Approved by the Government
30.06.2015 at the Cabinet meeting

The Analysis and Suggestions for Determining the Owners of Public Services

The summary of the desired state of affairs (to be implemented in all state institutions)

- services offered by the public sector are described and with high quality;
- the state has an assessable overview which is based on unified principles about the volume, usability, administrative cost and user satisfaction with the services;
- on a single institution's board level there needs to be an accountable person who takes responsibility for the quality of the services offered to the end user. The main tasks for this person includes:
    - taking responsibility for the quality of services (across all service channels) offered by the institution in connection to four main indicators: usability, satisfaction, administrative cost, the end user's administrative burden;
    - taking responsibility for organising the management of the list of services (keeping it up-to-date);
    - taking responsibility for developing the content of services (incl. partnering up with IT by taking the role of a customer, and the role of making proposals for changes in the legislative process).

1. Terminology

Service providers:
institutions (agencies, inspectorates, public entities, ministries where service provision is not delegated to the ministry's subdivisions, when possible foundations and non-profit organizations carrying out public duties).

Service-based approach:
service-based approach (understanding and action) refers to the provision of services by institutions and, as a result of the provision, the emergence of value to the target groups. The service-based approach is the administration and systematic development of services based on the objectives of the institution, optimization of costs and the growth of satisfaction with the services amongst the target groups. The service-based approach and the implementation of opportunities offered by ICT has helped to carry out (based on pilot projects and previous experience) the restructuring of organisations, which on the one hand has resulted in the improvement of efficiency of the institutions' operations, and on the other hand has resulted in the rise of end-user satisfaction with the services.

Service:
service, incl. public service, is defined differently but in general it is assumes that the end-user has a need for a service and the service provider shows readiness or obligation to provide that service. Service is always the result of processes and activities, and it is their most outstanding part. The prerequisite for providing services is the necessity of a concrete target group to realize its' rights or to fulfill its' obligations and the ability of the public sector to fulfill that need.

In Estonia's strategy documents, public service has been referred to as 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. The following definition has been formulated in the Green Paper on the Organisation of Public Services (hereafter GPOPS). The definition of service found in the Digital Agenda 2020 for Estonia (hereafter Digital Agenda 2020) is based on the one defined in the GPOPS. The scope of the concept of public service that can be found in the GPOPS, was agreed upon a public consultation in 2012 through the participatory web osale.ee. Digital Agenda 2020's smarter governance and public administration measure foresees the development of improved public services by using ICT. Thus, in the present concept the GPOPS's definition of public services has been addressed with the main focus on e-services and the memorandum has not been extended to cover the so called genuine public services (e.g. streetlights, the control of the state border etc.).

Service owner:
is responsible for the provision of service related business processes and the development of public services. The task of the service owner is the optimization of the service processes and the search for possibilities to make services more convenient, financially rational and the realization of these goals, based on the value generated through the provision of services. [1] The tasks of the service owner/ coordinator at the management level have been presented in the current presentation of analysis and suggestions. The current document, together with the Government Cabinet memorandum establishes the general responsibilities of the ministries' secretary generals. Meaning, taking responsibility for the quality and management of public services (incl. e-services), that the ministries and their subdivisions (incl., when possible, foundations and non-profit organizations that perform public duties) offer. The management of public services mainly comprises of having an overview of the directions of the development of public services and making sure that the offered public services are relevant and up-to-date. As a result, in every institution there should be a person at the management level responsible for the quality of services offered to the end-user.
Service-based management can be organised by assigning tasks and managing work of the employees. The service owner is an entity at the management level responsible for the functionality of public services, in order to directly influence the funding of public services and the processes regarding the provision of public services.

Uniform requirements for the quality of public services (the minimum requirements for public services):
in the requirements there are described the list and the amount of services rendered, the end-users' satisfaction with the service, the administrative cost for the institution and the administrative burden of the end-user, also including the principles for developing services that cross domains and cooperation models.
Service standard is a document that sets the minimum standards for the institution for the provision of public services. It consists of the description of the legal basis, basic definitions, the objective, the target group and the provision of the service. This will be prepared by a particular institution taking into account its' specificities.

[1] Example: How to explain a project's economic profitability? Road Administration's owner Exchange Project [Available in Estonian at: http://media.wix.com/ugd/a58f19_faf791bbde3d4bb99a01c3489021377c.pdf]

2. Problems

The volume, contents, and quality of the services provided has not been determined due to a lack of cooperation

In the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (hereafter MEAC), the Department of Information Society Services Development (hereafter DoISSD) is a unit fulfilling specific tasks, whose main responsibility is coordinating the development of public services, public sector administration and electronic record management, on the basis of the opportunities offered by the state information systems and information technology. During the last three years, DoISSD has come out with different support materials and carried out various pilot projects in order to prove that the principles developed at the DoISSD can actually be implemented. At the same time it occurred that there is a lack of responsibility for the quality of services on all managerial levels.

The state lacks an accurate overview over where, what kind and at what level and quality services do the state and local agencies offer and what channels are used in order to provide services. The Public Information Act § 28 subsection (1) p. 27 and § 29 subsection (1) state that the information owner is obligated to make public on his/her website the information about the provision of services, as well as about any changes in the conditions or prices of the services before they are enforced. However, this requirement is applied very differently and the Data Protection Inspectorate's general guidelines[2] do not offer any detailed instructions either. There is an inability to answer questions such as: how many services does an institution offer; how often are these services being used; what is the quality of these services and what is the cost of administrating and providing these service, i.e. the cost of public service which is also the prerequisite for changing over to an activity based state budget. This may lead to duplication of development activities and the unsustainable use of budgetary resources. Without mapping services, it is difficult to recognise which services can be offered across institutions in order to initiate cooperation and development of these services. Today, it is quite difficult to know whether or not we are developing the right services and if it is done efficiently.

There is no role of the owner of services

By evaluating the applications for state investments for ICT developments and through discussions with the representatives of ministries and state agencies, it has become evident that there is no fixed role within institutions that would have the responsibility to administrate information about services in order to fulfil the requirements in the ICT investment application (state budget, structural funds). In other words, there is no owner of services. The role of a service owner means a set of specific tasks and not a new position. The set of tasks can be supplemental to the current tasks of a specific position.

Over the past two years, by adjusting and co-ordinating the database statute, MEAC has made the following remarks and drawn attention to shortcomings when it comes to databases providing e-services:

- before the establishment of a database, the necessity and the impacts of creating a database should be thoroughly analysed;
- avoid requesting of information already gathered in the state's information system;
- it has not been analysed what data is required for a service;

[2] The Public Information Act Guidelines
[In Estonian
https://wwwaki.rik.ee/sites/www.aki.ee/files/elfinder/article_files/Avalku%20teabe%20seaduse%20%C3%BCldjuhend%20%2822.10.2014%29_1.pdf]

- there is no thorough analysis about the retention of data and underlying documents.

Service owners should be persons who are able to provide the necessary information to the draft acts and explanatory notes.
Only 8% of institutions have an overview of the cost of services across channels and have assigned (on various levels) persons responsible for services. This became evident through a questionnaire[3] that was carried out by MEAC in December 2014 which was sent to ministries, agencies and inspectorates. The questionnaire was filled out by 50% of the survey recipients. The replies showed that only 40% knows what services they offer and only 24% have an overview of the user satisfaction across channels.

The indicators for assessing the impact of provision of public services are vague
The indicators used in the assessment of the quality and quantity of public services and making a cost-benefit analysis differ between authorities or are completely absent. Today, it is possible to measure (under unified principles) the quality of services through general satisfaction surveys that are arranged after every two years[4]. The representatives of institutions have expressed their opinion that it is not possible to make any specific management decisions about investment of resources, organisational restructuring etc. on the basis of these results. The general satisfaction does not reflect the actual services rendered, the resources necessary to offer the services and it only shows the satisfaction with a two-year retrospective. With the lack of indicators, it is not possible to assess to what extent the different public services support the institution's objectives. Obtaining information from the accounting about the cost of a service is today made complicated. There is no one-on-one correspondence between the expense accounts and offered services. There is no day-to-day cooperation between the persons responsible for services and drafters of the budget.

No minimum requirements are put to place for the administration and description of public services
Some service descriptions and standards have been created inside institutions. However, no overall minimum requirements have been established at national level, stating where, which, and at what level should public services be made available. Under the Digital Agenda 2020 for Estonia[5] (Digital Agenda 2020) sub-objective 5.3 Smarter Governance and Public Administration, measure 1 Development of better public services by using ICT, one of the indicators is the share of public services corresponding to common quality requirements, of all public services. In order to measure the results of the indicator, a description and a prototype of an information system for describing and displaying services has been developed, which will be the basis for a support system in the future. The created system is intended for both describing and displaying the services offered through e-channels as well as other channels.

The problem of motivating institutions
To achieve any kind of efficiency, budgetary resources need to be cut down on. This might lead to a situation, where institutions that are becoming more efficient, might lose some of their financial resources in comparison with the ones that have not yet reorganised themselves. Thus, when planning the next budgetary periods, the institutions that have become more efficient have to do the same as today but with less resources and the ones that have not taken on any changes

[3] The survey results are summarized at the end of this concept
[4] The study reports are available on the MEAC website [In Estonian: https://www.mkm.ee/et/analuusid-ja-uuringud#infoteenused)
[5] Digital Agenda 2020 [https://www.mkm.ee/sites/default/files/digital_agenda_2020_estonia_engf.pdf]

can carry on with receiving the same amount of resources as before. In order to avoid an unfair situation, it is crucial to agree upon the mechanisms that will endorse the institutions to be more efficient. Another issue is that employees carry out developments on the side of other tasks, not taking into account the actual time spent on that. The time spent for completing the tasks has not been taken into account nor has it been laid down in the job descriptions or agreed upon.

There is no legal regulation that supports the concept of service owners

The above described legal acts and strategic documentation do support indirectly service-based approach and the concept of service owners, however there is no legal warrant or legislation for the Government or ministers to base their regulations on. A new legal regulation or the modification of the existing regulation should be considered, in order to better support the concept of service owners. For example imposing "Records Management and Service Provision Procedures" instead of the current „Common Principles of Administrative and Records Management Procedures".

A similar example about the Government giving out a regulation can be given with the "System of Security Measures for Information Systems"[6], by which from 01.01.2013 the information security management system was enforced and the tasks of secretary general of the ministry, the head of the institution and head of information security were determined.

3. Solutions/ proposals

Ensuring a central view (agreements, cooperation network, changing the legal acts)

The overall responsibility for the quality of services must be on the secretary generals within their area of governance. By overall responsibility it is understood within this concept as the secretary general's responsibility for the quality and management of public services, incl. e-services, within ministries and areas of governance (incl. when possible foundations and non-profit organizations carrying out public duties). Foremost, the management of public services comprises of having an overview of the direction of the development of public services and making sure that the offered public services are relevant and up-to-date. As a result of managing, in every institution there should be a person at the management level responsible for the quality of services offered to the end-user.

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). For that, MEAC will organize regular meetings in the form of "Service owners' cooperation network", involving "service owners" that have been assigned by secretary generals. In addition, information days will be held that will include all the ministries and will be directed towards a wider audience.

As a good example, the launch of IT-managers' network can be mentioned, as it has justified itself when it comes to the coordination of IT related questions, however has failed to explain the content and necessity of public services. Under the guidance of MEAC, a tool will be realized that would help to administrate the information about the services offered by institutions. MEAC will develop and prepare instructions for a web-based catalogue for the administration and improvement of services. Through the cooperation network, MEAC will ensure a continuous flow of information about the administration, measurement and other activities of services offered through e-channels. As a result, a supporting system for developing

[6] Information Security Management System [In Estonian: https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/119032012004]

and coordinating public services would appear, which would enable to manage the services related administrative and developing processes on the level of a specific institution and in the state as a whole. A functional system would support the emergence of an across-agency service owners' network that would guide the development of public services.
According to the statute, MEAC has the task to shape the politics of managing public services. Politics can be shaped in cooperation with institutions that offer services while having an overview about the volume, quality and cost of the offered services. The service owners will act as partners to MEAC to assist finding out the needs of the ministries for ICT investments by pointing out how the planned ICT investment affects the offered services, how the changes will affect the customer satisfaction in different channels and how the new situation will be reflected in the institution's budget.
Besides the subsidies given for IT programming solutions that would result with a functional application, the Digital Agenda 2020 plan of implementation also foresees funds for the analysis of public service related processes, for the assessment of the quality of services, for prototypes for possible solutions and so on. This type of approach will help to ensure necessary resources for the service owners in order to fulfil the tasks described in the present concept.

Appointing an "owner" to the services and service provision channels

The need for the role of an "owner" of services also exists at lower levels. In order for the responsibility for the quality of services at a management level to take effect, it is crucial to appoint a public service owner in every institution who would be responsible for the development of business processes and public services.
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 would be responsible for the legislation where the service is defined; for the needs of the end-users; for the development of services and for the service provision processes. They would also be responsible for selecting suitable channel(s) for the provision of specific services, and for the development and reorganisation of services. It is important not to manage and develop inefficient services and not to take on unnecessary actions.
The task of a service owner is also to share correct input information to the owner of the channel through which the service is provided (service desk, self-service, e-mail). The service owner is responsible for ensuring that the content and functionality of his/her services are correct, relevant and up-to-date. The task of the service owner is the successive administration of services. He/she is also responsible for the results of the business analysis and the proper performance of the completed service and the correctness of the test results.
In a pilot project, with the example of Road Administration, the importance of having a service owner when developing e-services was examined (handbook "Designing user-friendly e-services"[7]). In the book there are described the rights and obligations of a service owner (p. 28, s. 2.3.1). The same need was pointed out in the "Integrated Portfolio Management of Public Services" final report[8] and in the "Information Governance strategy plan"[9] discussions.
As a result of the pilot project it became evident that the amount of time spent in the development phase of a service is approx. 160-190 hours per service and 30-40 hours in the administration phase. The amount of time shown above is significant and requires those who engage in that activity to have separate work description for this activity.

[7] E-services design handbook [In Estonian: https://www.ria.ee/public/publikatsioonid/E-teenuste_disainimise_kasiraamat.pdf]
[8] The summary is published on the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications website [https://www.mkm.ee/sites/default/files/avalike_teenuste_uhtne_portfellijuhtimine_-_kokkuvote_tolkeks_ed.pdf]
[9] The strategic plan „From records management to information management"[In Estonian: https://www.mkm.ee/sites/default/files/dokumendihalduselt_infohaldusele_strateegia_1.9.pdf]

For achieving the best results, the service owner should apprehend which services are not reasonable to develop as e-services for the sake of financial rationality and simplicity and ensure compromises for finding reasonable solutions when making orders.
The service owner also creates high-quality analysis documentation, which will be the input for the IT units' operations. This, in return, requires continuous cooperation with all the units and having trust in the decisions made about the services.

The tasks of the institutions' service owners/ coordinators at the management level

- Participates in the preparation of the institution's strategy;
- reports about significant failures in the provision of services and about the violation of internal regulations to the head of the institution;
- assigns service owners within the institution, participates in the development of common minimum standards for measuring the quality of public e-services and keeps the e-services relevant and up-to-date;
- organises the fulfilment of minimum standards within the institution and the publication of these on the institution's website;
- participates and takes a stand in the institution or across institutional development initiatives (data view, process view, legal view, financial view);
- organises the development and administration of services in different channels (incl. e-channels) in accordance with the needs of the channel as a whole;
- seeks for opportunities to make services easier to use, more clear and more efficient for the organization;
- takes responsibility for mapping service related processes, legislation and information, and for the improvement of processes;
- has a complete overview of the institution's service related processes and keeps the process maps relevant and up-to-date;
- has an overview of the use of services (the volume) across channels;
- has an overview of the user satisfaction with the services across channels;
- has an overview of the cost of administrating services across channels,
- organises receiving and administrating the feedback from customers across channels;
- establishes indicators for measuring the services, taking point of departure from the institution's strategic objectives, the process view, the customer view, the financial view and the civil servants/ service provider view;
- organises the measuring of all the services in the institution;
- organises the preparation of the initial task for the development of services.

Examples of the impact of assigning service owners

As part of the programme "Creating preconditions to improve quality of public services by ITC means"[10], financed by the EU's Social Fund, the following activities were carried out: as a pilot project "20 e-services project"[11] and "Customer feedback system project"[12], a "Framework for self-service environments"[13] has been created, the analysis of "The introduction of e-bills in the public sector"[14] and the "Analysis and strategy of information governance"[15] has been put

[10] The programme for developing public services [https://www.mkm.ee/en/objectives-activities/information-society/information-society-services]
[11] Summary [In Estonian: https://www.mkm.ee/sites/default/files/20_e-teenuse_kokkuvote_final.pdf]
[12] Final report [In Estonian: http://media.wix.com/ugd/a58f19_9aa89a701b7d4c4a91bfbc66ff149037.pdf]
[13] Framework [https://www.mkm.ee/sites/default/files/self-service_framework.pdf)
[14] Final report [In Estonian: http://media.wix.com/ugd/a58f19_cb7ad6e9df984cd18e3c0010e63bd702.pdf]
[15] Final report [https://www.mkm.ee/sites/default/files/information_governance_analys_strategy_oige.pdf]

together. Also as part of the programme, there has been approx. 1300 civil servants attending information days.
Through the activities within the programme, it emerged that institutions that had previously assigned specific people to take responsibility for their services, had significantly better results. For example as part of the 20 e-service project, one development for a e-service from the Road Administration and two from the Estonian Tax and Customs Board received financing from the investment plan.
Also in the customer feedback project, institutions where the responsible person for services had a strong desire to receive feedback about his services, played a more active role. Here again the Road Administration and the Estonian Tax and Customs board should be emphasised as users of the promoter index[16] as an instrument to manage services.
Also in the "From records management to information governance" strategic plan, as one of the measures to reach the objectives it has been pointed out that responsibility should be serviced-based.

The indicators for assessing the impact of provision of public services
MEAC has participated in two projects in the period of 2013-2014, where one of the goals was to develop the indicators for assessing the impact of provision of services. In the first project, "Integrated Portfolio Management of Public Services" led by the Government Office of Estonia, 60 indicators were developed that can be utilised when assessing the quality of public services. As a result, it became evident that this amount of indicators cannot be applied with small investments.

In the second project, "20-e-service project" led by MEAC, 11 indicators were tested. As a result it became evident that only two institutions (all together nine institutions participated) were able to highlight results under all 11 indicators, at the same time all the participated institutions could give results under four main indicators.

As a result of the above mentioned projects, a minimum number of indicators were chosen. The impact assessment indicators for evaluating the quality of services (across all channels) are at least:

- the reliability of the services (incl. the volume of services)
- the end-user's administrative burden and satisfaction with the service (time spent, satisfaction)
- the institution's development and administrative costs for providing services (net cost)

The minimum requirements for administrating and describing services (incl. the tool for preparing an overview of the services)
MEAC has developed a prototype of a web-based tool[17] which is a prerequisite for creating an overview/ catalogue of services in institutions based on uniform principles. The overview must include the aforementioned impact assessment indicators. The tool enables to establish minimum requirements for the description and administration of public services. By using the existing prototype, an overview of MEAC and its' subdivisions services will be realized in the first phase, which will be done by relying on the developed standard. The overview will be a prerequisite for introducing this web-based tool to other ministries and their areas of governance with the objective of obtaining an overview of the institutions services and working models. In

[16] Promoter index website [https://app.recommy.com/Default2.aspx]
[17] Prototype [In Estonian: https://www.mkm.ee/teenustelist/#p=tutvustus]

the second phase, an overview of public services will be realized in all the other ministries and their subdivisions.
The publicly viewed website which is realized through the web-based tool will help to facilitate the obligation (The Public Information Act § 28 subsection (1) p. 27 and § 29 subsection (1)) put on institutions (the holder of information) to publish on their websites information about the provision of commonly used services, about changes in the conditions of providing the services and about changes in the cost of using the services.
The ministries can choose whether they measure the quality of services across all channels, across some channels or they measure only the quality of e-services that are offered by the ministry. It should be obligatory that all governance areas should have at least an overview of the three aforementioned indicators when it comes to services offered in e-channels.
In the 08.04.2015 coalition approved Government action plan, in section 4.16 it is stated amongst other things that the citizens' portal www.eesti.ee will act as a gateway for the entire e-government. According to the Government action plan 2015-2019, one of the activities is to develop an eesti.ee development roadmap, which deadline is intended to be in 2016. According to the present concept, the service overview developed in practice will also serve as an input to the information gate's - eesti.ee – roadmap.

Future agreements for the successful implementation of the concept
In order to get an overview of the services, the primary condition is that agreements are made and responsibility delegated between the heads of the institutions and the central coordinators of public service development. For MEAC's DoISSD it is necessary to have equal partners in the development of public services.
In order to secure the concept of service owners, the MEAC in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance's activity-based budgeting workgroup needs to agree on the organisation of cooperation between the service owners and activity-based budgeting assemblers.
MEAC has started to draft an act for the Government's regulation „Common Principles of Administrative and Records Management Procedures" in collaboration with the Government Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Information System Authority, the Estonian Data Protection Inspectorate and the National Archives of Estonia. The goal is to replace the current document management regulation with a legislation which would support the development of services and the concept of service owners. The Ministry of Justice in collaboration with MEAC needs to consider updating the currently existing laws (e.g. Administrative Procedure Act) and if necessary adding provision delegating authority to the regulation.
The Ministry of Finance in collaboration with MEAC needs to consider how to organize the redirecting of funds that have been saved up through the development of services, back to the institution's budget (e.g. the proposal to amend the budget law) in order to ensure the motivation of institutions to develop their services.

The summary of the responses to the survey questionnaire sent out by MEAC's DoISSD in December 2014 to ministries, agencies and inspectorates.

The number of survey recipients	39	
Number of respondents	23	
% of respondents	63%	
Responsible on the management level	13	57%
Head of Department is responsible	9	39%
Knows the exact number of services	16	70%
Uses the following channels:		
self-service	20	87%
website	17	74%
counter-service	16	70%
at the customer	10	43%
consulting channels	19	83%
has indicators	14	61%
uses the following indicators:		
the number of services rendered across channels	8	35%
user satisfaction across channels	10	43%
cost across channels	3	13%
the time spent by users across channels	4	17%