



## **Annex C4 – Case Study France**

*Annex to: Does e-government pay off?*

October 2004

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**Appendix I:** Literature, interview partners and sources of information

## 1 Service Public Local - France

*A national platform for public authorities and their public services*

### 1.1 Background information

Service-Public Local is a platform that shares content and services to enable local authorities to build a one-stop portal for public services. Service-Public Local allows:

- regional and local authorities to build a unique point of access to services on their website by ‘co-branding’ with [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr), the national one-stop government portal
- Sharing of relevant local, regional and national data, in order to answer citizens’ queries (administrative information, access to forms and to services online).

#### *Objectives*

The first objective of Service-Public Local is to improve the quality of local e-government by enabling the local authorities to develop a single point of access to e-government services in a multi-channel concept. The portal can also be used to support frontoffice employees in delivering services to customers at the desk or on the telephone.

The second objective of Service-Public Local is to organise the sharing of e-government information and services between local authorities of different levels in order to give users best services possible. For instance, in a département (about 300 towns), the préfecture provides information about their services. All other local governments can use this information and service directly on their website. The Service-Public Local platform allows the decentralised co-production of relevant information to citizens and the organisation of its exchange in XML format in order to use all the potential of new technology to give a very relevant response to citizens’ needs on local websites.

The third objective is to standardise the quality of services provided by different levels of government and offer local access to citizens.

#### *Motives*

Service-Public Local is a solution to a pressing public sector problem: how to cooperate between national, regional and local governments to deliver consistent public services.

The Service-Public Local platform enhances citizen-centered local one-stop-shop portals developed by local authorities by organising data exchange between national, regional and local public authorities.

### *Organisations involved*

The platform Service-Public Local is the result of a partnership between la Caisse des dépôts and la Documentation française.<sup>1</sup> La Documentation française is the administrator and webmaster of [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr). From the start, two other partners have been important in relation to the development of Service-Public Local: l'Agence pour le Développement de l'Administration Electronique en France (ADAE, French Agency for the Development of the Electronic Administration) and the French Ministry of the Interior.

The private sector is also a key player for developing the local e-government. The players in the local e-government solution market have been offered to participate to allow them to include the use of co-branding in the solutions they provide to local authorities. More than 20 companies are integrating access to the platform in their products, including global players such as IBM.

### *National e-government context*

In February 2004 the French Prime Minister has unveiled an e-government strategy for the period 2004-2007. The new program ADELE (*ADministration ELEctronique*), will be implemented through 140 concrete initiatives (which address 300 e-services), which is outlined in a 50-page action plan.

Before the launch of ADELE, there was no specific e-government strategy as such in France. The major e-government strategic lines had been defined in the Action Programme for the Information Society (PAGSI, 1998) and in the Re/SO 2007 Action Plan for the Information Society of November 2002. This was completed by the creation of ADAE in February 2003, intended to provide political drive, co-ordination, business expertise and technical support to the development of e-government in the French public administration.

Together with its action plan and a document providing technical details on each project, the new ADELE strategic plan provides a detailed framework for future e-government developments, in which both qualitative and quantitative objectives and the means allocated to achieve them are defined. With a budget of EUR 1.8 billion, the new ADELE strategic plan has three main strategic goals:

- Simplify administrative procedures in order to make life easier for citizens, businesses and local authorities;
- Guarantee data security and confidentiality: ADELE foresees, among other things, the use of secure user identification systems and the possibility for citizens to control the use of their personal data by public bodies;

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<sup>1</sup> La Caisse des dépôts is a state owned financial institution that represents the interests of national, regional and local public authorities in France. La Documentation française is a central administrative direction that offers the public information and services regarding current issues and political, administrative, economic and social issues in France, Europe and the world.

- Contribute to the modernisation of public administration: according to the Prime Minister, productivity gains made possible by e-government developments should deliver about EUR 5 billion in annual savings by 2007.

Some of the main initiatives to be developed during the lifecycle of the new strategic plan include the following:

- The “*Allo Service Public*” service, which provides information and guidance on public services and administrative procedures through a single telephone number (39 39), will be extended to the whole country during 2004;
- By the end of 2004 a one stop shop website for address change will be launched, enabling users to select the public bodies to which they want to communicate their new address;
- An electronic ID card will be developed and launched in 2006. The features of the new card should be announced by mid-2004;
- Public sector procurement will be progressively e-enabled during the 2004-2007 period;
- Financial and accounting management systems will be revamped and modernised across government;

## 1.2 Process description

### *Actual situation*

A new business model has been designed for Service-Public Local: the exchange of data is free for those who contribute and give access to their (local) data. A low fee for membership is asked from local authorities who use the platform for co-branding in their web site. (from € 150 a year for a town with less than 3,500 inhabitants to € 4,000 a year for Paris).

The platform was operational from the fourth trimester of 2002 and is now used by more than 450 local authorities and cities (from Paris to Aubazine with just 700 inhabitants).

La Documentation Française has put in place a server, which contains [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr) data in XML. This is a reference server where data are updated and accessed by the Service-Public Local platform. Specific and generic data exchange models (in XML) have been developed conjointly by *Caisse des dépôts* and *La Documentation française* and are published on the national XML scheme.

Users have access to the local authorities’ website. When the local authority has joined the Service-Public Local platform, the content and services of Service-Public Local are available via the local authorities’ website. When a user has a question, the system connects to [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr) and generates files (for example a form, like a driving license document), which are completed with specific local information (for example geographic information or information about contacts at the city, préfecture or département, for example).

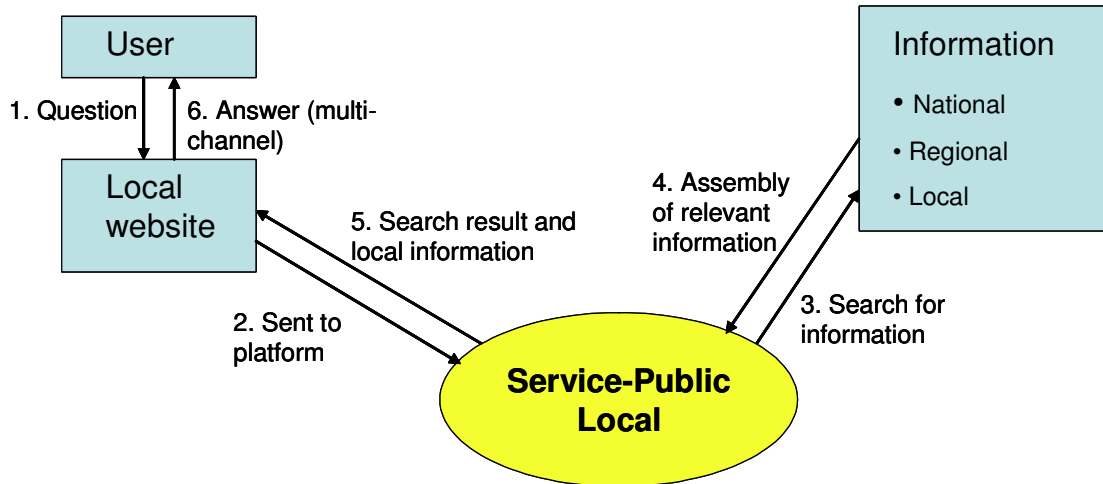


Figure 1: Model of Service-Public Local

#### *Main differences*

The shared platform is, of course, the main difference. Before, all local authorities were responsible themselves for developing content, services and technical solutions. Now one organisation is responsible for controlling the platform, and all participating organisations have a joint responsibility for sharing content.

### 1.3 Improvements

The platform Service-Public Local itself and the business model are the most important improvements made. More co-operation between public authorities and centralisation of development and maintenance of the platform are the result of that. Co-operation takes place at different levels: co-operation between national governments, co-operation between national and local governments. In some cases, regional authorities have also taken up the responsibility for helping the development of e-government by promoting the platform.

Public authorities can join a platform and profit from joint investments in technology and content. A joint platform means some processes are more standardised. However, participating authorities have enough flexibility to organise their own one stop shop portal.

By using the internet, an extra channel is available for customers. Furthermore, the information and services provided can be improved with limited investments.

## 1.4 Returns on investment

### *For customers*

Users have all the information and services they need, with national, regional and local integration of information on one website. Via the website of their local administration, they have both the centrally produced (and maintained) official answer to their questions, combined with the online services and local information. Therefore, they save a lot of time, because they do not have to find the information themselves, via the various websites or through other channels. Furthermore, customers can choose their preferred channel and because of the platform, the development of electronic services is much faster.

### *For local public authorities*

The most important result is the improvement of the services offered to users of websites of local public authorities that are members of the Service-Public Local platform. Local governments can give a better response to users, and have less customer contacts regarding general information at the same time.

Participating authorities save money for building online services themselves and for collecting and updating national and regional information, online forms and services. The platform offers higher flexibility, for example, Saint-Etienne is using the platform to answer citizens by phone and the town of Parthenay has trained frontoffice employees to use the portal available on the Parthenay website.

Furthermore, because of the increased electronic possibilities the number of visitors online has increased. For example, the Niort website, one of the first members, has had an increase of 50% in visits thanks to co-branding with [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr). A large number of local authorities also consider this service as a way to modernise the image of the public authority to citizens.

### *For Service Public (national government)*

The information on [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr) is considered the best reference for information about administrative procedures. Having the local authority using this information to build their online services, improves homogeneity of the public authorities' websites and helps the local authority adapt to changes in law and other procedures. The quality of [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr) (national) improves when more local authorities join the platform and services have a wider range. More and more services are offered through [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr) (about 2700), and the service now includes relevant local information.

The service of Service Public and Service Public have a better fit to customers information needs, than the information provided by la Documentation Française (which was the provider of information in the previous situation).

At the moment there are more than 450 local authorities who are members of the platform. Together they serve more than 20 million citizens. This is considered a very fast development for this service in less than 2 years time.

## 1.5 Changes in the backoffice

### *Organisation*

A new business model has been designed for Service-Public Local focusing on standardisation and co-operation (see also paragraph 1.2). The shared platform and the use of open standards is the main difference. Before, all local authorities were responsible themselves for developing content, services and technical solutions. Now one organisation is responsible for controlling the platform, and all participating organisations have a joint responsibility for sharing content.

A steering committee has been set up, with representatives of la Caisse des Dépôts, la Documentation Française, ADEA and two ministerial departments. The committee determines the platforms' strategy. La Documentation française manages XML data and quality of content. La Caisse des Dépôts is the operator of the platform, and thus responsible for contact with local authorities.

### *Finances*

The overall investments for the project are estimated at 2 million euros. Participating authorities save money for building online services themselves and for collecting and updating national and regional information, online forms and services. It is difficult to express the financial gains in specific figures. The exchange of data is free for those who contribute and give access to their (local) data. A small membership fee and a yearly subscription fee is asked from local authorities who use the platform for co-branding (from € 150 a year for a town with less than 3,500 inhabitants to little over € 4,000 a year for Paris).

### *Policy and legislation*

The service provided by Service Public and Service Public Local is part of the national e-government strategy. The platform Service-Public Local is referred to in nearly all e-government speeches in France. This indicates the strong support at a national level. Use of the service however, is not obligatory and no changes in legislation have been made.

### *Personnel*

Few changes in personnel are visible. Frontoffice personnel is better equipped now and in some cases have less customer contact regarding general questions (since the website is now more complete). Also, less time is spent on the maintenance of technical issues and content.

### *Administrative organisation*

For most members it has been a difficult process to re-organise the process of updating the existing databases or to create co-ordination with public local organisations to harmonise the quality of the services.

### *Technology and information flow*

The use of JavaScript allows a fast development of the service. For data management, XML has been chosen to allow exchange of information between different applications in the different local and regional environments. XML facilitates the use of structured sub-items easier. Four servers are used (one for the database, three for the co-branding frontoffice). The platform can be accessed online by public authorities using authentication through a login password and a SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) session to update, extract, send local data or customise their co-branding diffusion.

Local authorities add the local data (address, opening hours, and services online) using the platform tool that corresponds to the services delivered to citizens. Local authorities check the data coming from other public content providers (national, regional, local) which will be published on its web site.

### *Communication*

At a national level (Service Public) efforts are made to stimulate the use of the platform. Some regional public authorities have also set up a regional ICT-agency in order to promote and accelerate the use of co-branding with [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr). For instance, in 2003 the ICT agency in the region Midi-Pyrénées encouraged 200 small towns to co-brand with [www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr) using the Service-Public Local platform. Some other regions are also developing a similar strategy.

When a town uses the Service-Public Local platform to build a one stop shop portal, it is advised to involve all the local public bodies. For instance the city of Pau took the opportunity of using the Service-Public Local platform to involve local employment agencies and welfare bodies in the construction of the one-stop shop service of the website of the city.

## **1.6 Change approach**

The platform is operational since the last quarter of 2002. After a three month analysis phase development began in March 2002. In the analysis phase 17 local authorities were involved and the project was led by la Documentation Française.

The limited experimentation phase, led by La Documentation française, followed by the realisations phase, this project was managed by the Caisse des Dépôts. Experimentation and realisation are very different projects. The responsibilities for those projects has been split up in order to achieve success. Managing platform (la Caisse des Dépôts) and producing content (la Documentation française) a two different tasks as well. Of course, co-operation between the organisations is important.

The focus serving citizens has been the key to bring together different public authorities. It has been a way to overcome competition between each public authority. In order to assure the success of the platform, it is important to explain the potential of this

tool and teach (potential) members how to use the service. It is also important to show the value to call centres and frontoffice employees. Therefore, local authorities are offered guides and learning tools to train their staff.

Service Public supports this by encouraging best practices through a monthly newsletter, a mailing list and a website for members. They also organise a meeting four times a year to:

- organise exchanges on the Service-Public Local platform;
- discuss local content and national content, and how to make them complementary in order to create a better service for customers;
- discuss local e-government projects.

The private sector plays an important role in e-government innovation. A public solution like the Service-Public Local platform must relate to private sector solutions in order to accelerate the improvement of local e-government.

## 1.7 Main findings

The following table summarises the most important improvements, returns on investments and changes in the backoffice, as described above.

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Improvements</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an extra or more complete channel (extra information and services online)</li> <li>• Centralisation of development of technical solutions</li> <li>• Shared services and content</li> <li>• Standardisation</li> <li>• More co-operation</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Returns on investments</b>    | <p><i>For customers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-stop shop</li> <li>• Improved access, multichannel</li> <li>• Improved quality of information</li> </ul> <p><i>For local public authorities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved quality of information and services to customers</li> <li>• Increased number of visitors</li> <li>• Saving of money (regarding content and technology)</li> <li>• Modernised image</li> </ul> <p><i>For Service Public (national government)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homogeneity</li> <li>• Wider access</li> <li>• Easier distribution of information (with respect to changes in law and procedures for example)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Changes in the backoffice</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New business model</li> <li>• Shared platform</li> <li>• Strong connection to e-government policy</li> <li>• Communication efforts</li> </ul>  |

Table 1: Summary of main findings

*Main success factors for this case*

Looking back, the following aspects are typical for the Service-Public Local case, and have contributed to the success of it.

Co-operation

In the project phase of course many parties have co-operated in order to create the platform, main players have been la Caisse des Dépôts and la Documentation française. Now, regarding the maintenance and further development of the platform, these organisations also work together and maintain contact with the users of the platform.

Flexibility

Public authorities work together in a less direct way. They all use the same platform and share services and content, but at the same time they all have the flexibility to do this in a way that is suitable to the local (or regional) organisation. The platform is flexible enough to meet the needs of many different organisations.

Principle of co-branding

By co-branding with Service Public (the national platform) a wider audience can be reached, with relatively limited investments. The local authorities can benefit from the services Service Public provides, and Service Public has an improved access and familiarity because of the access via the various local websites.

## **I Appendix I: list of literature and sources of information**

### **France**

#### *List of Literature*

Local data sharing and co-branding to serve citizens better. N. Conzo, 2003.

Platform Service-Public Local – public sector data interexchange. Case report, [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society](http://europa.eu.int/information_society)

#### *Websites*

[www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr)

[www.servicepubliclocal.fr](http://www.servicepubliclocal.fr)

[www.internet.gouv.fr](http://www.internet.gouv.fr)

[www.caissedesdepots.fr](http://www.caissedesdepots.fr)

[www.adae.pm.gouv.fr](http://www.adae.pm.gouv.fr)

#### *Sources of information*

Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations

N. Conzo and Mrs. M. Franca