WHAT IS SIMPLEX?

SIMPLEX: CUTTING RED TAPE AND EGOV POLICIES IN ONE PROGRAMME

Making citizens and businesses everyday life easier – by cutting red tape, reducing compliance costs and using ICT to deliver better public services – has become a priority goal for the Portuguese Government.

A NETWORKING STRATEGY

The first Simplex Programme was launched in 2006. Each year, public bodies from all government departments propose simplification initiatives and establish a deadline for its implementation.

Simplex also includes ideas directly suggested by the civil servants who participate on the "Simplex Ideia Award"; as well as the proposals made by citizens, enterprises and associations who contribute to the Public Consultation.

To meet more effectively Simplex goals, Municipalities have start-up, in 2008, a joint simplification programme in partnership with the Central Government, which is called "Simplex Autárquico" (Simplification Programme for Local Government).

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Results are released by the Executive each quarter, as well as the reasons for any delays in the initiatives' implementation.

All information about Simplex is available online.

More than 80% of the 757 initiatives included in Simplex 2006, 2007 and 2008 programmes have been successfully completed.

"(...) Simplex has become a high-profile initiative – unique among OECD countries – with strong political support, addressing the need for simplifying the Portuguese public sector and its service delivery." (OECD, 2008, Making Life Easy for Citizens and Businesses in Portugal – Administrative Simplification and e-Government)

MAIN OUTCOMES

Simplification of laws and procedures (e.g. by simplifying the formalities related to the submission of financial and accounting information);

Dematerialisation of forms and procedures (e.g. by putting online the editions of the Portuguese "Official Gazette" and thus making access to it easier, more convenient and paperless);

Elimination of unnecessary certificates (e.g. by eliminating the certificates to prove the non-existence of debts to tax and/or social security services);

Consolidation of existing legal rules (e.g. in the simplification of permits regulations related to the industrial facilities);

Easier access to public services (e.g. by creating single contact points and integrated services organised around user's life events).

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR CITIZENS? SOME EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES

CITIZEN'S CARD

5 ID cards in 1 and a tool for eGov

More convenient and easy to carry, the "Citizen's Card" is an identification document that gathers and replaces five cards from different public services. Also it enables you to identify yourself when using online public services and to sign documents electronically.

BORN CITIZEN

Birth Registration at the maternity unit

This service allows to registry newborn babies directly in the maternity service where the birth took place, with no need to go to the registry office.

ELECTRONIC PRE-FILLED INCOME TAX RETURN

Filling your taxes was never easier!

For your convenience, tax services complete your return with the information they already have about your profile (name, taxpayer ID number, local tax office's code) and about your income (wages, pensions, deductions to taxes and social security). You just have to check it.

"I LOST MY WALLET" COUNTER

Renewing several ID cards at once is now possible!

Have you lost your wallet? Has it been stolen? To help you deal with what used to be a really headache – reissuing your ID cards - we have created the "I lost my wallet" one-stop office. This integrated service enables you to renew several ID cards at once.

"ONE-STOP HOUSE" SERVICE

Helping you dealing with an important step in your life

Buying or selling a home is always a complex process. The "One-stop House" service makes your life easier. Procedures related, such as taxes payments, contract drafting and signing, municipal tax exemption, property registries, can now be completed on a single counter.

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR BUSINESSES? SOME EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES

ON THE SPOT FIRM

Start-up a firm in less than one hour

The "On the Spot Firm" service enables you to set up companies at a single contact point and in less than one hour, without filling any application form. All the information is internally exchanged among the public services involved (registry, social security, taxes, economy).

ON-LINE FIRM

Create your enterprise without leaving your office/home

With no need to move around from public service to public service, without queues or delays, papers and public deed, it is now possible to start-up a firm completely online. Companies just need to access the "On-line Firm" service through the "Business Portal" and use a digital certificate number to authenticate themselves. This service also enables to access to other online services related to the different stages of the "businesses' lifecycle", such as registering a trademark.

SIMPLIFIED COMPANY INFORMATION:

Submitting financial and accounting information in one step

Portuguese companies had to fill in different forms at different deadlines to report their annual financial and accounting information to four different bodies (Directorate General for Taxation; Business Register Centre; National Statistics Agency; Portuguese Central Bank). Now, firms just have to fill a single form, available on line, to submit all the information required by these four bodies.

PERMANENT CERTIFICATE

Access companies registries with a code and a few clicks

The "Permanent Certificate" contains information about companies' trade registries that is permanently updated and available online. It can be obtained though the "Business Portal". Whenever this information is requested by public or private bodies, firms just have to send a code to allow access to it. This service is also available in English.

SINGLE WINDOW FOR PORT-RELATED PROCEDURES

A single window to contact ports

Economic agents can now contact with ports (whatever its destination) through a single point, available online. It is a technological platform that centralises information and connects the several public services that work with ports authorities. It allows economic agents to complete all the formalities to dispatch ships and merchandise in a faster, more convenient and paperless way.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SIMPLEX?

In Portugal, the cutting red tape and eGovernment policies are directly conducted by the Prime Minister.

The responsibility for the Simplex programmes lies with the Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, with direct support from the Prime Minister.

The Secretary of State for Administrative Modernisation is in charge of coordinating and monitoring these programmes.

The Cabinet of the Secretary of State for Administrative Modernisation (www.gsema.gov.pt) is placed at the centre of Government (Presidency of the Council of Ministers) and comes under the direct authority of the Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

To technical support this cabinet work, the government has set up the Agency for Administrative Modernisation (www.ama.pt). Its main goals are to carry out cross-department initiatives to modernise public services and to promote the cooperation between all the bodies involved.