



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS  
AND COMMUNICATIONS

# Green Paper on the Organisation of Public Services

Direct services that support the performance of obligations and exercising of rights, and the creation of environments that support provision of services by using the possibilities and means of information and communication technology.



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## Introduction

The main reason for compiling the Green Paper on the Organisation of Public Services (hereinafter GPOPS) is the understanding that although Estonia has enjoyed the fame of an e-state for quite a while, there are still some shortcomings<sup>1</sup>. There are a number of well-known and highly regarded solutions for the provision of public e-services; however, these were all created years ago and no continuous substantial qualitative changes have been noted.

The Development plan of the Government of the Republic of Estonia for 2011-2015 (updated on April 16, 2012) provided compiling the GPOPS as a solution. The task was assigned to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (hereinafter also MEAC). At the end of 2011, the Department of Information Society Services Development (hereinafter DoI SSD) was established at the Ministry. The GPOPS has been compiled by the officials of the department. The main functions of the DoI SSD are to coordinate the development of public services and electronic records management in accordance with the development of the state information system and information technology.

**Green papers** are novel documents in the shaping of Estonian policies. They describe the **problems in the respective field, introduce the fundamental and the most important policy options, and suggest possible solutions**<sup>2</sup>. The Green Paper is presented to the cabinet for consideration and approval. After that, the steps for implementation of the Green Paper are decided upon (e.g. preparing policy papers and development plans, amending legislation, etc.).

There are several documents that partly address the organisation of public services, the most important of them being the e-State Charter,<sup>3</sup> the interoperability framework,<sup>4</sup> OECD Public Governance Review's action plan.<sup>5</sup> By further expanding and developing the contents and requirements of these documents, the GPOPS presents a comprehensive overview of the problems occurring in the organisation of public services in Estonia, and the potential solutions to these problems.

**The main means used in solving these problems and organising and developing the provision of public services is information and communication technology (hereinafter: ICT).** Within the context of an ageing society and the changing economic environment, the number of employed people continues to decrease whereas the number of people needing the assistance or information provided by public services increases. In a state of declining resources, the public sector has to provide increasingly improved services. Under these conditions, developing ICT-based services is a good way of providing and developing high-quality and cost-effective public services.

At the same time, the analysis of the current situation reveals that using ICT should not be an objective in itself – it is just one of the means of ensuring the functioning of public services, and a channel for providing e-

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<sup>1</sup> Audit of the National Audit Office "Quality of public service in the information society", 2007.

[Available at: <http://www.riigikontroll.ee/tabid/206/Audit/2010/Area/4/language/en-US/Default.aspx>]

<sup>2</sup> In the Member States of the European Union where the practice of compiling Green Papers is deeply rooted, the Green Paper is defined as a "preliminary report of Government proposals published to stimulate discussion"

<sup>3</sup> Everyone's Rights in e-State. The e-State Charter. National Audit Office, 2008.

[Available at:

<http://www.riigikontroll.ee/Riigikontrollipublikatsioonid/Muudpublikatsioonid/tabid/113/ItemId/458/View/Docs/amid/760/language/en-US/Default.aspx>]

<sup>4</sup> State information system's Interoperability Framework 3.0. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, 2011.

[Available at: <http://www.riso.ee/et/koosvoime/raamistik>]

<sup>5</sup> Action plan for implementation of OECD Public Governance Review. Approved by the cabinet on October 13, 2011.

[Available at: <https://riigikantselei.ee/en/oecd-public-governance-review>]

services. Developments in the last decades indicate that public services are increasingly moving to electronic channels, self-service options are widely used and the officials at service or information desks are also using information systems that provide similar e-services. In information systems, proactive and independently functioning e-services are increasingly used.

Depending on the content, target group, etc., using e-services may not always be the best or the only way for making service provision available and cost-effective. Therefore, the GPOPS addresses all channels used for provision of public services (e.g. service offices, information lines, etc.). In organising public services, it is important to proceed from the process/quality management principles and consider all the channels, parties, roles, and technologies.

**Therefore, the GPOPS aims to address improving service quality on a broader scale, involving accessibility of the service, its ease of use, speed, information provided by the service provider, quality of the decisions made in the course of the process, etc.**

The **exact objective of the GPOPS** was defined based on the materials used in the compilation of the GPOPS, the study results viewed, consultations conducted, and feedback received from the people who used the public services. The objective is to **provide directions for organising available, simple, non-burdensome, understandable, transparent, secure, efficient, and cost-effective public services by the state and local government (hereinafter: LG) authorities.**

In other words, the objective is that by 2020:

- users of public services would consider all the services provided in Estonia as being available, simple, non-burdensome, understandable, and transparent;
- all public service providers could provide the services in a secure, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

**To achieve quality, common grounds for organisation of public services are needed, also taking into account the state information system and the possibilities provided by ICT.** Common grounds function as an input for the respective sectoral legislation, organisation of the work of authorities, development of services (including e-services), and evening up of the level of public services.

For determining the common grounds for public services:

- the definition of public services addressed in the GPOPS is worded;
- a generalised overview is given of the problems faced by citizens and entrepreneurs (hereinafter: persons) when using public services, and those of the state and LGs when providing the services;
- and possible solutions are provided to the issues raised.

Based on the problems described and solutions offered, the authors propose to initiate a pilot project in one of the authorities under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. As a result of that project, three services will be designed and guidance materials compiled for future projects.

GPOPS Annex 1 contains the list of projects in which the GPOPS principles have been used.

The GPOPS is meant for all ministries and state and LG authorities for agreeing on the courses of action in organising public services. The GPOPS is one of the source documents used in preparation of the Digital Agenda 2020 for Estonia. It is also a basis for other sectoral development plans in the respective areas of organisation of public services.

The first version of the GPOPS (79 pages) was sent to ministries, the National Audit Office, the Government Office, the Association of Estonian Cities, the Association of Municipalities of Estonia, the Centre of Registers and Information Systems, the Information System Authority, the Tax and Customs Board, the Estonian Road Administration, the Estonian National Social Insurance Board, the Agricultural Registers and Information Board, the Health Insurance Fund, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, the Police and Border Guard Board, the Defence Resources Agency, the Environmental Board, the Consumer Protection Board, the Labour Inspectorate, the city of Tallinn, and the city of Tartu. By May 15, 2012, the recipients submitted written feedback on the GPOPS and on May 24, 2012, a Round Table was held at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications to discuss the material.

The second version of the GPOPS was opened for public consultation in the Draft Information System (file No. 12-1175) and in the participation portal on September 18, 2012. Through the members of the working group, the discussions on the second version of the GPOPS included ministries, the National Audit Office, the Government Office, the Centre of Registers and Information Systems, the Information System Authority, the Tax and Customs Board, the Estonian Road Administration, the Estonian National Social Insurance Board, the Agricultural Registers and Information Board, the Health Insurance Fund, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, the Police and Border Guard Board, the Defence Resources Agency, the Environmental Board, the Consumer Protection Board, the Labour Inspectorate, the city of Tallinn, and the city of Tartu. It also included the members of the document administration council, heads of service at state authorities, the Estonian Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications, the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations, the Association of Estonian Cities, the Association of Municipalities of Estonia, the e-Governance Academy, the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The second version of the GPOPS was introduced at the Round Table of Open Government Partnership.

The following questions were raised at the public consultation:

- Are the issues perceived similarly?
- How important are the issues raised, in your opinion?
- Is the list of issues exhaustive?
- Are the solutions proposed achievable?
- What would be the alternative solutions?
- Are the measures proposed achievable?
- What additional measures could be taken?
- Are the core principles of the provision of public services necessary and whether and on what level (authority, the area of government of the ministry, LG, the state) should they be established?

Feedback received from the participation portal and through other channels was gathered in the public consultation summary published in the Draft Information System on 05 November 2012. The Ministries of Justice, Finance, and the Interior also provided their opinions at the public consultation since, in addition to the MEAC, they are also responsible for the key development and organisation of public services.

According to the feedback received from public consultation, the issues raised were generally perceived similarly and seen as relevant, they were considered important, and the main issue emphasised was the uneven quality of service provision. One of the potential concerns of the respondents was whether it is possible to map such a wide area in only one document. The list of issues raised was considered sufficient and some of the respondents admitted that in this field, the list can never be conclusive. The solutions proposed seemed realistic. One of the problems emphasised was the backwardness of legislative drafting. No alternative solutions were provided, but it was acknowledged that in the case of a lack of central management, everyone acts in their own way and the situation remains unchanged. There were difficulties in assessing the measures

and suggesting additional possibilities. The overall opinion was that measures should be established by law. Establishment of the core principles was considered a good initiative for all levels.

The Green Paper on the Organisation of Public Services was introduced at the meeting of secretary generals on March 11, 2013. The issues raised and future steps proposed were approved by the meeting participants.

The opinions and suggestions made were used in compiling the third version of the GPOPS that you are currently reading. In addition, the results of the study „*Kodanike rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012*“ (“Citizen Satisfaction with the Public e-Services Provided by the State, 2012”)<sup>6</sup> and „*Ettevõtjate rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012*“ (“Entrepreneur Satisfaction with the Public e-Services Provided by the State, 2012”) ordered by the MEAC<sup>7</sup> have been used<sup>8</sup>.

The solutions provided in the GPOPS will be implemented in a pilot project. The action plan of the project shall be prepared by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. The guidelines compiled as a result of the pilot project will be used in the development of public services in 2014–2020.

## **Definition of public services and the scope of the GPOPS**

The definition of public services can be extremely broad, including all services provided by the public sector. Different members of society understand public services differently: some as services relating to the organisation of search and rescue, some as sending an application to a LG authority, submitting an income tax return, relating to prison services, tax revision, etc. Due to different perceptions, expectations regarding the level of provision of public services are also different. Therefore, the concept of public services needs to be defined at least in general.

Public services are most commonly defined<sup>9</sup> as services provided in general interests in the course of performing public duties, aimed at providing public good, performing the obligations accompanying a public law function, or protecting fundamental rights and freedoms, and interests. Therefore, a public service may be collecting taxes, carrying out a supervisory operation, or providing a personal service like social counselling or babysitting. In order to determine the common grounds for public services it is reasonable to first restrict the concept to make it more manageable and clear, yet unambiguous for both the user and the provider of public services.

The National Audit Office has stated that public services can be divided into two large groups:

- issuing of supporting administrative acts (e.g. awarding a grant) and creating an environment for exercising one’s rights (e.g. voting, making public information requests and requests on oneself) or performing obligations (e.g. declaring taxes);
- so-called actual public services (e.g. waste handling, water and power supply, public transportation, and medical care).

The city of Tallinn considers a public service to be an action or a series of actions that are realised in a direct or indirect mutual impact process between the provider and the recipient with the aim of solving the problem the recipient is facing. The city has defined the following concepts:

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<sup>6</sup> Available at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_poolt\\_pakutavate\\_avalike\\_e-teenustega\\_2012\\_EMOR.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike_rahulolu_riigi_poolt_pakutavate_avalike_e-teenustega_2012_EMOR.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Available at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_poolt\\_pakutavate\\_avalike\\_e-teenustega\\_2012\\_EMOR.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike_rahulolu_riigi_poolt_pakutavate_avalike_e-teenustega_2012_EMOR.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Available at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Ettevotjate\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_avalike\\_e-teenustega\\_2012.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Ettevotjate_rahulolu_riigi_avalike_e-teenustega_2012.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The final report on the analysis “The Contractual Delegation of Local Government Public Services to Civic Associations”. Ministry of Interior.

- Public service – direct or indirect service that a city authority or its authorised person provides to the user of the service, according to legislation, for a fee or free of charge;
- Direct service – service that a user receives personally or via an authorised person, based on an application or some other inquiry;
- Indirect service – service in which city authorities provide a service established by legislation without a direct inquiry by the user; the users of the services cannot be identified.

The GPOPS has adopted the approach that involves the first article of the National Audit Office's approach (issuing supporting administrative acts, creating an environment for the exercise of persons' rights and performance of their obligations) and the direct services in the meaning provided by the city of Tallinn.

**Thus, according to the GPOPS, public service is a service that the state, local government, or a person in private law performing public duties provides at the will (including the presumable will) of a person for the performance of their legal obligations or the exercise of their rights<sup>10</sup>.**

The GPOPS focuses on **ensuring the quality of organisation of such services**, i.e. on:

- publication of information on the services and notification of people of the services (user awareness);
- forms for provision of services (channels);
- user-friendliness and availability of the services.

In regard to these points, the provision of all public service has some common features. These features can be developed together by different authorities and then commonly used in organisation of public services.

The GPOPS focuses mainly on whether and how the organising of a service ensures its quality (i.e. awareness, channels, availability, and user-friendliness). It is presumed that a public service user is generally not interested in knowing which state authority provides the services, with whom, and for what reason.

The GPOPS does not address reorganisation of public service authorities or management of their everyday work. Nor does it evaluate the necessity of the services. The GPOPS is aimed at the public service organisation, providing potential uniform solutions to the issues that may arise in relation to the provision of public services.

## **People's problems when using public services**

For people, the measure for assessing the organisation of public services is quality – the question whether or not the service is of high quality for the person can be asked in different ways.

People may experience problems when using the services:

- due to the low level of awareness of the services provided by the state and LG authorities;
- due to poor access to channels for geographical, technological, or other reasons;
- due to insufficient user-friendliness and availability of the existing services and the services being developed.

### ***Issues related to the awareness and abilities of people***

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<sup>10</sup> 1. the service provider may be the state, a LG, or some other person (including private person) performing public duties

2. the user of the service may be a resident or an entrepreneur of Estonia, or some other private person connected to Estonia

3. a person's will may be expressed both at their direct initiative, via an official, or through their indirect wish to receive a service

First we need to admit that in people's awareness of the state and LG tasks, and their own rights and obligations, there is always room for improvement. Awareness of the public services provided by the state and LGs is also very uneven. The users of public services are asking, "What can I get or ask from a state or LG authority?" For instance, the awareness of the e-services provided by the state or LG authorities can be considered good for only 29% of Internet users<sup>11</sup>. The awareness of entrepreneurs regarding state e-services that simplify business is good only for 34% of the entrepreneurs<sup>12</sup>.

Ignoring these shortcomings in citizen education results in a situation in which the necessary service exists but the person needing it is unable to use it. The shortcomings include some of the following factors:

- The methods of providing public services are at times difficult for people to understand and the counselling channels are not sufficiently available in many places. For instance, information on the submission of reports and the methods of submission may be placed within different authorities and locations (web sites, information boards of authorities, information materials, service standards, etc.) and described in a different way.
- The descriptions of which authorities provide what kind of public services, are not similar in different information channels.
- Abundance of document types and forms is not in the best interests of people and hinders electronic document exchange (for instance, 611 document forms were available to users at the information gateway eesti.ee in November 2012).
- In addition to the above, access to public e-services is restricted by people's poor computer skills and lack of experience. In 2012, 21% of natural persons did not use the Internet<sup>13</sup>.
- In order to use public services, people are forced to submit the same data to different authorities several times. It was one of the reasons for dissatisfaction stated by entrepreneurs<sup>14</sup>.
- Many public and e-services cannot be used properly due to the absence of English and Russian translations<sup>15</sup>.

Because of these factors, people get confused when using public services, wander between different service channels, and run between different authorities for no reason. The users of public services complain, "Do I have to inform the State of anything? How do I find the necessary information online? Why does each authority describe the same thing in a different way? How do I find the correct application form? Where can I ask for advice? Who would help me with the computer or Internet?"

### ***Issues regarding the location and opening hours of state and LG authorities. Issues regarding telephone and e-channels***

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<sup>11</sup> Study „Kodanike rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012“ (“Citizen Satisfaction with the Public e-Services Provided by the State, 2012”), p 93

[Available in Estonian at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_poolt\\_pakutavate\\_avalike\\_e-teenustega\\_2012\\_EMOR.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike_rahulolu_riigi_poolt_pakutavate_avalike_e-teenustega_2012_EMOR.pdf)]

<sup>12</sup> Study „Ettevõtjate rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012“ (“Entrepreneur Satisfaction with the Public e-Services Provided by the State, 2012”)

[Available in Estonian at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Ettevotjate\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_avalike\\_e\\_teenustega\\_2012.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Ettevotjate_rahulolu_riigi_avalike_e_teenustega_2012.pdf)]

<sup>13</sup> Study „Kodanike rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012“ (“Citizen Satisfaction with the Public e-Services Provided by the State, 2012”), p. 10

[Available in Estonian at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_poolt\\_pakutavate\\_avalike\\_e-teenustega\\_2012\\_EMOR.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike_rahulolu_riigi_poolt_pakutavate_avalike_e-teenustega_2012_EMOR.pdf)]

<sup>14</sup> Study „Ettevõtjate rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012“ (“Entrepreneur Satisfaction with the Public e-Services Provided by the State, 2012”)

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<sup>15</sup> Study „Kodanike rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012“ (“Citizen Satisfaction with the Public e-Services Provided by the State, 2012”), p. 42

[Available in Estonian at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_poolt\\_pakutavate\\_avalike\\_e-teenustega\\_2012\\_EMOR.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike_rahulolu_riigi_poolt_pakutavate_avalike_e-teenustega_2012_EMOR.pdf)]

People have different habits and possibilities in communicating with state and LG authorities. In addition to using the e-services, people would like and sometimes even have to visit the offices of the authorities. Generally the public services of state authorities are available at the offices located in county or regional centres or sometimes only in the larger cities. At that, the offices of different authorities may not be located in the same county centres. Even in the same settlement, the offices may be located in different parts of the city. The public services of LGs are generally available at the location of the specific LG authority.

- The location of provision of public services is important for people when using public services. Usually, the state and LG authorities are located far apart from one another. The locations of the offices have not been selected based on their accessibility. Some of the locations are hard to reach even for car owners.
- The opening hours between the offices vary, also causing confusion when it comes to the use of public services.
- It is difficult to tell which public services are provided by the state and which by LGs. That is why people often turn to a LG authority for matters concerning a state authority, and vice versa.

The users of public services are complaining over the following: "Why can't I take care of everything at the same place?"

Some of the services can be used via telephone or e-channels. By different authorities, the services vary both by their contents and the possibilities of use:

- the state and LG authorities provide telephone services in a different way. A single short number is used, enabling one to get answers to different types of questions, or there are different short numbers by topics or fields. There is no general information number - it is up to the person to find the number of the official who could help them in solving the particular issue.
- People find it difficult to understand what is meant by electronic services – is it provision of information in a scanned form or a functioning information system that contains a lot of pre-filled information. People find the electronic applications with different logic, structure, and functionality very confusing. The most common reason for dissatisfaction with the e-services among natural<sup>16</sup> and legal persons<sup>17</sup> is the excessive complexity of the services.

Such a situation does not create a holistic image of the state as the provider of public services and does not ensure uniform quality of the services. The users of public services complain, "Why do I have to look for a new official to call every single time I need some advice? Why are all the authorities different on the Internet?"

### ***Issues regarding user-friendliness and availability of the public services***

User-friendliness and availability are often left unnoticed in the organisation of physical service provision, as well as in the development of e-services. Here are some of the reasons:

- The procedural logic used in the paper-based world is directly carried over to information systems. Although the state and LGs have gathered data on the person, it may be asked again due to technological, regulatory, or organisational problems. The obligation to verify the circumstances and get approvals is often left to people. It may happen that during a single proceeding, a person has to turn to several authorities and as a result of this, one authority creates work for another.

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<sup>16</sup> Study „Kodanike rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012“ (“Citizen Satisfaction with the Public E-Services Provided by the State, 2012”), p. 41

[Available in Estonian at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_poolt\\_pakutavate\\_avalike\\_e-teenustega\\_2012\\_EMOR\\_Kokkuvote.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike_rahulolu_riigi_poolt_pakutavate_avalike_e-teenustega_2012_EMOR_Kokkuvote.pdf)]

<sup>17</sup> Study „Ettevõtjate rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012“ (“Entrepreneur Satisfaction with the Public E-Services Provided by the State, 2012”)

[Available in Estonian at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Ettevotjate\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_avalike\\_e\\_teenustega\\_2012.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Ettevotjate_rahulolu_riigi_avalike_e_teenustega_2012.pdf)]

- There is a lack of information as to the current state of procedure. People receive no accurate information on the course of provision of the service, its intermediate stages, and the deadline.
- Authorities allow different feedback possibilities (where, how, who to, about what can feedback be given) on the services provided. Some authorities have enabled feedback on each service immediately after using the service. Some authorities gather feedback by e-mail or content window. In some cases, there are no clear instructions on providing feedback.
- In addition to providing information on the public services, their current state, and the feedback in a different manner, the state and LG service portals are scattered around to numerous web pages.

For these reasons, the provision of public services may be slower, more difficult to understand, more expensive for people, more time-consuming and less available. For a person, it is more convenient to start gathering information or using an e-service from a single point of contact, be it an online information gateway, a help phone, a common service office or a so-called family official. The users of public services complain, "Where can I get information? Why does the State ask me to give the same information every time I need to use its services? Why couldn't the authorities communicate with each other instead of forcing me to run around? Why do I have to verify everything myself? How far is the processing of my application? Why aren't I asked if I'm able to handle everything and if I'm satisfied?" The overall satisfaction with the services provided by the state and LG authorities has decreased in 2012 in comparison to 2010.<sup>18</sup>

In summary, it can be said that for people, the most important aspects are being aware of the service, being able to access it, and receiving a high-quality service.

## **Issues of state and LG authorities in provision of public services**

From the viewpoint of state and LG authorities, efficiency is the central point in the issues related to organisation of public services. It has to do with the efficiency of performing the public service tasks while ensuring the economical use of the state funds.

The main problems are:

- **Issues regarding managing, targeting, and analysing the provision of public services;**
- **Issues regarding the requirements and principles of provision of public services;**
- **Issues regarding public service channels (including delegation);**

### ***Issues regarding managing, targeting, and analysing the provision of public services:***

- **The lack of a central view on the provision of services, and cooperation between ministries, also at regional level**

Every public service has contact with other public services. For example, several authorities may issue activity licences, environmental or resource permits needed for the same activity. Even for the most unique services, e-services provided by state datasets and information systems act as a point of contact. Therefore, development of the services is horizontal by its nature.

The deficiency in horizontal cooperation in provision of public services is presented by the fact that related parties are often not included even from the same jurisdiction, not to mention the representatives of other

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<sup>18</sup> Study „Kodanike rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012“ (“Citizen Satisfaction with the Public E-Services Provided by the State, 2012”), p. 10  
 [Available in Estonian at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_poolt\\_pakutavate\\_avalike\\_e-teenustega\\_2012\\_EMOR.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Kodanike_rahulolu_riigi_poolt_pakutavate_avalike_e-teenustega_2012_EMOR.pdf)] p. 38

jurisdictions affected by the matter. The trouble, time, and money saved by not involving the parties will later come back in the form of litigations or unsuccessful and useless IT developments that require redoing.

Due to the lack of cooperation, different registers with similar or even the same contents are created in different administrative areas. On the one hand, it requires resources to maintain such registers, and on the other, it forces people to submit the same data to different authorities.

- **There is no role of the “owner” in the development of public services**

The other aspect of the lack of horizontal cooperation is the fact that at national level, there are no authorities responsible for the area as a whole (“owners” in the project management terminology) who would have a comprehensive view of public services and act as the chief supervisor of the development activities. There is no specific owner in Estonia to manage the process of public service development. Four ministries are responsible for the central development and organisation of public services – the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, and within the counties, also the county governors.

There are various departments and authorities that, one way or another, handle the development of public services either inside the field or across different fields. They include the Information Systems Department and the DoI SSD at the MEAC, the Information System Authority, the Centre of Registers and Information Systems at the Ministry of Justice, the Information Technology Centre for the Ministry of Finance, the IT and Development Centre of the Ministry of the Interior, the Strategy Unit of the Government Office. Due to the multitude of the parties, the action plans are often unharmonised. Sometimes it results in parallel implementation of similar or principally conflicting projects.

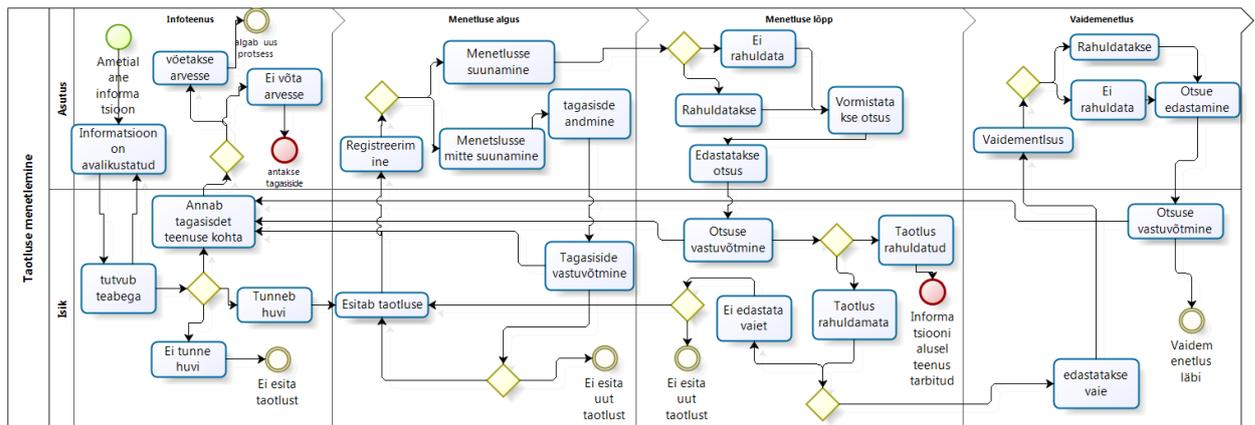
The same issue of the role of the owner of the service development also exists at lower levels. There is often no overall responsible authority and “owner” in the management of the public service development processes even at the level of state and LG authorities. Usually, authorities have executive officers, finance officers, information security officers, IT officers, sector managers, etc., but there is no position in place to carry the responsibility for the development of business processes, technology, service provision channels, and services. Often, all the parties handle the development of business processes and services within their limits, but there is no overall responsible authority. Generally, there is no efficient control and monitoring of the service providers. Therefore, there is also no possibility of directing service providers to improve their services according to the client’s view and the benefits from optimisation of the working processes.

- **There is a lack of process-based management**

Currently, the only starting point for organisation of state and LG services is the jurisdiction given to the authorities by legislation. Therefore, the services have been developed based on the interests of the authority, its officials, and the possibilities of the budgets. Often, services are not viewed as a uniform chain with two sides: the view of the authority and the view of the user of the service. Service may begin with the publication of information by an authority, after which a person reads the information and decides whether he/she is interested in it. This may lead to submission of various applications and end in notification or in delivery of the decision by the authority, and gathering of feedback from the person on the service they received. Currently, services are seen as simply a part of the chain described above, not as the entire process. In addition, there is no general concept for providing feedback by people, nor the systems supporting that. These shortcomings decrease the level of satisfaction of the people and fail to ensure improvement activities for provision of services.

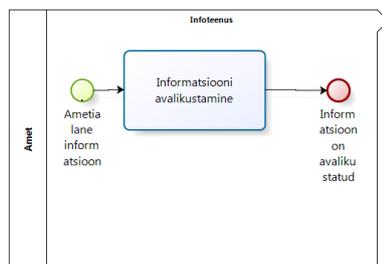
The schematic drawing below consists of an overall view containing two views (the one of the authority and the one of a client). Both views consist of four stages (information service, the beginning and the end of

proceedings, potential challenge proceedings, and the possibility of giving feedback on the service throughout the proceedings)



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Currently, it is possible to approach service provision only by considering just one view and stage of the process, bringing about several processes unrelated to each other.



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### Issues regarding the requirements and principles of provision of public services:

- **The volume, contents, and quality of the services provided has not been determined**

There is no accurate and constantly updated overview of where, which, and on what level are services provided by the state and LG authorities, as well as which information and which service channels are used in the process. There are no answers to questions such as how many services the authorities provide, how widely these services are used, and how much the management and provision of these services costs. As a result, duplicated development of the same services may occur, resulting in non-economical use of budget funds. Without mapping, it is also difficult to recognise and develop cross-party services and to initiate cooperation.

- **No minimum requirements are put in place for public services**

Some service descriptions and standards have been created inside the authorities. Still, no overall minimum requirements have been established at national level, stating where, which, and at what level public services shall be made available. There are no requirements in place concerning the speed of the service in question (more purposeful and automated proceedings processes), its precision/quality (automatic data insertion and control, etc.), clarity (user-friendliness, harmonisation of document types, simple instructions, summaries of legislations that would be understandable to “normal people”, translations into English and Russian), etc., that would enable the comparison of the services provided. It results in uneven quality and

quantity of the organisation and provision of public services, damaging the overall performance of the functions of the authorities.

- **The indicators for assessing the impact of provision of public services are vague**

The indicators used in assessment of public service quality and quantity and making a cost-benefit analysis differ between authorities or are completely absent. Without the indicators, the ways in which different public services support the objective of the authority cannot be assessed.

***Issues regarding public service channels (including delegation):***

- **Fewer and fewer services are being provided in counties**

The widespread use of computers and better availability of Internet services, improvement in computer skills and development of public e-services have sharply diminished the volume of physical servicing in recent years. Similarly to commercial banks, several state authorities are facing the question of whether and where to continue with the services of their offices. It is costly to maintain underemployed staff and pay for the office space in the areas where service offices are visited infrequently. Budget cuts have also contributed to the decision to close some of the offices. This may bring about a situation in which a service that has so far been available in county centres is now only accessible only in regional centres. Services move away from people and since the staffs of authorities have decreased, the level of efficiency of the performance of the tasks by the authority may also fall. At the same time, common operation of authorities or operating in some areas in certain periods is not widespread.

- **The principles for delegating services are vague**

One of the ways to ensure the availability of services in small places is to agree on the principles that would help to delegate the services between authorities. Currently there is not much clarity in the principles and conditions for delegating the provision of services to other public sector authorities or the private sector. There is no clarity as to what to rely on when delegating services – the infrastructure, logic of the IT solution, availability of work resources, similarity in the service process models, etc. Upon reaching an agreement, the services provided can be made high-quality and available to people. Currently there are no clear agreements on determining the cost and cost-effectiveness of the work processes to be delegated. The issues of financing concerning authority budgets in regard to delegation of services have also not been settled, since the parties do not wish to re-divide the budgets upon transfer of services.

- **The support of authorities' administrative procedures and information management is not efficient enough**

Successful provision of public services is not possible if the person or the official is unable to quickly find the necessary information (a guideline, document, data from the information system, a description of a proceeding) and when the management processes do not support the service provision processes.

Until recently, the main focus in records management has been on records created on paper or as a computer file. The principle of information governance, stating that records are simply a part of the information that is used in the provision of services and created in the process, is not taken into account.

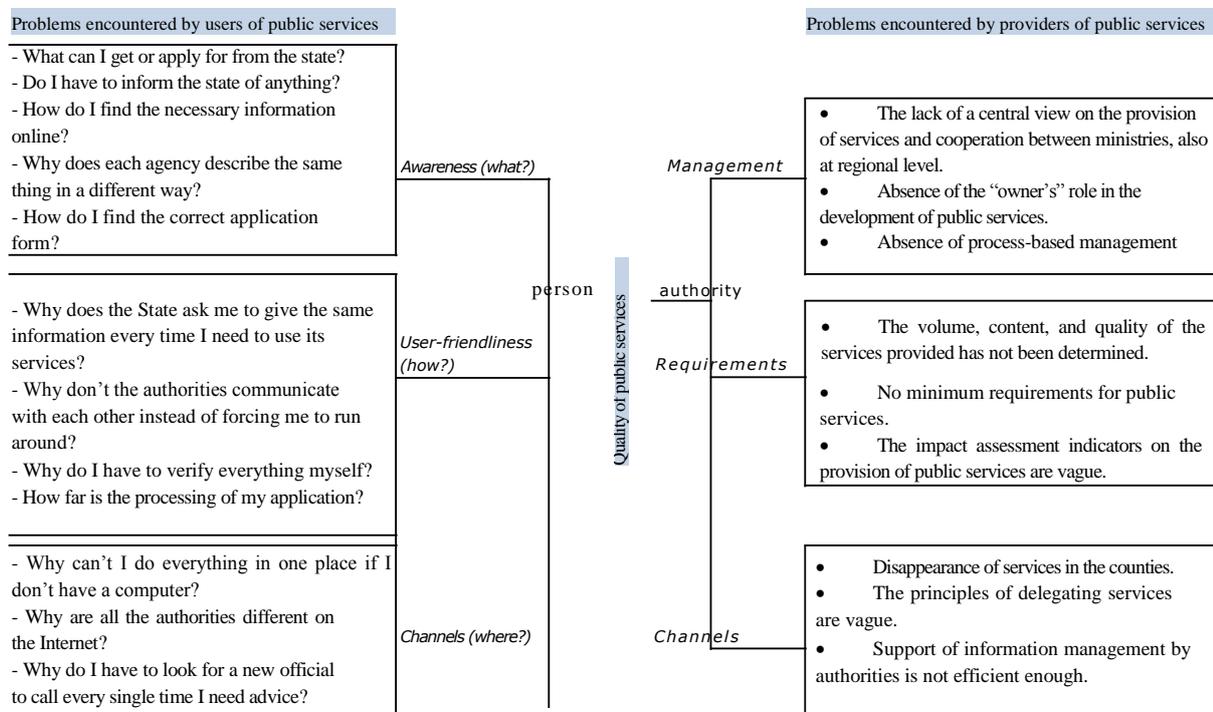
The development of the business systems, on the other hand, has been seen as the task of only the ICT, although in these systems datasets that are equal to records are also created (they have to retain their integrity, authenticity, reliability, and usability for a certain period of time). That is the reason why records management and other information systems have been developed for a long time not as systems supporting the same process, but independently of each other. The exchanging of domain-related knowledge between different parties, and taking them into consideration, has been poor.

As a result of the lack of cooperation between different fields (in addition to the abovementioned, also service management and legislative drafting) and systems, the paper-based approach is slow to disappear, many operations are duplicated, service processes do not function smoothly and seamlessly, and the necessary information is difficult to find and use. It all serves to lower the motivation of employees who participate in the servicing process, and the quality of the service provided.

In summary, it can be said that the most important thing for authorities is to find the motivation to cooperate in the organisation of public services and to operate efficiently. The process of providing public services has to be cost-efficient, on the one hand, and reduce the administrative burden of clients, on the other.

In development of public services, changing of the process must result in a positive effect perceptible to at least one party of the service process; for example, the result is increased user-friendliness or diminished costs of process management. It would be ideal if both of these occurred.

**Figure 1: Summary of the issues encountered by public service users and providers**



## Solutions

Below, possible solutions are provided to the problems encountered by people, the state, and LG authorities in relation to the organisation of public services. The aim of the solutions is to improve the quality of services.

The proposed and possible solutions are divided into the following subsections:

1. **Managing, targeting, and analysing the provision of public services**
2. **Requirements and principles in provision of public services**
3. **Channels for provision of public services, and delegating the services**
4. **Increasing the awareness and knowledge of public service users and providers**

## ***1. Managing, targeting, and analysing the provision of public services.***

Ensuring the quality of public services should be the highest priority of the state and LG authorities. People's needs should be taken as a basis in developing and reorganising public services. To ensure horizontal cooperation, which is the foundation of efficient and effective provision of public services to users, a responsible authority needs to be established at national level. This authority would have a complete overview of the principles and requirements of public services.

- **Ensuring a central view (agreements: development council), appointing an “owner” to the services and service provision channels**

It is important to agree on the inter-institutional division of responsibilities and tasks in the organisation and development of public services, and the methods of their coordination (starting from “soft” measures like information exchange, analysis, counselling, good practice, and development of networks, and ending with “strong” measures like legislation and monitoring). As a result, an authority responsible for the development and coordination of services would emerge and start managing the process as a whole. Under the leadership of a general coordinator it would be possible to create a cooperation network across the fields that would guide the development of public services, or a development council that would mediate the implementation of the GPOPS solutions and coordinate the respective work in authorities.

The need for the role of the “owner” of service management and development also exists at lower levels. An owner of the management of the public service development processes is also needed at local and national levels. All authorities should have an owner of public services, responsible for the development of business processes and public services. In addition to the owner of public services, the owners of public service provision channels also need to be appointed. They would be responsible for the quality of the channel and the technologies supporting the channel. The task of an owner would be checking and monitoring the quality of the services, as well as guiding and supporting improvements to the services, taking into account the customer view and the benefits from optimising the work processes. The owners of public services, as the heads of services, will be responsible for legislation that stipulates the service, along with consideration of the needs of service users and the service development and provision process, starting from the idea and ending with service satisfaction. They would also be responsible for selecting a channel for provision of specific services, and development and reorganisation of the service.

Channel owners would be responsible for the constant monitoring of the channel, as well as its working time, technical capabilities, capacity, management, and development. They bring out the advantages of the channel, introduce its additional services (notifying, identifying, marketing, feedback management).

Service level and channel quality agreements need to be in place between public service owners and public service channel owners.

- **Process-based management of the services**

The direction in the provision of public services that are based on the principles of life cycle should be towards process-based management. Services based on life cycle principles depend on the person's residence, interests, age, previously used services, etc. The objective is to create conditions for people to communicate with the state in a convenient way, without having to know the details about the structure, role distribution, and jurisdictions of public sector authorities. People using services are interested in the services, not the authority providing them. It should be in the interests of the authorities to have an overview of what operations should be carried out for the provision of life cycle services, what are the administrative costs of such services, and what are the activities people carry out while using the services.

- **Constant analysis of the services, assessment of the impacts and the administrative burden**

In the process of legislative drafting, the impact of the public service that is created or amended should be assessed from the viewpoint of people's, state's, and LG's administrative burden (including the economic impact – for example, the need for changing the place of residence should not be created). The need for the service should always be considered. Using the existing means and solutions across the fields should become everyday practice. Creation and development of public services has to be aimed at decreasing persons' administrative burden and optimising the work processes of authorities. The existing services should be constantly analysed. It also serves as an input for assessing and possibly developing the services provided. Setting minimum standards for services helps to establish assessment indicators on the quality, speed, and clarity of services, on the one hand, and their resource costs, on the other. It also permits assessment of how each service supports the objectives of the authority. Public services should be constantly improved based on feedback from users.

- **Analysis preceding the development of services**

In development of services (including e-services), an analysis of the needs of the users – people and officials – should always be carried out before legislative drafting. The future users of the service – meaning people – should be involved in the development and testing process of services. The existing legislation and the authority's work organisation should be analysed because they often present a barrier to creating and reorganising e-services. The analysis must definitely include an analysis of the roles of the legislation, service providers and users, and the related technology. If necessary, it should lead to amendments proposed. The objective is not development in itself, but performance of the state and LG tasks within the shortest possible period of time and at the lowest costs. This may mean the service has to be delegated to another authority.

The outcome of public service development need not necessarily be an e-solution, although it is often the best way. It is important to reorganise public service in a more general manner, to make it convenient to use and easy to manage. If it is purposeful to create new e-services or develop already existing ones, paper-based service provision should not be followed word for word, and more should be done than just making the information system used by officials accessible to the service users. In the development stage, it is wise to involve parties that are competent in offering solutions that are based on the possibilities that technology can provide. The preliminary analysis should be conducted with the aim of making the service process more effective and efficient, and taking into account the needs of the people using the services. The existing applications for calculation of administrative burden must be used in this phase. A thorough preliminary analysis helps to achieve a user-friendly and convenient service, regardless of whether it is provided by the state or a LG, or is delegated to another authority.

## ***2. Requirements and principles in provision of public services***

- **Establishment of core principles and requirements**

Requirements supporting public services should be agreed across the fields, both on the provision and the development of services. Requirements agreed on the provision of services help people orientate better in utilising possibilities for realising their rights and obligations. They also help authorities to use common principles for systemising information on the services, service provision channels, information channels, location and business hours of the channels, feedback possibilities, data gathered during the provision of public services, and the related stages of proceedings. Requirements agreed on the provision of services help to determine the need for development, use a process-based approach to development, and take into account the interests of the parties and the possibilities of technology.

The particularities of the services need to be kept in mind when establishing the requirements. A different approach is needed depending on whether the service is provided within the authority as a so-called simple service, or across authorities as a complex service. One of the objectives for establishing the requirements is to differentiate between public services that are provided strictly within authorities (functioning within a single authority) and public services that are provided across authorities (several authorities participate in the process of provision of public services. The act or omission in one of the fields serves as an input for another authority to start or finish its operations).

Requirements as a whole would help to manage the process of provision of public services efficiently and effectively. Based on the materials gathered during the pilot project, the following can be prepared:

- guidelines for implementation of the channel strategy;
- description of the rights and obligations of the owner of public services;
- description of the rights and obligations of the owner of channels used for providing public services;
- model of the development process;
- methodology for assessment of the development process;
- methodology for assessment of the cost of the service (development, maintenance).

- **Obtaining an overview of the services provided by the authorities**

There has to be an overview of where, which, and on what level services are provided by the state and LG authorities, and which information and service channels are used in the process. It has to be clear how many services are provided by the authorities, how widely these services are used, and what is the cost of the management and provision of these services. The information has to be available for both intra- and inter-authority use. For example, a list of public services, a catalogue, or a set of process cards is a useful tool or source of assistance for both the people using the services and the authorities providing them. In the course of the study "*Ettevõtjate rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012*" ("Entrepreneur Satisfaction with the Public e-Services Provided by the State, 2012"),<sup>19</sup> the respondents made suggestions for simplifying communication with the state. Thirty-seven per cent of respondents suggested that "an authority should describe online how and where people can obtain information on all the services provided by the authority" and 34% said that "an authority should describe online which services people can use".

- **Re-use of data, prohibition on duplicate requests of information**

Duplicate requesting of information already gathered by the state and LGs needs to be prohibited, and in the case of e-services, people should be provided with pre-filled data fields. The document types exchanged with people should be harmonised and their data composition described. No information should be asked unless it is necessary for the provision of the specific service. Taxonomy management and monitoring mechanisms should be developed based on the public service catalogue to prevent duplicate requests for the same information by authorities providing public services.

- **Electronic information governance (a holistic approach)**

In the field of records management, the course should be changed from records management to holistic information governance, taking into consideration all information systems and environments (including social media) where information is created and documents are processed or made available. Common subject thesauri, classifications, and other options supporting information governance should be considered. These, along with the harmonisation of metadata, document types and forms, and statuses of proceedings, will simplify the process of finding and using information via a single point of contact. It also helps to promote

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<sup>19</sup> Study "*Ettevõtjate rahulolu riigi poolt pakutavate avalike e-teenustega 2012*" ("Entrepreneur Satisfaction with the Public e-Services Provided by the State, 2012")

[Available in Estonian at: [http://www.mkm.ee/public/Ettevotjate\\_rahulolu\\_riigi\\_avalike\\_e\\_teenustega\\_2012.pdf](http://www.mkm.ee/public/Ettevotjate_rahulolu_riigi_avalike_e_teenustega_2012.pdf) p. 53]

document and data exchange between different systems and to make full use of the potential offered by the X-Road document exchange service. In order to reduce paper-based records management, any legislation and procedures (e.g. administrative and records management procedures) preventing the development of records management should be updated. In many places, electronic information governance is still seen as an exception rather than a rule; where documents must be submitted on paper, and the logic of the “paper world” is still followed. Instead of forms, legislation should lay down compositions of data that are necessary for carrying out certain procedures or providing services.

- **Ensuring the user-friendliness of services**

In order to ensure user-friendliness, certain principles regarding the counselling of the users of public services and giving feedback, especially in the e-channels, need to be agreed on. Users must have a clear understanding of who is, and under what conditions, providing public services, what service it is, and why it must or should be used. They also need to know whether and how they can obtain feedback on the stages of proceedings, what they need to know and what should be taken into consideration when using the service in different ways (e.g. technical, time-related, content-related, or linguistic aspects). Service users must also know how and where they can obtain information, notifications, and counselling on these matters, and give feedback. It is important to provide information on the technical and software requirements for the use of different e-services (e.g. browsers, freeware, etc.).

### ***3. Channels of provision of public services, and delegating the services***

The state aims to use e-channels as much as possible in places where it is the best and most efficient option possible. At the same time, taking into consideration the number and skills of Internet users, the diversity of channels needs to be continually ensured during the transitional period. People should be offered different service and information channels (service office, trainings for the users of public services, information line, webpage, information gateway eesti.ee, forums, services provided by e-mail, services provided in an e-environment, services via mobile and connected devices). Feedback needs to be gathered, including on e-services, and the necessary improvements made on the basis thereof. By analysing the services of different authorities, it is possible to develop the bases for service delegation by identifying similar proceeding processes and control criteria. Using the delegation of services in the provision of physical services would enable resolution of problems falling within the jurisdiction of several authorities during a single client contact.

**It is important to move towards an approach based on a one-stop-shop in all channels.** Modern ICT possibilities enable such an approach. It is necessary due to the fact that clients want to resolve all their concerns in a single contact with the public sector. They wish to solve as many issues as possible and not to travel, call, or search between numerous offices, phone numbers, and web pages.

- **Single point of electronic contact (interoperability of different portals, life cycle services, new technologies)**

Information on public services should be grouped based on the needs of the target groups – e.g. in the state portal eesti.ee, LGs’ portal kovtp.ee, public health portal e-tervis, the Company Registration Portal – and the interoperability of these portals should be ensured. While state and LG authorities have to ensure the relevance of the data contained therein, a person should be able to obtain information about the service and also use some of the services without having to identify themselves. Authentication will take place in case of actual need, that is, when it is necessary to authorise the person. The information being viewed by a person using a public e-service should be made accessible to the official providing the service, so as to initiate electronic proceedings based on an oral expression of will. Possibilities for granting authorisation to a representative (e.g. a close person or a family official in the provision of services) should be created to ensure access to the e-services. The scope of electronic services provided to the person should be extended, and the services should

be based on the citizen's life span – their residence, interests, age, and previously used services. Applications should be created to enable the use of public e-services in mobile phones, tablets, DigiTV, and other devices.

- **Single physical point of contact (service counter, family official, service office of the “anchor authority”, private company, etc.)**

The development of information technology has lessened the need for physical communication, which is why many authorities are unable to efficiently provide public services via a physical point of contact. At the same time, it has created the possibility for providing public services irrespective of the location of physical offices – services of different authorities can be provided at the same physical location. The provision of public services can be handed over to so-called family officials who could, in case of extending their authorisations, be social workers, family physicians, public library employees, county government officials, employees of a private company, or the officials of an authority (anchor authority) with a service network covering the entire country.

On the one hand, this approach enables services to be provided in smaller places that are currently no longer being serviced. On the other hand, it enables administrative costs to be divided between the authorities and labour to be used effectively, ensuring a normal work load to officials both in provision seasonal and regular services. In seasonal services, it has to be taken into consideration that different resources are needed for the provision of the same services at the busiest times and under regular conditions. By obtaining an overview of the seasonal services of different fields, the peak moments of which fall into different periods, it is possible to combine such services.

The transfer of services should also include reallocation of the budgets of the respective authorities. In doing so it is possible to prevent the discontinuation of the provision of services in sparsely populated areas, increase the level of satisfaction of people, and create a more uniform image of the state.

- **Common point of contact in the form of an information line (national information line, topical information lines).**

A national information line or subject-based lines need to be created. The primary working tool of an information line employee could be the information gateway eesti.ee and the information systems of the authorities that have joined the system. In addition to independent provision of services, the role of a call centre would also include ensuring coherence between physical points of service and e-services. The information directed to the users of e-services, and the e-services themselves in part, would be available to people using the call centres, and the provision of the services would be more harmonised.

#### ***4. Increasing the awareness and knowledge of public service users and providers***

- **Training of officials**

The officials need to be trained to be able to provide public services and counselling across the authorities and fields. They need to be introduced to the possibilities of different information gateways (eesti.ee, kovtp.ee, the Company Registration Portal, health portals). Various trainings need to be organised on updating or modernisation of public services, introducing the principles of mapping and improving the services. In addition to that, a website should be created, gathering all the trainings for officials by topics and the information materials used in the trainings into a single location. An integrated approach to training officials would help to develop both service and service development skills.

- **Increasing the awareness of service users**

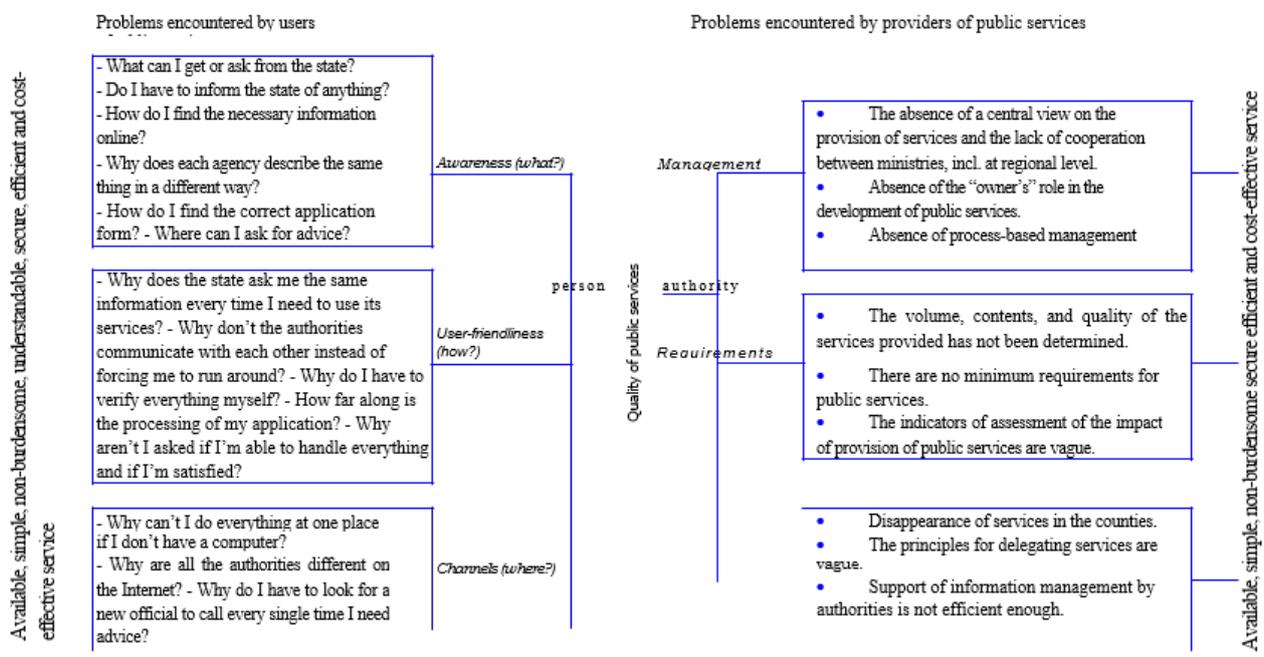
People's awareness of the duties and possibilities of the state and LG authorities in the provision of services, as well as of their own options in the use of public services, needs to be raised, including the preventative offering

of services necessary to fulfil the performance of individuals' rights and obligations. Various channels need to be used for communicating this information. In addition to e-channels, social networks and the media could be used for informing people, as well as spreading the word in the offices, by LG officials, care workers, and employees of public libraries. The information on the provision and use of public services needs to be translated into both English and to Russian, in order to increase awareness.

- **Training of people (ID, software, etc.)**

Computer trainings need to be continued within the framework of the Digital Agenda and other development plans. Information activities and trainings on the use of the ID-card and mobile ID also need to be continued. Simple guidelines on using a computer and public services should be compiled and handed out for free, especially online. Public libraries and public internet points of other institutions could serve as the places for displaying these materials.

**Figure 2: Summary of the issues for public service users and providers, and possible solutions**



**Common SOLUTIONS**

- **Managing and targeting the provision of public services.**  
Ensuring a central view (agreements, development council), appointing an "owner" to the services;  
Process-based management of the services;  
Prior constant analysis of the services, assessment of the impacts and the administrative burden;  
Analysis preceding the development of services.}
- **Requirements and principles in provision of public services**  
Establishment of core principles and requirements;  
Getting an overview of the services provided by the authorities;  
Re-use of the data, prohibition on requesting the same data twice;  
Electronic information exchange (holistic approach);  
Ensuring the user-friendliness of the services;
- **Channels for provision of public services, and delegating the services**  
Single point of electronic contact (interoperability of different portals, life cycle services, new technologies)  
Single point of physical contact (service counter, family officer, service office of the "anchor authority", private company, etc.);  
Single point of telephone contact
- **Increasing the awareness and knowledge of public service users and providers:**  
Training of officials;  
Increasing the awareness of service users, including trainings.