform where citizens or third parties are actively involved from the design to evaluation.</p> <p>2.2. Carry out a user survey (using different methods: interviews, online surveys, group discussions, other methods indicated by Gävle) to reform and improve the city's online participation possibilities.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> Survey results and analyses about the biggest problems of the e-engagement in Tartu, ideas to develop or reorganise the solutions, compiling user personas etc.</p> <p><i>Results:</i> Increased trust of the citizens towards the city government, additional cooperation possibilities between players of different sector. Increasing satisfaction with public services/living environment.</p> <p><i>Evaluation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of participants in the participation processes in Tartu. • Registered users of ArcGIS Hub • New projects initiated (also from the third parties) where the ArcGIS Hub is being used.
Players involved	Tartu City government will be responsible of the action 2 in cooperation with external experts, Tartu University Sandbox programme team and it's students, city's sub-organisations (e.g. schools, museums), related foundations, local NGOs (e.g. district associations), citizens.
Timeframe	2.1. Carry out seminars and prepare sample cases with success stories to foster ArcGIS Hub as the main engagement environment of Tartu.

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	<p>August 2022 – July 2023</p> <p>2.2. User survey and analyse November 2022 – January 2023</p>
Costs (if relevant)	<p>2.1. 25 000 (includes the working hours of employees of city government)</p> <p>2.2. 20 000 €</p>
Funding sources (if relevant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Budget • Proposal “ELIDIA – Effects on Legitimacy and Inclusion: Democratic Innovations in the Digital Age” has been submitted to <i>HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01</i> where Tartu City Government is associated partner.

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Date: 08.06.2022

