

11TH "BEST PRACTICE IN CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION" Award

AWARD APPLICATION FORM

A. BASIC INFORMATION:

Title of the experience : Portal Service for Citizens' Initiatives, Mayor's Open Days and Info65+		
Name of city/region : Ljubljana		
Promoting entity: Municipality of Ljubljana		
Country: Slovenia		
Starting date 2006		Finishing date: /
Population size: 288,307 (1/7/2016)		
Surface area: 274.99 km ²		
Population Density: 1047.9 people per km ²		
GDP per capita: 18,693/ per capita –Slovenia (Source: Bank of Slovenia)		
Sector of the economy: Local government		
Type of experience:	Citizens' Initiatives Service, Mayor's Open Days and Info65+	X
Regional scope	Entire Region	X
Thematic area	Governance	
	Education	
	Transportation	
	Urban management	
	Health	
	Safety	
	Environment and/or urban agriculture	
	New social movements and associations	
	Culture	
	Housing	
	Employment	
	Decentralization	
	Local Development	
	Learning/training	
	Economy and/or finances	
Legal regulations		
Social inclusion		
All		X

B. PROCESS

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE EXPERIENCE OCCURRED

Citizens' Initiatives Service has already existed at the time of previous mayors. It was founded in 2003. Its main purpose was to offer support in communicating with citizens



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and listening to their complaints, which relate to the work area and the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Ljubljana.

Current mayor wanted to further stress the importance of two-way communication, be even more available to the citizens and be able to identify their specific challenges, and be, in this way, capable to faster respond to their proposals with a view to further increase the participation of citizens. The department has therefore been renamed the Office for Citizens' Initiative, which operates under the auspices of the mayor's Cabinet. Since 2006, it has been managing and organizing the Mayor's Open Days, and in addition, a web **Portal Service for Citizens' Initiatives** has been active since December 2008.

As a result of the efforts to increase access and facilitate direct communication with all segments of the population in Ljubljana, the Information Office Info65 + has been established, which is primarily intended for elderly residents and people with disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to enable the residents to actively participate in shaping the decisions that affect life in Ljubljana, and enable them to quickly and effectively resolve their complaints, suggestions, practical solutions and other requirements. This creates a direct communication between the mayor, the city administration, public institutions and public enterprises on one side and citizens on the other; which, as a final result of this communication, brings actual solutions.

Numerous certificates and awards gained by the Municipality of Ljubljana in the last few years also represent the recognition in the field of openness, accessibility and participation of residents and various groups. Since 2009, the City has held the Access City Award for disabled-friendly cities and also since 2014 the title of LGBT-friendly and youth-friendly city.

Our work has also been rewarded with a European award for best practice in the public sector (EPSA 2015), and the prize Eurocities 2013 for the project "Ensuring security and equal opportunities in transport for children and persons with disabilities", which presents good practices in the field of cooperation between urban authorities and citizens through the use of digital technologies. It combines transport services on call, conducted by the Ljubljana public transport and education portal with a description of safe school routes, maintained by the Department of pre-school education of the City Administration of the Municipality of Ljubljana.

DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE

Mayor's Open Days are held at least twice a month, mainly between 2pm and 8 pm, at the Town Hall. The mayor personally meets with citizens and listens to their suggestions, proposals, criticism, problems ... Due to a great interest and in favour of more efficient organization, the citizens need to make an appointment in advance.



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The schedule of meetings is managed and organized by the Office for Citizens' Initiative.

Citizens can book their appointments via phone, fax, e-mail, regular mail or in person. When applying for appointment they are asked to describe the content of the desired conversation issue with the mayor in detail. All questions and suggestions are forwarded to the competent professional services in the Municipality of Ljubljana prior to the Open Day, so the expert opinion of the competent services is already available to the mayor during the meeting. Those kinds of conversations are therefore extremely effective.

The mayor does not have the maximum time provided for each interview, he always meets all the citizens who have made an appointment, regardless of time or the time required for the conversation. Some questions can be answered quickly; other issues may require more mayor's time.

Different questions from various fields of operation of the city administration, public institutions and public enterprises are raised during the meetings between the mayor and the citizens, but mainly the issues in the field of transport, environmental protection, regulation of public spaces, culture, tourism, quality of life in the city, health and the environment are discussed.

While dealing with current themes, e.g. municipal spatial plans, a publication of an invitation to tender for the allocation of non-profit housing, an enrolment of children in kindergartens, many questions on those issues were raised.

Mayor also devotes a lot of time to those citizens, who turn to him because of personal and social distress. The problem of the lack of housing has been a constant issue, and also an increasing number of cases when people are unable to pay for the cost of renting and operating has been noticed. Due to its limited jurisdiction, the Municipality of Ljubljana cannot help directly in all cases, but many people find hope and see new opportunities just speaking to the mayor.

As mentioned above, **Web Portal Service for Citizens' Initiatives** has been active since 2008 and has recorded until January 2017 more than 16,900 initiatives. The application is accessible via the official website of the City of Ljubljana (www.ljubljana.si).

It serves for receiving specific notifications of potential problems or errors. Therefore it is dominated by actual proposals and comments regarding traffic arrangements, parking, abandoned vehicles, damaged traffic signs, speed bumps, landscaping and protection of the environment (abandoned and unmanaged land, environmental pollution, overgrown shrubs), the problem of cycling in the city (random cycle paths, pedestrian zones, endangerment of pedestrians, ..) as well as issues regarding the planned projects of the Municipality of Ljubljana in the field of culture, sports, health, social issues, tourism.

In recent years the citizens have also used the social network Facebook for posting



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their initiatives. Resolving process is the same as when posting via the web portal.



The online entry of initiatives is user friendly, because the application does not require a registration. Despite the requirement to enter the personal data of initiator (name and surname), their full anonymity is ensured, because they can use a pseudonym. On the web portal, a citizen can choose a specific topic (roads, street lighting, stationary traffic, culture, child care). An online form allows them to further on describe the initiative in detail.

After the initiative has been received, the procedure of solving is as follows:

The Office for Citizens' Initiative forwards the initiative to the relevant department of the Municipality of Ljubljana. The citizens receive a reply no later than within 8 days, within 3 days on average. The answer of professional services is published under the original initiative and is visible to all users of the Citizens' Initiative Service.

Questions and suggestions are often complex, a preliminary view on the field is often required, particularly in the case of transport and inspection matters.

The Information Point for senior citizens 65+ and people with disabilities was established in 2016 as a direct indicator of the impact of citizens' initiatives. The above mention groups are able to obtain basic information on services and activities available to them in the Municipality of Ljubljana.



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LEADERSHIP AND SHARED RESPONSABILITES.

The Office for Citizens' Initiative manages the whole procedure, from receiving the initiative to passing the answer to the citizen.

Citizens may file their comments, suggestions, complaints and compliments daily via telephone, fax, e-mail (pobude@ljubljana.si), regular mail or online application **Citizens' Initiatives Service**, as well as by using the social network Facebook, and in person at the Office's premises during the working hours.



It is the Office for Citizens' Initiative which obtains the answers from the professional services of the Municipality of Ljubljana, so it is therefore the responsibility of all who are engaged in the operation of the city to provide accurate, high-quality and useful information and answers to the citizens' suggestions.

In the background of this process, all the people involved are introducing new practices on the basis of complaints and proposals received, which simplifies certain procedures in accordance with the applicable legislation or provides professional suggestions for regulatory change where citizens' suggestions are professionally substantiated, but not viable under current regulations.



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COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES OR WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF THE SAME MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

In the process of preparing the answers, posted on the online application Citizens' Initiatives Service and asked on Mayor's Open Days, all competent departments of the Municipality of Ljubljana, in addition to the Office for Citizens' Initiative as an organizer and coordinator, participate actively.

Fast and clear introduction of the expertise is of key importance for a successful response to the initiative and to discussions held on Mayor's Open Days. Many issues are extremely complex and it takes a lot of time to check all the facts. Our professional services do their work very efficiently; the preparation of information and answers to web initiatives and to Mayor's Open Days is considered as a priority.

The same rule applies in responding to the initiatives posted by senior citizens and persons with disabilities through Information Point 65+.





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C. METHODOLOGY

DESCRIBE THE METHODOLOGY AND THE PARTICIPATION MECANISMS IMPLEMENTED IN THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE PROCESS.

Mayor's Open Days

The Office for Citizens' Initiative tends to immediately clarify the question or suggestion that a citizen wants to ask the mayor; it then arranges the preparation of a response by competent services (see above) needed by the mayor when meeting the citizens.

Due to a large number of citizens (between 220 and 260) that visit the Mayor's Open Days, it is extremely important to have a good planning of time and schedule. Mayor's opinion on the Open Day is actually forwarded to the competent department of the Municipality of Ljubljana, which gives a final assessment of the potential solution or realization of the citizen's proposal on the basis of mayor's opinion and the expert assessment of competent services.



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Portal Service for Citizens' Initiatives

The online entry of the initiative is user friendly, because the application does not require a registration. Despite the requirement to enter the personal data of initiator (name and surname), their full anonymity is ensured. On the web portal, a citizen can choose a specific topic (roads, street lighting, stationary traffic, culture, child care). An online form allows them to further on describe the initiative in detail.

After the initiative has been received, the procedure of solving is as follows:

The Office for Citizens' Initiative forwards the initiative to the competent department of the Municipality of Ljubljana. The citizens receive a reply no later than within 8 days, within 3 days on average. The answer of professional services of MOL is published under the original initiative and is visible to all users of the Citizens' Initiative Service

INFO65+

The Information Point for the people of the age of 65+ and persons with disabilities offers basic information on services and activities in the Municipality of Ljubljana for both groups. It should be noted that the premises of Info65+ are adapted for people with disabilities. The Information Point is located on the ground floor and the place is equipped with a ramp.

It is open three times a week, 4 hours per day.

There is a city administration assistant available to all people interested, who not only provides information but also accepts visitors' proposals and suggestions, and forwards them to the competent services, which prepare the responses that are then sent back to initiators.

D. FUNDING STRATEGY AND BUDGET

BUDGET

Total amount and percentage amount over the total costs of the project/institution/department.

Citizens' Initiative Service set up costs were 30,000 EUR

Amendments costs (2012) were 6,200 EUR, re-design (2015) 4,575 EUR.

The portal runs on its own infrastructure.

The salaries of the three employees at the Office for Citizens' Initiative and of one employee at Info 65+ are included in the budget; the costs of each individual initiative are paid from the annual budget of the MOL.

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FUNDING STRATEGY

The Office for Citizens' Initiative is a part of Mayor's Office of the City Administration of the Municipality of Ljubljana and persons employed are public servants.

Funds for the operation of the web portal and INFO65 + are provided in the respective budget of the Municipality of Ljubljana.





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E. INFORMATION SPREADING AND FEED-BACK TO THE PARTICIPANTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE INFORMATION DISSEMINATED DURING THE PROCESS.

We are aware that the service will be effective if as many residents as possible know about it, and if it is designed to be accessible to different groups of people.

Information on all channels of communication with citizens (portal service citizens' initiatives, Mayor's Open Days, Information Office 65+, Facebook) are regularly published in the gazette of Ljubljana and other local media, on the website, via the social network Facebook and in a number of other meetings between the mayor and the residents of Ljubljana.

The entire archive of initiatives and responses of citizens, which have been made via web service Citizens' Initiatives since the beginning of the operation of the service, is open to public.

When checking the site, it is possible to filter the initiatives received and the answers by:

- **content** (power industry, sewerage system, culture, urban transport, environmental pollution, playgrounds, dealing with real estate, development projects, social issues, housing, sport, tourism and events, plumbing, etc.)
- **area** (District Communities of the Municipality of Ljubljana) and
- **the time** of publication of the initiative.

We are pleased to conclude that the residents of Ljubljana are well informed on all communication channels that are available to them for swift resolution and for pointing out the shortcomings. We can affirm that the citizens participate in policy-making of the city in a big percentage, as they are well aware of all communication channels.

FEED-BACK TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The Office for Citizens' Initiative will ensure that all the suggestions received on the web portal are answered in the shortest time possible. Average response time is 3 days, maximum 8 days, but it may also be longer in the case of more complex initiatives.

Mayor's Open Days are held at least twice a month. Citizens can apply for a meeting



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on an Open Day throughout the whole month. The citizen receives their first answer at the meeting with the mayor; a final written response is prepared by the competent department a few days after the meeting.

At Info65+ the answer is immediately available to the resident. If the answer cannot be provided, it is forwarded to the citizen by the assistant within 8 days the latest.

F. RESULTS

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS. PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS OVER THE TARGET POPULATION GROUP. PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

Between the year 2006 and the year 2016 the Mayor personally met with around 24,000 citizens. The popularity of the Open Day has risen so much, that it usually takes place two days per month.

Service for Citizens' Initiatives has recorded more than 16,900 initiatives in a period from 2008 to 2016.

The profile of participants is general. Anyone can participate, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, skin colour, any degree of disability, level of education, etc. Participation is not limited; the possibility of co-decision is given to all, underprivileged groups as well as others. Everyone has the right to participation and equal treatment irrespective of the viability of the proposal and its possible solutions.

HAVE THE RESULTS BEEN DOCUMENTED? WHAT KIND OF DOCUMENTATION IS IT? HAVE OUTCOMES BEEN RETURNED TO THE CITIZENS?

Portal Service Citizens' Initiatives:

All initiatives and responses are documented. Each initiative, received by phone in person or via e-mail is entered in a computerized record keeping, Lotus Notes; all the documents are filed within the particular matter, from the first initiative to the final reply sent to the citizen.

A register of suggestions received online is kept electronically; each initiative has its own serial number.

All the initiatives and their responses can be seen on the web portal, prior registration is not necessary.



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A register of web initiatives is also kept in paper form. Each web initiative received is printed out. An e-mail indicating which service the initiative was sent to for solving and the response prepared by the department are printed out as well.

A report on initiatives received is handled by the Commission for citizens' initiative of the City Council of the Municipality of Ljubljana, which meets every 3 months.

Mayor's Open Days

The Office for Citizens' Initiatives appoints a person in charge and enters each initiative received into the Lotus Notes system, from the initial initiative to the final respond.

Info 65+:

Record of visits and their purposes is kept (e.g. inquiry, where a computer or swimming course for seniors can be attended; seeking help in fulfilling a variety of applications and forms, etc.). More complex issues are also forwarded to the competent services and the responses are then sent to citizens. All stages of the process are recorded.

IMPACTS ON PUBLIC POLICY. PLEASE DESCRIBE IF, ONCE THE EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED, HAVE THERE BEEN CHANGES IN THE LEGISLATION, ACTIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATION (NEW PLANS, NEW PROJECTS), BUDGET AND/OR MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT.

The initiatives have had a significant impact on traffic regulation in the city, slow traffic zones have been introduced, parking barriers set up, the conversion of the part of the Slovenska cesta made into a "shared space" - it is a lane intended for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport vehicles. Private cars are, with a few exceptions, banned from the area, etc.

On citizens' initiatives, a free public transport service Kavalir has been introduced. Four electric vehicles, which run within the city centre pedestrian zone, have been facilitating errands for the elderly and mobility-impaired people since 2009. The service operates on call, but due to their slow speed, they can be hailed anywhere on the street. The ride is free.

Some traffic regulations have also been changed, e.g. Ordinance establishing the maritime regime, Ordinance regulating and cleaning of municipal roads and public green areas, Order establishing public parking areas intended for parking vehicles of residents with permanent or temporary residence in the pedestrian area, the Order establishing the payable public parking areas.

The participation of the citizens had an impact on housing policy. Rules on the allocation of the assigned rental housing for rent for young people adopted, was



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partly based on a great number of citizens' initiatives.

Based on the initiatives on the inclusion of the elderly and persons with disabilities, InfoPoint 65+ was established in 2016. In response to various citizens' initiatives, MOL has also introduced a fieldwork with the homeless.

Življenje v ljubljani Mestna občina O Ljubljani Medijsko središče Kontakt

Servis pobude meščanov

Št. pobud: 16071
Št. odgovorov: 16055

Domov Servis pobude meščanov

VNDIS POBUDE NEODGOVORJENE POBUDE ODGOVORJENE POBUDE OBJAVLJENE POBUDE

Korak 1: Izberite željeno ulico in hišno številko, ali pa lokacijo označite s klikom na zemljevid.

Izberite ulico

Korak 2: Vpišite podatke o pobudi

Naslov pobude

Ceste

BEŽIGRAD

Opis

Prijava na e-novice

IMPACTS ON THE ACTORS. CULTURAL EFFECTS AMONG PARTICIPANTS AND CULTURAL EFFECTS AT THE ADMINISTRATION (TECHNICAL STAFF, POLITICAL STAFF) CAN BE DESCRIBED?

A web service Citizens' Initiatives enables an insight into the opinion of the residents of Ljubljana. It is often the first address they turn to. The use of the web service is increasing and so is its popularity among the residents of Ljubljana, therefore we assume that promptness and quality of responses is very good. The web service and the Mayor's Open Days enable the citizens to actively participate in the policy-making of the city, which is after all, confirmed by the fact that the current Mayor Zoran Jankovič has been elected to his third term successively.

The citizens' initiatives are welcome and very effective feedback for our professional services with regard to their work and planned or already taken decision. The preparation of the answers for the citizens is our priority.

EXTERNAL IMPACTS. IS THE EXPERIENCE TRANSFERABLE? CAN IT BE REPLICATED IN ANOTHER CITY OR BY ANOTHER ORGANISATION?

Citizens' Initiatives Service can be, from a technical and organizational point of view, used in any city, but the successful operation of this type of web application requires highly motivated employees in all competent services, while the work is promptly and professionally done.



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We believe that Mayor's Open Days can be in such form organized in any other city as well, but the attendance and popularity of Mayor's Open Days in Ljubljana are strongly associated with the mayor's personality and his reputation. It is the matter of an innovative approach in the Municipality of Ljubljana, because we know of no such practice in other cities around the world.

G. EVALUATION AND MONITORING.

DESCRIBE SHORTLY WHAT KIND OF EVALUATION (INTERNAL/EXTERNAL) HAS BEEN FORESEEN FOR THE PROCESS, WHO WILL CONDUCT IT AND WHICH PARAMETERS WILL BE MEASURED.

The employees at the Office for Citizens' Initiative monitor and record the number of initiatives and responses, the number of meetings between the citizens and the Mayor, and the number of visitors at the office Info65 +.

Successfulness of the work done is immediate and direct; a citizen, who is not satisfied with information relating their initiative or with an activity that is taking place, usually re-contacts the Office for Citizens' Initiative in the form of a reply. In such cases, we pay particular attention to further clarification from the competent service that has prepared the original information.

The aim is, of course, to consider as many wishes and suggestions of citizens as possible. This is not always possible due to technical, financial or other reasonable restrictions. Our desire is to attract greater public involvement, to understand the needs of citizens in their environment, and to provide them with clear and precise information. We pay particular attention to the negative answers. Most people accept them with understanding, but not all of them.

The performance and activities of the Office for Citizens' Initiatives is monitored by the Commission for Citizens' Initiative at the City Council of the Municipality of Ljubljana, which meets four times a year. The most current and the most numerous questions and suggestions are reviewed at the meetings.

WILL CITIZENS BE INVOLVED IN THE EVALUATION? WILL THEY BE PROVIDED WITH THE EVALUATION'S RESULTS?

The citizens are actually the ones who evaluate. If their initiatives are granted, they have immediate insight into what has been done in order to agree, disagree or immediately express dissatisfaction. Particular formal evaluation is not anticipated, but the elections are surely an event, where the "informal" evaluation is made; citizens have every opportunity to approve or reject the candidacy of the mayor, and



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at the same time express their (dis)satisfaction with the situation in the city.

ONCE THE EVALUATION PROCESS IS FINALIZED, IS THERE A CITIZENS' MONITORIZATION/ FOLLOW UP PROCESS FORESEEN?

Each citizen can follow the realization of their initiatives as well as the realization of all other initiatives, because the web application is freely accessible without pre-registration.

The evaluation process is informal, since every individual who has highlighted a particular initiative, can have a direct insight into the outcome of this initiative – whether it has been realized or not. Thus, evaluation and monitoring of initiatives take place at the same time, but still the applicant has no insight into the process of resolving of their initiative itself or, which competent department is dealing with the particular initiative in that particular moment.

So far, there has been no need for formal evaluation and monitoring, and the citizens are satisfied with their informal, yet so direct evaluation. Actual results are achieved without the (unnecessary) complications and bureaucratic entanglement, and here precisely lies the beauty of citizens' initiatives and Mayor's Open Days.

H. ABSTRACT AND CONCLUSIONS.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EXPERIENCE.

The direct involvement of citizens in policy-making of the city via a web portal Citizens' initiatives, Mayor's Open Days and info 65+ offices.

One of the highlights of the citizens' initiatives is the feeling of belonging to the city and consciousness by encouraging people's participation in decision making on urban issues. The citizens are pleased with their municipality, because they have the opportunity to co-create their city, and more connected to the city administration, which is motivated by the fruits of its work that is appreciated and accepted with gratitude and enthusiasm.

We would like to stress the simplicity of the concept in regard to the citizens' initiatives, which is, on the other hand, thoroughly developed and supported by expert opinion, and has been achieving very good results on a small budget, and encourages extremely high participation.

FUTURE CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVE.

Maintaining and increasing the efficiency of the achieved, direct two-way communication with the citizens, and the establishment of the systematic



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monitoring of realization of initiatives while striving to maximize the realization of initiatives, in so far as this is possible within the limits of the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Ljubljana.

WHY CAN THE EXPERIENCE BE CONSIDERATED INNOVATIVE?

The Portal Citizens' Initiative is comparable to the portals of some other cities, whereas the mayor's contacts with the citizens on the Mayor's Open Days described above are, to our knowledge, of innovative practices in our city. Many cities around the world, as well as MOL, are aware of the problem of rising of elderly population, and invest a lot of effort into solving this problem. We believe that we are innovative by having established Info 65+, since that kind of information point does not exist in any other city, therefore we have made one more innovative step forward.