

→ Establishing a helpdesk for better service delivery

Country Turkey

Project title Hand in hand for a better delivery of public services in Lüleburgaz

Twinning Municipality of Deventer (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Lüleburgaz (Turkey)

Project period 1 September 2006 to 31 August 2007

Project budget € 65,096

Project objective

Improve the quality of public services of the municipality of Lüleburgaz by improving communication between departments and citizens and by setting up a front-office to address the needs of civil servants and citizens.

Project summary

The municipality of Deventer supported Lüleburgaz in creating a front-office thus responding to the needs of civil servants and the public. Citizens can address their questions to the front-office directly. The front-office aims at a better communication and interaction between the municipality and citizens and between the different departments of the municipality.

Core information

Lüleburgaz is the largest municipality of Kirklareli province and has approximately 120,000 inhabitants. The city is active in industry, trade and agriculture. Lüleburgaz is the local centre of administration responsible for services such as water, sewage, solid waste, transportation, and city planning to meet the needs of citizens. The main executive body is the municipal council headed by the mayor.

Problem analysis

First of all, public services in Lüleburgaz did not sufficiently meet the requirements and expectations of the population. The municipality had to upgrade its communication with its own departments and with citizens to improve the quality of public services. Local public servants lacked some of the skills needed to tailor the services to citizens' needs and to monitor these. Municipal staff would be less charged with general tasks and the quality of public services would improve if certain municipal services were offered within a convenient front-office context.

A practice to improve service delivery of local governments

Project implementation

The project started with a survey of citizens (1,200), municipal officers (250) and associated staff, followed by a SWOT analysis with participation of all stakeholders. The purpose was to determine the needs, degree of satisfaction, wishes for improvements, and priorities in service delivery. Four priorities were formulated: 'Traffic', 'Clean-up', 'Communication' and 'Impaired citizens', of which communication became the focus issue. The work continued with an action plan for further analysis and investigation of possible improvements in inter-department communication. One key conclusion was to establish a front-office to respond to the needs of both citizens and municipal officials. An assessment of possible integration of front- and back-offices to better support the helpdesk was concluded positively. The project included also capacity building for 30 key municipal staff. With all planned activities complete, the municipality instituted recommendations. It now benefits from better internal and external communication, satisfying the needs of citizens and staff, and more effective services in general.

Process management

The project required changing the existing municipal working and communication process as well as its communication system with the public. Re-organization and some new job-descriptions reflect necessary changes made within the municipality. Four additional staff members were assigned and the front-office was established in the main entrance hall. The project included a participatory process with involvement of citizens, municipal staff and all relevant stakeholders, including KENT (local citizens' assembly), municipal political representatives of the Kirklareli district, NGOs and similar.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Ensure involvement of the mayor and vice-mayor in all stages of the process;
- Involve all stakeholders in the analysis and planning process;
- Ensure the support of the municipal council for the budget and ultimate changes and processes introduced;
- Ensure sustainability of the changes reflected;
- Ensure good co-operation between the front-office and back-office of the municipal organization for optimal results.