



DIGIT  
Unit B4

## Business Case

# Stakeholders' feedback on public service experience

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>CONTEXT</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1	Situation Description .....	4
	Situation Impact .....	5
<b>2</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES</b> .....	<b>6</b>
3.1	Alternative A: No action.....	6
3.2	Alternative B: Use and further extension of the Latvian “Futbols” application .....	7
<b>4</b>	<b>SOLUTION DESCRIPTION</b> .....	<b>8</b>
4.1	Benefits .....	8
4.2	Success Criteria .....	8
4.3	Assumptions and constraints.....	9
4.4	Scope .....	9
4.5	Solution Impact.....	9
4.6	Deliverables .....	10
4.7	Risks .....	10
4.8	Costs, Effort and Funding Source.....	10
4.9	Roadmap.....	11
4.10	Synergies and Interdependencies.....	11
<b>5</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE</b> .....	<b>11</b>
5.1	Project coordination .....	11
5.2	Service Provider .....	11
5.3	Associated services/stakeholders .....	11
5.4	Beneficiaries .....	12
	<b>APPENDIX 1: REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>13</b>

# 1 CONTEXT

## 1.1 Situation Description

Proactively seeking for customers' feedback on products and services is a common practice in the private sector, from hospitality to retail and the automotive industry. This allows companies to bridge the gap between customers' expectations and the products and services that they deliver, enabling them to continuously improve the way their serving their customers (e.g. by providing better, personalised products/services) and providing those who are successfully doing so with a competitive advantage against their competitors. The ideas of product and service co-creation have thus grown significantly over the years. The exponential growth and use of social media has contributed to this significantly.

Following this trend, public administrations are realising that they can also benefit from the feedback of stakeholders, such as citizens and organisations, for monitoring and assessing the implementation of public services and policies and for continuously improving their quality. Nowadays, public administrations have a limited view over the way their stakeholders are experiencing their interaction with public administration when using public services, either via digital or via physical channels. In that sense, public administrations often have limited visibility and information to assess what is working well and what needs to be improved. Typically, public administrations report satisfaction based on pre-defined criteria and key performance indicators, which often leave limited possibilities to report outside this pre-defined schema. Furthermore, traditional mechanisms of feedback used by public administration usually require effort and time, both to be completed and to be processed. Some examples of common feedback provision mechanisms include the traditional paper-based claims form, long online surveys or the e-mail form on the administration's website which have all become of little usage in the current interactive web environment.

In this context, it becomes clear that making it easy for stakeholders to give feedback and empowering them to report things that are working well or not, without having to escalate it via formal complaint mechanisms can create a powerful feedback loop for public services<sup>1</sup> and can have a significant positive impact on public service delivery. In addition to that, convincing about the importance of giving feedback and engaging stakeholders to do so remain challenges that have to be addressed, not solely by technical means, but also by other types of support and raise awareness activities.

It is key to build feedback mechanisms using technologies that the individuals already use and like, as well as making them effortless, ready and quick to use in real-time. In this context, online-based tools and apps can play a major role in establishing such mechanisms in the form of tags, free-text comments and posts on social media, and ratings. This new way of sharing views, opinions, and feedback will help public administration to identify areas of improvement, beyond the monitoring of pre-defined inflexible KPIs that might rapidly become outdated.

In this direction, the Latvian State of Chancellery aimed at measuring the efficiency and performance of the public administration in communicating with its citizens and developed the mobile application "Futbols"<sup>2</sup>. This application, available on iOS and Android, collects feedback from users after a visit to a public institution for a problem resolution or information request. The feedback is requested through three experience-rating questions which allow free-text (optional) comments. This application could be used by other Member States, but is now only available and used in Latvia.

Summarising, the main challenges related to gathering stakeholder feedback on public services are:

- Gathering feedback timely, with minimum effort for the stakeholder and on a regular basis using open standards and technologies;
- Gathering feedback throughout public service delivery, i.e. from the point where the stakeholder is trying to find the right public service down to the use of the public service and the receipt of its outcomes, as well as on the outcomes themselves;
- Making sense of the feedback and eliciting opinions, trends and sentiment;

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.opengovguide.com/commitments/establish-easy-feedback-mechanisms-for-public-services/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3p0Br5LI82k>

- Defining a transparent process to process and manage feedback;
- Improving existing public services or defining new ones based on the feedback received; and
- Engaging internal and external stakeholders to provide feedback.

## Situation Impact

Feedback mechanisms on public services are not common in today's public service delivery, a fact which prevents from engaging the stakeholders directly in the optimisation, improvement and definition of public services.

The current situation has a negative impact on public service delivery, as follows:

- **Gap between stakeholders' expectations and public services.** The missing feedback loop between stakeholders (as service consumers) and the available public services leads in many cases to a widening gap between what they need and expect from public services (both in terms of functionality and experience), and what is finally offered by public administrations. In such cases, the satisfaction of stakeholders is observed to be lower.
- **Missed opportunities for public service improvement.** As a consequence of the aforementioned gap, stakeholders' feedback is either not expressed or not captured. In both cases, this means that valuable information that could lead to the identification of improvement points for public services is simply lost.
- **Missed opportunities for improving public service delivery.** Research studies<sup>3</sup> have shown that collecting and harnessing stakeholders' feedback can help public administrations to improve the discovery of its services, and to put in place proactive service recommendation and personalisation mechanisms that will improve the experiences of stakeholders and will reduce the administrative burden of public service delivery.
- **Re-inventing the wheel.** Our analysis has revealed few initiatives that manage feedback mechanisms from the EU Member States. Those initiatives are not spread in all Member States.

The current situation has a negative impact on the stakeholders involved (including residents, citizens and organisations), as follows:

- **Limited opportunities to contribute input and feedback.** As explained already, rarely in the context of public service delivery do stakeholders have the opportunity to provide their feedback on the use of public services. Even if this is possible, most of the existing feedback mechanisms are not user-friendly, informal nor social-media-based, but rather paper-based, formal, bureaucratic and requiring significant time and effort (e.g. completing complaints forms etc.).
- **Trust.** Existing feedback mechanisms do not provide transparency into how the information collected is used and considered in public service assessment (if at all).

## 2 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes derived from the implementation of the proposed solution should aim at overcoming the challenges identified in section 1.2. More specifically, public administrations should be able to:

- Put in place stakeholder feedback collection channels and mechanisms, e.g. via contact form or comments, social media posts, ratings, short surveys (with open and closed questions);
- Collect feedback timely (near-real-time) and on the spot;

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<sup>3</sup> Soriano et al., 2008; Chang et al., 2006 ; Fernandez, Hayes et al. 2008

- Make sense of the collected feedback and be able to elicit ideas for improvement, pain points, opinions and other information related to the monitoring and evaluation of the use of public services;
- Improve their public services or define new ones that respond to the needs and expectations of stakeholders;
- Improve their efficiency and reduce costs of public service delivery; and
- Discover, but also prevent and discourage instances of negligence or corruption, both through all feedback mechanisms establishment and analysis.

Feedback mechanisms should be implemented on participation channels that stakeholders use on a regular basis, with social media, mobile applications and digital public service portals and catalogues being among the prime targets.

### 3 POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES

This section describes known or potentially available alternative solutions to tackle the described situation. From the list of the potential alternatives, one of them is clearly chosen. The chosen alternative is detailed in Section 4.

For each identified alternative, a general description, a SWOT analysis and a qualitative assessment is provided. The SWOT analysis provides the major Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats as perceived by the stakeholders considering the organisational impact, the financial impact, the timing impact and the associated risks.

Two possible alternatives have been considered to tackle the situation and meet the objectives:

- Alternative A: Baseline scenario – No action
- Alternative B: Development of a reusable solution for capturing stakeholders' feedback on public services

#### 3.1 Alternative A: No action

In the baseline scenario, public administrations will continue to carry out their work following the current approach.

##### SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No need for investments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public administrations are missing feedback on operational processes, affecting individual users and their perception of public administration.</li> <li>• Stakeholders cannot voice their feedback and expectations for public services.</li> <li>• Several feedback mechanisms co-exist in EU, with low to none optimisation of reusability, interoperability, consistency, and resources' efficiency.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A widening gap between stakeholders' needs and expectations and available public services.</li> <li>• Lack of trust from stakeholders, who feel the feedback mechanism does not take into account the feedback they provide.</li> </ul>

For obvious reasons, this alternative does not raise itself as the best option since it will not contribute to the achievement of the expected outcomes.

### 3.2 Alternative B: Use and further extension of the Latvian “Futbols” application

A second alternative entails the extension of an existing solution that is successful in helping public administrations capture stakeholders' feedback on public services.

The solution currently takes the form of a mobile application. It could be complemented by a plugin on a platform, such as a digital public service portal, or a social media analysis tool that is capturing posts related to public services.

These options can coexist and complement each other:

- The use and further extension of the mobile application “Futbols” from the Latvian State of Chancellery would allow relying on and optimising a solution that proves that can deliver. The open-source mobile application development frameworks Sencha Touch<sup>4</sup> and Ionic<sup>5</sup> could be considered to further extending the functionalities of this application. A location-aware app could ensure the collection of feedback at real-time when the stakeholder is using the public service or right after he completed his experience, even when he is still on the premises of the competent authority. Such an app would push notifications to the user asking for a one-click quick feedback (a score from one to five). This easy feedback allow stakeholders not enclined to spend some time on giving feedback to do it in almost no time. This notification could also allow a more complex feedback as well, with close/open questions and more refined feedback (feedback about different aspects of the service).
- A plugin on a website can be used to collect direct feedback (and sentiment) using structured, e.g. ratings or likert-scales, or unstructured ways, e.g. free text comments, similar to popular websites such as Tripadvisor or Amazon. This could be easily implemented in open source CMSs supporting such websites, like Drupal and Wordpress.
- The feedback collection mechanism would be integrated with an analytics tool, including sentiment analysis functionalities for the free text comments and statistics on the closed questions. The analytics tool would also allow comparing the scores between institutions or regions. Such functionalities could be implemented using Stanford libraries for sentiment analysis and a simple web interface using HTML5 and d3js javascript libraries for the data display.
- Social media are possibly the most used channel, however capturing feedback on public services on social media is rather complex, unless the posts contain specific hashtags or links. For more details on this, we refer the reader to the “Social media analysis” business case, please see *The associated services will take part* in the definition of the requirements, the performance, the guidance and/or providing lessons learnt of the project.

The identified associated services for this project are the following:

- DG CNECT;
- DIGIT;
- The Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development; and
- SG.

A list of additional potential associated services and stakeholders for the project implementation have been identified in the above section *Synergies and Interdependencies*.

### 3.3 Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the project will be the Member States' public administrations. During the project, the beneficiaries will be represented by the ISA2 Committee.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sencha.com/products/touch/#overview>

<sup>5</sup> <http://ionicframework.com/>

## - Appendix 1: References and Related Documents.

The solution can seek stakeholders' feedback proactively, e.g. via a notification after a citizens uses a public service or is in a public building or event, or can give them the opportunity to contribute their feedback if they want to or a combination of both.

### SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The solution would serve the needs of public administrations at any level across Europe, and could be reused by them.</li> <li>• Simple, direct and instant information flow and participation.</li> <li>• Long term multichannel approach for public service optimisation driven by stakeholders' feedback.</li> <li>• The solution can capture both feedback and sentiment.</li> <li>• For the mobile application, relying on a solution that has proven that can deliver by building up on the Latvian Futbols mobile application.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional investments in technology, process definition and implementation.</li> <li>• The feedback received may not be representative. Due to the digital divide, feedback may not evenly distributed across societal groups and geographic regions. Other feedback mechanisms will need to remain available for those affected by the digital divide.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a "speak-up" culture.</li> <li>• By implementing such a solution, the European Commission would demonstrate innovation and a thought leadership.</li> <li>• The gap between stakeholders' expectations and needs and available public services will be closed.</li> <li>• The quality of public service delivery will be increased.</li> <li>• Public services co-design by stakeholders and public administrations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of action taken and lack of transparency in how the feedback of stakeholders' is taken into account can diminish the trust, the interest of stakeholders in participating and their engagement.</li> <li>• There has to be caution not to reinvent the wheel.</li> </ul>

This alternative can achieve the expected outcomes, and relies on the internal engagement for it to be a success.

## 4 SOLUTION DESCRIPTION

### 4.1 Benefits

The main benefits of the proposed solution for gathering feedback on public services are the indicated below.

For public administrations and EU institutions:

- Ability to detect trends in the collected feedback;
- Ability to elicit the sentiment of a particular contribution;
- Ability to discover relationships between contributions, their sentiment and specific public services and events;
- Ability to identify duplicated contributions;
- Ability to easily produce statistics on the collected feedback;
- Opportunity to co-create public services and solutions;
- Ability to build reports with the collected data;
- Ability to have a near-real-time view on public services' and events' satisfaction;

- Ability to establish an efficient process to evaluate services and events on a regular basis rather than on an ad-hoc basis.

For stakeholders (individuals or organisations having experienced a public service or event):

- Ability to make their voice heard and initiate service optimisation;
- Ability to submit feedback on experiences that affected them directly;
- Opportunity to co-create public services and solutions.

## 4.2 Success Criteria

The high-level success criteria of the proposed solution are:

- The outcome of the feedback analysis is used as a basis for the decision-making process on how to improve public services.

## 4.3 Assumptions and constraints

It is assumed that there exists enough interest within the EU institutions and Member States public administrations to invest resources in a platform for feedback mechanism management, and in the implementation process.

It is assumed that the solution will process several EU official languages.

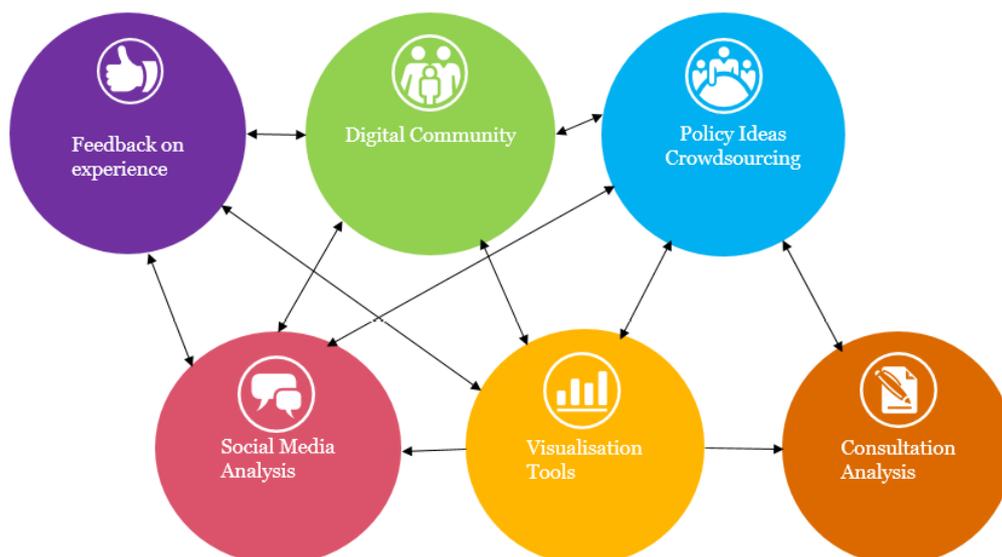
## 4.4 Scope

The scope of the solution is limited to the development of a platform solution for user feedback management, focusing on the aspects outlined in the “Expected Outcomes”.

The solution will be made available to the EU Member States.

The expected outcomes will be covered by one tool from a set of tools DIGIT intends to develop to support Participatory knowledge for supporting decision making. This set of tools can be included in the Better Regulation Toolbox, launched by the European Commission’s Secretariat-General. For additional information, we refer the reader to *Appendix 1: References and Related Documents*.

## ***Business cases***



**Figure 1: Links between the business cases for corporate solutions supporting participatory knowledge for supporting decision making.**

## 4.5 Solution Impact

The adoption of Alternative B: introduces the need for establishing an internal feedback analysis and action plan process for the public administrations.

The solution will positively impact processes supporting public service delivery, as follows:

- **Closing the gap between stakeholders' expectations and public services.** The implemented feedback loop between stakeholders (as service consumers) and the available public services will lead to closing the gap between their needs and expectations from public services, and public administrations service offerings. The satisfaction of stakeholders will increase.
- **Public service improvement opportunity.** Stakeholders' feedback is valuable information that will lead to the identification of improvement points for public services. What is required is for this mechanism to be used on a regular basis on all phases of all services and events offered by the public administration and integrate the feedback received (via analytics) in a cost-efficient, fully reliable and transparent decision-making process.
- **Public service delivery opportunity.** The collection of stakeholders' feedback will help public administration to improve the discovery of its services, and to put in place proactive service recommendation and personalisation mechanisms that will improve the experiences of stakeholders and will reduce the administrative burden of public service delivery.
- **Outreach and representativeness.** The participation of stakeholders on online feedback mechanisms across societal groups and geographic regions will be promoted via different communication channels and offering an offline alternative to the online mechanism.

The solution will positively impact the stakeholders involved (including residents, citizens and organisations), as follows:

- **Increased opportunities to contribute input and feedback.** The mechanisms supporting feedback provision will be user-friendly, informal and social-media-based.
- **Trust increase.** The feedback mechanism will provide full transparency into how the information collected will be used and considered in public services assessment. To achieve this, the platform and communication campaign will provide transparency into how the information collected will be collected, used and considered in public services assessment.

## 4.6 Deliverables

The main deliverables of the proposed solution is a software solution, consisting of a mobile application to be used by stakeholders, integrated with a sentiment analysis plugin. However, the adoption of a new solution will imply the development of additional deliverables such as:

- User manuals;
- Technical documentation;
- Branding strategy, including a communication plan; and
- Training material.

## 4.7 Risks

The main risks derived from the implementation of the proposed solution are the following:

- Public administrations do not take into account the feedback from users, and thus do not integrate it into the public services design and optimisation. This risk could be mitigated by conducting informative sessions highlighting the benefits of using stakeholders' feedback (process optimisation, increasing satisfaction, etc.).

- The communication campaign does not engage the public administration nor targeted stakeholders. At public administration level, this risk could as well be mitigated by conducting informative sessions highlighting the benefits of using stakeholders' feedback (process optimisation, increasing satisfaction, etc.). For stakeholders, this risk could be mitigated by promoting how their feedback can drive change and make public services more efficient and satisfactory.

If the mitigation measures are not effective, the risks can have an impact on a low perception of the long-term benefits and overcome of these risks might require additional time and means.

#### 4.8 Costs, Effort and Funding Source

The costs, effort and funding source will be defined by the business case owner. The business case owner of the feedback on public service experience is DIGIT.

The internal tasks currently foreseen are the following:

- Project management

The external tasks currently foreseen are the following:

- Business analysis & requirements
- Development
- Testing
- Evolutive maintenance
- Training documentation
- Change management activities

The European Commission will only provide the tool to the Member States, and therefore the resources needed for the customisation and operations of this business case will need managing by each owner adopting the tool.

#### 4.9 Roadmap

The current roadmap for the development of this business case is the following:

- The service description to be completed in 2016;
- the tool development and implementation to take place in 2016 and 2017; and
- the tool publication and offering to the EU institutions and Member States to take place between 2017 and 2018.

#### 4.10 Synergies and Interdependencies

In the European Commission, some synergies can be found among the initiatives that are being carried out. Several initiatives are identified:

- The Latvian mobile application Futbols, launched by the Latvian government for feedback provision on public services.
- The Better Regulation toolbox, launched by the European's Commission Secretariat General as a complement to the Better Regulation Guideline presented in in SWD(2015) 111.

## 5 GOVERNANCE

### 5.1 Project coordination

The DG that will coordinate the project is DG Informatics (DIGIT); together with the ISA2 Committee. DIGIT can nominate external suppliers to develop the technical part. However, DIGIT will be accountable for the delivery of the final solution and the support for its well-functioning.

## 5.2 Service Provider

The DG that will make the final solution available to Member states is DG Informatics (DIGIT). The solution will be provided as a tool to EU Member States public administrations.

## 5.3 Associated services/stakeholders

The associated services will take part in the definition of the requirements, the performance, the guidance and/or providing lessons learnt of the project.

The identified associated services for this project are the following:

- DG CNECT;
- DIGIT;
- The Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development; and
- SG.

A list of additional potential associated services and stakeholders for the project implementation have been identified in the above section *Synergies and Interdependencies*.

## 5.4 Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the project will be the Member States' public administrations. During the project, the beneficiaries will be represented by the ISA2 Committee.

**APPENDIX 1: REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS**

ID	Reference or Related Document	Source or Link/Location
1	Business Case on Social media analysis	<a href="https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/CITnet/confluence/x/0AFWH">https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/CITnet/confluence/x/0AFWH</a>
2	Better Regulation toolbox	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/br_toolbox_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/br_toolbox_en.pdf</a>
3	D03.01: Business cases for corporate e-Participation solutions	<a href="https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/CITnet/confluence/x/0AFWH">https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/CITnet/confluence/x/0AFWH</a>
4	Latvian Football application requirements	<a href="https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/CITnet/confluence/x/-YG2Hg">https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/CITnet/confluence/x/-YG2Hg</a>