

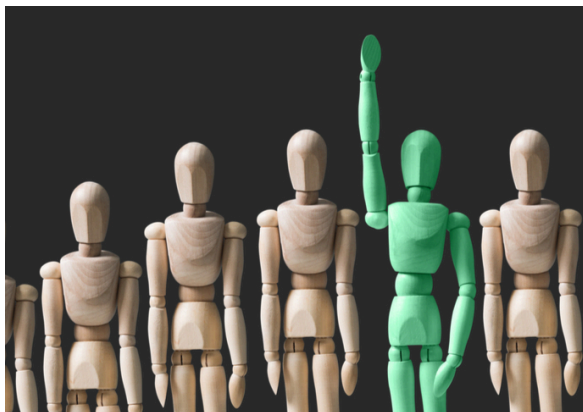
HORIZON
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Understanding value co-creation in public services for transforming European public administrations

Results in Brief

A guide for enabling co-creation in public administrations

The future of public administrations is not top-down. Meeting societal challenges calls for innovation, and more specifically value co-creation where end users and administrations can collaborate to devise better services. Co-VAL answers this need with policy recommendations and examples of best practices.



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Participative democracy has become a fashionable concept. But what's citizen participation in public services worth if it doesn't actually generate value? According to Anna Triantafillou, coordinator of the EU-funded project Co-VAL (Understanding value co-creation in public services for transforming European public administrations), mere participation is not enough. What the public services of the future really require is co-creation. "Value co-creation is often defined as the involvement of citizens in the initiation

and/or design of public services. But it goes even further. It impacts the value generated at the end of the production process and encompasses new practices to better meet social demands and tackle societal challenges," she explains.

Co-VAL was built around the observation that public administrations' old ways –

usually based on top-down policy assessments – do not meet citizens’ expectations anymore. It seeks a full-blown paradigm shift where citizens would be seen as value co-creators.

Beyond state of the art

“Our project advances the state of the art,” says Luis Rubalcaba Bermejo, Co-VAL scientific coordinator. “It tackles the main barriers to enabling solutions such as Open Government. These include a lack of knowledge and expertise, resource constraints, cultural barriers, scale and complexity of the service, existing routines and practices, and difficulties in aligning the goals of the different actors involved.”

Concretely, the Co-VAL team started its work by conducting theoretical and empirical research. They monitored transformative innovations and co-creation in the public sector, identified best practices in current and previous experience, and developed a system monitoring co-creation and the take-up of digital services at Member State and city level.

For its empirical case studies, the project focused on four public service-related co-creation areas. These are: digital transformation; service design and blueprinting; innovation and living labs; and innovative structural relationships between the innovation networks of the public-private-third sectors and social innovation in public services.

“With all this work, we wanted to contribute to theoretical knowledge while also generating a sustainable impact in public administration policy and practice,” adds Co-VAL policy coordinator Francesco Mureddu. “This implies continued collaboration with stakeholders in European public administrations, policy recommendations based on research outcomes and the implementation of policy tools for scaling up best practices.”

Measuring success with the Co-VAL dashboard

The project team developed a series of policy briefs to this end. These notably include indicators to monitor and evaluate existing initiatives to support public service transformation. The project team also created the Co-VAL dashboard, which showcases how local and national governments perform against project recommendations.

In Italy for instance, the city of Milan tested the Co-VAL dashboard and has a representative on the Co-VAL stakeholder panel. It also co-organised two events on the occasion of Milano Digital Week during which Co-VAL policy briefs were presented. Likewise, the Italian Government’s Digital Team provided feedback and

now represent the Minister of Innovation Paola Pisano within the Co-VAL stakeholder panel.

Over the next few months, the Co-VAL team will finalise the data analysis of their large-scale European survey on the use of co-creation in public administration. They also intend to enrich their policy recommendations based on the latest results as well as provide more interesting empirical cases and increase stakeholder engagement.

“Co-creation and service innovation are two still marginal but particularly dynamic fields of research that will be connected in the future due to the Co-VAL approach,” says Rubalcaba Bermejo, while Mureddu stresses how public sector innovation and Open Government are central pieces of the EU strategy for the coming years. What is certain is that Co-VAL is set to raise awareness of co-creation and how to best implement it amongst policymakers and practitioners.

Keywords

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[public administration](#)

[value co-creation](#)

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