The Once Only Principle Project

Reporting

Project Information

TOOP

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RESULTS PACK

Digital Government: Co-creating innovative public services for citizens and businesses

25 September 2020
Summary of the context and overall objectives of the project

"OOP is a principle that puts forth the idea that public administrations should collect information from citizens and businesses only once and then share and reuse the information that has already been collected, keeping in mind legal requirements and restrictions. This principle aims to reduce the administrative burden of individuals and businesses by re-organising public sector internal processes, rather than making individuals and business users adjust to existing processes.

The EU-wide implementation of the OOP is a political priority. Large-Scale Pilots have already been implemented within Europe, technical building blocks have been developed and piloted in various domains, and interoperability standards and frameworks have been developed. However, while many European Union (EU) countries have started to implement the OOP at a national level, the cross-border implementation of the OOP is so far limited to a few services.

The Once Only Principle Project (hereinafter "TOOP") aims to explore and demonstrate OOP on a European scale by using a federated architecture to implement multiple cross-border pilots. TOOP’s approach to the OOP is specific, focusing on information related to businesses activities and on cross-border sharing of this information. TOOP aims to contribute to a situation where businesses could provide certain standard information to a national or supra-national public administration only once, and this information could be shared between those public bodies, based on the data subject's consent and relevant privacy legislation.

It is implementing three pilots in the following areas: (1) Cross-border e-Services for Business Mobility, (2) Updating Connected Company Data, and (3) Online Ship and Crew Certificates.

One of the key innovative solutions to be developed within TOOP is a generic federated architecture that supports the organisational, semantic and technical interoperability of national registries across state borders. Such an architecture aims to provide consolidated and reusable building blocks for the implementation of the OOP in public services within Europe.

The project also works to identify and mitigate barriers and legal issues, which is not only necessary for the correct execution of the pilots, but may also provide guidance for future legislative or policy measures in the EU and beyond. The pilots will be evaluated to identify the tangible and intangible benefits and impacts of the cross-border implementation of OOP and generate lessons learned that could help introduce OOP-based initiatives in the future.

It currently explores and demonstrates the functionality of the OOP on a cross-border European scale may bring positive changes both for public administrations and public service users across Europe.
and beyond. The exercise that TOOP is undertaking will give valuable insights into how the OOP could be extended, what the drivers and barriers are, and which obstacles need to be overcome to make the OOP a reality throughout Europe. The project is thus an important learning environment for the OOP in particular and European e-Government in general.

Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far

The project has completed the first year out of the total of thirty months. As Large Scale Pilots are aimed at devising solutions for implementation of EU policy in the domain of e-Government, an important part of the work performed during the first year was liaison with the relevant EC Departments General and other relevant stakeholders, as well as following the ongoing EU initiatives, most importantly, the proposed Single Digital Gateway Regulation, which is of immediate relevance to the project. The core of the activities as well as some of the key achievements for the first year of the project are related to setting the ground for further development of technical architecture and piloting. This included development of an understanding of a legal framework and of the key drivers and barriers for cross-border implementation of OOP; development of an understanding of an ex-ante impact assessment framework, and, most importantly, a vision for the Generic Federated Architecture for the cross-border implementation of the once-only principle in Europe.

During the second year, the project continued effective liaison with the EC, in particular focusing on the Single Digital Gateway Regulation. Also, the project continued work on the development of the federated technical architecture in close collaboration with the pilots, as well as development of impact assessment approach and approaches to sustainability and governance of TOOP outcomes.

Following the groundwork performed by the piloting work package during the first year, during the second year, work in the piloting work package resulted in the following achievements: 1) Development of the common components, and integration in the playground environment for the deployment and testing but also visualization of the common components; 2) Development of two major releases of implementation guidelines for the MS systems that need to develop and expose TOOP-compliant interfaces; Roll out of the common components to the MS and supporting their integration to national pilot environment and the implementation of pilots in two pilot areas.

Communication and dissemination activities have been active throughout the project. The most intensive period for project communication was during the Austrian presidency of the EU Council, during which the project participated in numerous events and organised a mid-term project conference.

Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)

The OOP is seen as a viable way to increase administrative efficiency and effectiveness in the EU Member States and to make the digital single market a reality. The OOP is expected to reduce the administrative burden for businesses, increase government efficiency and improve the quality of public services. However, the cross-border implementation of the OOP is packed with challenges, ranging from technical issues to legal, organisational, political and demand-side barriers.
TOOP is a large-scale EU-funded initiative of participants from a growing number of more than 20 European countries that aims to contribute to the removal of the technical obstacles to cross-border data sharing. In order to facilitate the cross-border application of the OOP and provide a basis for the implementation of cross-border public e-services in the future, TOOP is developing a generic federated architecture that supports the organisational, semantic and technical interoperability of national registries across state borders. This architecture will be tested in practice via pilots in the fields of Cross-border e-Services for Business Mobility, Updating Connected Company Data and Online Ship and Crew Certificates.

The European Commission and EU Member States have intensified their efforts to remove obstacles to the cross-border implementation of the OOP. The European Commission particularly emphasizes the need to overcome the existing technical and legal barriers. This includes, in particular, the European Commission's proposition of the Single Digital Gateway Regulation. This proposal includes a system which enables cross-border data exchange in the public sector. It is one of TOOP’s main objectives to closely follow and contribute to such a development.