

D1.2 ADAPTED USER-CENTRICITY PRINCIPLES

LOCALISED TALLINN DECLARATION USER-CENTRICITY PRINCIPLES

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1. INTRODUCTION

Local authorities play a fundamental role in digital government service delivery. They are the front office of government as a whole and the first way citizens experience digital services, and will increasingly do so in the future with the adoption of the 'once only' principle. The implementation of the user-centricity principles has to start at the local level, and many cities have taken the lead in implementing digitisation and co-creation.

Local governments are those with direct contact with citizens and should be at the forefront of achieving the goals of the Tallinn declaration. However, they face a number of challenges that UserCentriCities (UCCs) will address as outlined in the table below.

Challenge	UCCs Objective	UCCs Output
Local authorities not sufficiently involved in defining the Tallinn Declaration	Involve local authorities in digital government policy debate at European level	Operationalization of Tallinn declaration by local authorities High level policy summits with local/European decision makers.
Impossibility to compare performance of local authorities in digital government	Provide a measurement tool to support local decision makers and incentivize progress	Benchmarking dashboard
Lack of support on how to become more user centric	Providing advice and facilitate peer to peer learning between cities	Support toolkit and mutual learning service
Involving and communicating with thousands of local authorities	Outreach and community building to cities and regions through existing networks and social media	Scalable tools for benchmarking, service and outreach

Table 1: Challenges user-centricity principles at the local level, objectives and outputs of UCCs

Digital government policy in Europe requires the involvement of local authorities in the delivery but does not sufficiently involve them in the definition of the priorities. UCCs aims to help bridging this gap by developing a local version of the Tallinn Declaration principles.

With this task, we will translate and adapt the user-centricity principles of the Tallinn Declaration for the local context of cities and regions, based on the needs of partners. All UCCs' partners are involved in the translation process through an iterative co-creation approach.

2. ITERATIVE APPROACH AND CO-CREATION

2.1 CO-CREATION WORKSHOP

The process started with a first brainstorming among partners. This brainstorming took place on the 4th of February during a co-creation workshop that was organised in collaboration with task 1.1. During this session, 33 participants representing the project partner organisations, cities and region, associated cities and Eurocities working group member cities reviewed the existing list of principles and addressed a set of questions:

- Is the list complete? Are important aspects missing? Are some aspects not important enough?
- Do the principles make sense in local practice? How should the principles be defined while taking into account your local context?

City/Region/Organisation	Country	UCCs Status
City of Rotterdam	Netherlands	Partner City
City of Tallinn	Estonia	Partner City
City of Espoo	Finland	Partner City
City of Milan	Italy	Partner City
Region of Emilia-Romagna	Italy	Partner Region
City of Murcia	Spain	Partner City
City of Barcelona	Spain	Associated City
City of Lisbon	Portugal	Associated City
City of Porto	Portugal	Eurocities member
City of Glasgow	UK	Eurocities member
City of Gothenburg	Sweden	Eurocities member
Lisbon Council		Project Coordinator
VTT		Project Partner
Eurocities		Project Partner

Table 2: Participating cities, regions and organisations in the co-creation workshop

This workshop resulted in a first draft of the localised Tallinn Declaration user-centricity principles. In this document a distinction was proposed between the additions and recommendations to the original user-centricity principles as formulated by the participants of the project during the co-creation workshop, and the challenges that they identified regarding those principles.

Next, this first draft was sent to the project partners and the cities that participated in the workshop and several suggestions and comments were received and added to the localised principles.

2.2 ONLINE PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST DRAFT AND COMMENTS

A second draft of the adapted version of the Tallinn Declaration user-centricity principles was published in an open format for cities and regions to comment, using the Making Speeches Talk platform (<https://discuss.usercentricities.eu/ch/UserCentriCities/>). To enable non-English speaking representatives of local authorities and citizens to also comment on the draft, translations of the document were made in six languages and posted online: Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Between 22 March and 23 April 2021, local authorities other than UCCs partners and associated cities and regions, but also the general public, were invited to comment on the draft via a social media campaign (LinkedIn and Twitter) and via direct mailings to Eurocities' working groups members. This resulted in 114 comments made by 10 distinct users from 6 different EU countries. An additional 15 comments made by Eurocities member cities were added after a presentation and discussion on the draft at a meeting of the Eurocities working group on digital citizenship.

2.3 CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Because of the pandemic, the dedicated citizen co-creation workshop that was originally foreseen to take place in Rotterdam was not organised. Instead, the UCCs partner cities and region were each proposed to organise a local online webinar, event or consultation that is open to their local citizens, businesses and other users of local digital public services and that aims to open up the conversation on the localised user-centricity principles and their related challenges to the general public.

Several cities and the region of Emilia-Romagna have planned an event with or a consultation of their local stakeholders in the coming months on the subject of user-centricity of local digital public services and the UCCs project. Unfortunately, the timing that was set for Deliverable 1.2 did not allow for the inclusion of the results of these webinars and consultations in the current document.

City/Region	Format	Timing
Espoo	Specific questions on user-centricity added to customer survey about MyEspoo development	12 April – 15 May 2021
Emilia-Romagna	Webinar with local authorities in the region	To take place in May 2021
Murcia	Webinar with local stakeholders	To take place in May 2021
Milan	Local webinar/workshop on digital public services	To take place in June/July 2021

Table 3: Local consultation of citizens

The results of these consultations and events will be added to this document once they are available and a second version of this deliverable will be published.

3. LOCAL TALLINN DECLARATION USER-CENTRICITY PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this task was on adapting the Tallinn Declaration user-centricity principles to the context and the practice of local and regional authorities. In this chapter, the recommendations and additions to each principle that were suggested by the participants to the co-creation workshop, Eurocities’ member cities and the general public via the publication of the draft on the Making Speeches Talk platform are described. Next, the challenges, barriers and suggestions to effectively make use of each principle on the local and regional level are summarised.

One of the outcomes of task 1.2 was the identification of specific priority services that are typically delivered at the local level. Based on the results of a request to the partner cities and region to send the leaders of T1.1 and T1.2 with background material from their local context that can provide some orientation on the areas of services it became clear that it would be very difficult to find a common ground and produce a list of priority (digital) services that is relevant to all cities. The best achievable result of this exercise is reflected in the high-level categorisation of services in Figure 1 below.

Institutional arrangements within EU member states make that there are significant differences in the way that competences between different levels of government are assigned and this in turn has an impact on the responsibilities and competences of local and regional governments in the field of public services and digitalisation. In general, all local authorities from every EU member state ask for a strong multi-level collaboration to fully operationalise the user-centricity principles.

Base-line services: Themes and Granularity

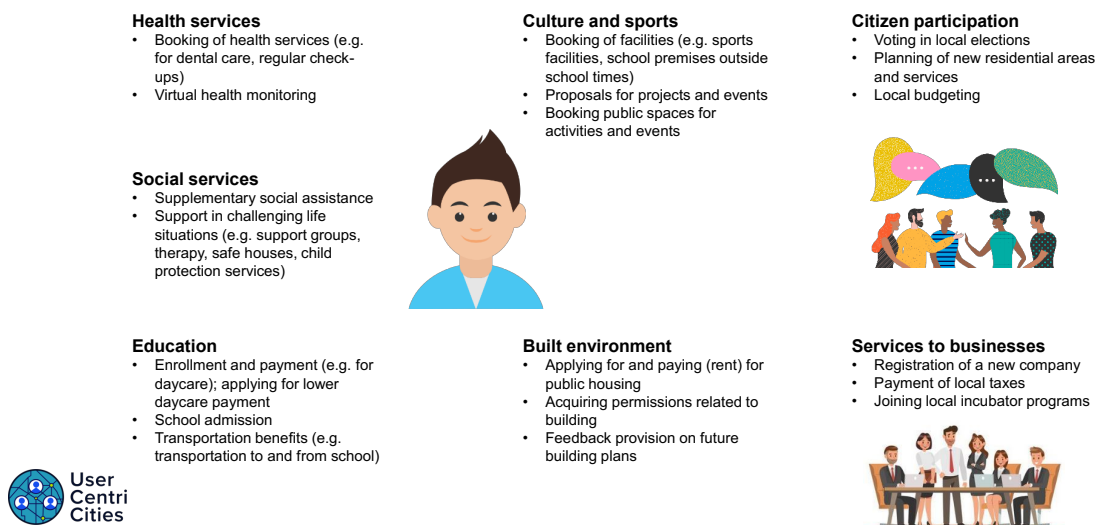


Figure 1: Base-line services: Themes and Granularity

3.1 DIGITAL INTERACTION

3.1.1 PRINCIPLE AS IN TALLINN DECLARATION

- To have the option to digitally interact with their administrations

3.1.2 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- To qualify the interactions and services that are in scope of this principle
- To differentiate between digital interaction and providing digital public services

3.1.3 CHALLENGES

Cities and regions recognise the importance of providing citizens and businesses with the option of digital interaction, also with their local administrations.

- Because the digital divide is still a reality, a digital only policy in interacting with local government is not feasible. Digital interaction will always need to be complemented with other modes and channels of interaction.
- The choice for digital only is often based on motives of efficiency and reducing costs and is therefore not user-centred, but organisation-centred. Many people prefer to interact directly with a human being when they have a complaint, instead of using an online form. Emotional aspects of customer/citizen contact and empathic connections have to be taken into account.
- There is a clear difference between digital interaction and providing digital services. Digital interaction could be as simple as giving citizens, businesses and other users the option to contact and interact with their local government via email. However, digital interaction via email is not scalable and interoperable.
- Local authorities point out that it is not always possible to provide services digitally. Certain services that are rendered on the local level, e.g., education services¹, are generally not fully digitised. Also, national laws may prevent the full digitalisation of a service, by making a physical visit or step mandatory.
- A citizen should be able to access the information and procedures online and get the result online but non-digital steps of some procedures (e.g., police verification for change of address) that cannot be digitalised by law can exist and should not influence the evaluation of the service.
- Local governments do not have all the levers to provide certain services digitally and have to rely on a strong collaboration with other levels of government to digitise interaction with citizens, businesses and other users, and certain public services. Using open standards can contribute to collaboration and scalability between levels of government and also within the same level of government.

3.2 ACCESSIBILITY, SECURITY, AVAILABILITY AND USABILITY

¹ Education services are not always rendered by local authorities in every EU member state. This is for instance not the case in the Netherlands.

3.2.1 PRINCIPLE AS IN TALLINN DECLARATION

- That the services are made more accessible (including findable) and secure and can be used by all in a non-discriminatory manner, with appropriate assistance available upon need
- That the principles of universal design have been applied to the setting up of the services and that the websites are simple to read and easy to understand
- That the authenticity of digital public services is secured and can be recognised in a clear and consistent manner

3.2.2 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- When designing digital services and websites, that specific attention is given to the usage of clear language (including icons and images) that is adapted to and understood by the users
- That digital public services are provided on the digital platforms and on any devices that are commonly and frequently used in the local context; that users that have no or limited access to digital channels are still provided with a fast and clear service solution, either offline or by offering them access to public digital instruments (e.g., digital desks or kiosks)
- That digital public services are inclusive by default by co-designing guidelines that are developed in practice with users of different groups: people with disabilities, including specific mental health issues, different genders, different levels of skills, different languages...

3.2.3 CHALLENGES

Local authorities consider the accessibility and usability principle to be the core principle of the notion of user-centricity and they recognise the need to design and implement digital public services that are inclusive by default.

Digital public services that are provided by local authorities should be easily findable and accessible:

- local governments in every EU member state have competences and responsibilities in many different policy fields and tend to communicate everything on their websites, often using a siloed organisational logic
- many local authorities have made or are making the transition from a local information website in which the services appeared to be hidden to a portal website that is structured based upon the needs of users and their search for specific local digital public services
- in making that transition, it is crucial to listen to a diverse group of users before starting the design, by using methodologies that check and understand their capacities, needs and usage of the websites and the services, thus improving the usability of the website

and the services. This also implies that knowledge of and skills and capacity in service design and design thinking methodologies in (local) governments is increased

- local authorities should devote time and resources dismantling monolithic applications, creating ad hoc inter-operability plans and preferring scalable solutions, enhancing sharing and communicating data among databases.

Local authorities find the correct usage of language to be an important aspect of accessibility, usability and availability of digital public services. This can be achieved by:

- developing a clear language agenda together with the users (including the use of local dialects in certain cases)
- providing content that is easily translatable in different languages by automated translation services (or by providing professional automated translations on the government website), but also by using images and icons to improve understanding by specific target groups
- developing language and design guidelines that are used to train future developers of digital public services and websites, thus creating a new development culture.

Multi-level and multi-organisational collaboration:

- some public services demand intervention and implication of different levels of government (local, regional, national), each with their own rules, channels and principles
- in order to make these multi-level services accessible and usable, collaboration between the different governments in the design of the services is necessary; the development of open standards and open infrastructures², in which databases, services and applications can be connected on the applicable levels, independently and in an open way can facilitate this collaboration
- accessibility and usability of services are also profited by collaboration between public and private organisations of the service ecosystem: local authorities, companies and academia (also for providing training in design and development).

According to local authorities, more attention should be given in this principle to the protection and security of personal data.

3.3 REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

3.3.1 PRINCIPLE AS IN TALLINN DECLARATION

- That public administrations make efforts to reduce the administrative burden on citizens and businesses, namely by optimizing and/or creating digital processes and services where relevant and possible, and by offering personalised and pro-active services
- Not to be asked to provide the same information to public services more than once, in due respect of data protection rules and regulations

² The Government of Australia developed a Digital Service Standard that can act as an inspiration: <https://www.dta.gov.au/help-and-advice/digital-service-standard/digital-service-standard-criteria>

3.3.2 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- That the reduction of administrative burden is also achieved by reducing the entry points to local digital services for the users
- That the reduction of the administrative burden is not limited to citizens and business, but that it is applicable to all users.

3.3.3 CHALLENGES

Local authorities recognise the needs for reduction of the administrative burden on citizens and businesses by optimising and creating digital processes and services, and by offering personalised and pro-active services. However, they also point out that:

- creating digital processes and services does not necessarily mean that the administrative burden will be any less, especially when offline processes are one on one transformed into digital processes. The focus should be on transforming the processes
- the effort to reduce the administrative burden should not be limited to optimising front-office processes of digital services, but should also focus on the back-office processes
- many back-office processes and supporting systems are not designed with the user in mind but follow an organisational logic and can thus jeopardize usability
- in certain cases where the legal basis and legal frameworks for digital services are issued at the national or regional level and the execution is at the local level, there is a risk of an increased administrative burden if there is insufficient collaboration and information sharing between the different levels of government.

3.4 DIGITAL DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

3.4.1 PRINCIPLE AS IN TALLINN DECLARATION

- That public services can as much as possible and appropriate, especially upon request of the user, be fully handled online, including the provision of any evidence required to obtain a right or fulfil obligations
- That the status of service delivery can be checked online where relevant

3.4.2 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- When public services are fully rendered online, transparency of the underlying process needs to be guaranteed and human intervention and control still made possible; discretionary space should be well defined and the persons assigned with the execution of services in public service should be facilitated, and protected by legislation defining that space.
- That the status of service delivery can not only be checked online where relevant, but also where needed or wanted by the users.

3.4.3 CHALLENGES

Local authorities recognise that it is empowering citizens to make it possible to fully handle public services online and to enable the user to check the status of service delivery online.

The implementation of this principle at the local level is challenging, because:

- it asks for local administration staff to be sufficiently skilled to use the digital tools for online service provision. It is not always possible for less flexible or untrained staff to develop the necessary skills to be expert users of the digital tools
- it takes time, effort, and budget to replace legacy systems that are in place with front- and back-office applications that are compatible enough to make this possible for every relevant public service.

3.5 CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

3.5.1 PRINCIPLE AS IN TALLINN DECLARATION

- That digital means are used to empower citizens and businesses to voice the views, allowing policy makers to collect new ideas, involve citizens more in the creation of public services and provide better digital public services

3.5.2 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- That the input from data that is already gathered from citizens, businesses and other users by administrations is first analysed, before starting to collect new ideas, or starting digital public service (co-)creating or (co-)design processes. This includes signals received via various sources such as CRM sources, social media, complaints via street-level bureaucrats, suggestions via publications...
- That citizens, businesses and other users are also heard and involved in deciding the municipal strategy.

3.5.3 CHALLENGES

Local authorities question the fact that citizen engagement using digital means is a design principle today. Engaging citizens (using digital means) is currently a choice. However, they find that it is recommended that citizens and other users are involved and engaged, both in policy and service delivery. Citizen engagement should not be limited by only using digital means, in order not to exclude citizens and other users that are less digital.

Local authorities recognise that it is important to involve all users in the creation of public services and they point out that, even though it is time consuming, including their insights already in the early stage of the development of digital services is worthwhile.

However, cities also point out that:

- before starting to collect new ideas, service co-creating or (co-)design processes (local governments should analyse the input from data that is already gathered from users (e.g., from CRM sources)
- a multidisciplinary approach is needed to effectively co-create digital public services. Teams of people with skills and expertise in IT, in citizen engagement and participation, in design, in specific service fields... need to collaborate
- local authorities feel a need to share information about tools, practices, methods, and applications to involve citizens and other users in the creation of digital public services.

3.6 INCENTIVES FOR DIGITAL SERVICE USE

3.6.1 PRINCIPLE AS IN TALLINN DECLARATION

- The barriers to use digital public services should be effectively removed, including by extending and promoting the benefits of, for example, higher confidence, speed, effectivity and reduced costs to individuals who are able to use them

3.6.2 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- That investments are made in onboarding of citizens, businesses and other users of digital public services, by finding out what their feelings and pains are that prevent them from using the services and by providing them with training in digital skills and better internet access, thus bridging the digital divide

3.6.3 CHALLENGES

It is worthwhile to proactively inform citizens and other users of public services of the benefits of using digital services: reduced costs, effectivity, greater speed but also the reduced impact on the environment because physical travel is being avoided.

To local authorities the most important barriers for citizens and other users to use digital public services are first and foremost the lack of skills to use digital tools and then access to the internet. Bridging the digital gap as much as possible and working on improved accessibility of digital services (anytime anywhere) will have a more positive impact than the mentioned incentives for digital service use.

3.7 PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA AND PRIVACY

3.7.1 PRINCIPLE AS IN TALLINN DECLARATION

- That the handling of personal data respects the general data protection regulation and privacy requirements at the EU and national levels, when applicable informing citizens about the use and storage of their personal data and allowing citizens to access and ask for the correction and deletion of personal data, where appropriate

3.7.2 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- When designing public services, more attention is given to the principle that personal data is only collected when it is absolutely necessary

3.7.3 CHALLENGES

Local authorities recognise the importance of this principle but feel that there is a difference in both the interpretation and the application of the GDPR between European member states (experiences from projects such as the Citizen Card³). These differences should be analysed in order to map the effects on the digital public services that are provided.

They also feel that, the more complex the service is and the more different interactions it requires, the more difficult it is to design the services and ensure compliance with the GDPR.

This principle also has to take into account the evolution towards a more decentralised control of personal data. Projects and initiatives such as decode⁴, Solid⁵, MyData⁶ and Cities for Digital Rights⁷ pave the way and give individuals the ability to control the sharing and the usage of their (personal) data.

3.8 REDRESS AND COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS

2.8.1 PRINCIPLE AS IN TALLINN DECLARATION

- That redress mechanisms are available online and that citizens and business have access to complaint procedures online, while also in other available channel(s) of their choice

3.8.2 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

³ https://eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Eurocities-KSF-Lab-Citizen-Card-report-2021_2.pdf

⁴ <https://decodeproject.eu/>

⁵ <https://solidproject.org/>, led by Tom Berners-Lee. It offers a protocol that lets people store their data securely in decentralised data stores called Pods. When data is stored in someone's Pod, they control which people and applications can access it. Solid is currently being piloted by the regional government of Flanders (Belgium)

⁶ <https://mydata.org/>

⁷ <https://citiesfordigitalrights.org/>

- That users also have the option of providing online feedback on the quality, availability, accessibility, findability and usability of digital public services

3.8.3 CHALLENGES

Local authorities feel that it is not only necessary to provide citizens, businesses and other users with the online possibility of filing complaints but also of providing feedback on the services and their experiences with interaction with their local governments.