

Introduction of e-administration platform in Municipality of Svishtov, Bulgaria. Action plan in modules.

The municipal leadership in order to implement its obligations to the society and in order to be convenient for the citizens and business, which are using the municipal administrative services, at the Internet site of Municipality of Svishtov, was created “e-Municipality” section.

Module 1: Web site of Municipality of Svishtov

The idea is in middle term there to be available information, application form and services via electronic way in the following fields:

1. Opportunities for project funding from Local Initiatives Programme of Municipality of Svishtov. Since June 2004 the section is functioning.
2. Administrative activities and exchange of documents. The site is providing reference information in this section about the administrative services, which the Municipality can implement – procedures for issuing of 50 types of documents. It is planned until 2007 to start conducting administrative services, which can allow issuing documents by using digital certificates of citizens.
3. Services for entrepreneurs in trade, manufacturing, crafts, services. General information about these economic sectors is already available. Until the end of 2005 it will be detailed.
4. Management of municipal properties, privatization, municipal investments. At this stage at the site of Municipality of Svishtov are available only advertisements and announcements for sells and privatizations of municipal properties. It is planned until the middle of 2006 these sections to be detailed.
5. Until the end of 2006 will be published up-to-date information about labour and human resources, labour market and medical services on the territory of the municipality.
6. Since July 2003 the web site is providing plenty of information about the education activities and cultural-historic sites, as well as non-governmental organizations on the territory on the municipality.
7. Until the end of 2007 it is planned to start the sections about publishing activities, health care and pension welfare systems, agrarian policy and environmental policy.

Module 2: Local Initiatives Programme of Municipality of Svishtov

The Local Initiatives Programme of Municipality of Svishtov is developed by the Municipal administration with assistance from experts of “Local Self-Government Programme” of the U.S. Agency for International Development. The programme is supporting implementation of projects and initiatives of the local civil community, implemented in cooperation with the local administration and partners from the municipality, aiming to increase involvement of local community in urban development.

In the preparatory stage for programme implementation during the autumn of 2002 were received more than 35 project proposals, which applied for funding in 2003.

In 2003 were submitted new project proposals, as their total number increase 55. Eight of them were funded at the total amount approximately of 16 600 euro. The funded subjects were: one sport playground, five children playgrounds, one area in housing estate, and one project for reconstruction of information boards at the streets and setting up of maps of the town. The half of approved projects were implemented in the villages in the municipality.

The Local Initiatives Programme is innovative approach for involvement of citizens in solving local problems. It became very popular among the society in the municipality. The Programme was on of the leading proposals, which Municipality of Svishtov applied with, at national-wide competition for innovative practices in the Bulgarian municipalities and was evaluated with the honorary fourth positions.

In 2004 the Conrad Adenauer Foundation of Germany awarded Municipality of Svishtov for participation in competition for innovations in the Bulgarian municipalities, when again leading proposal was Local Initiatives Programme.

The idea of the leadership of Municipality of Svishtov is Local Initiatives Programme to become usual practice and for coming years to be provided means for it in every next municipal budget.

Since June 2004 every residents of the municipality, civil group and non-governmental organization can become acquainted with information about the Programme, to download the full package of documents, as well as to ask and to receive answers about the Programme via the e-mail.

The application form and the other necessary documents, as well as guides for preparation a project for the Programme are published on the web site of Municipality of Svishtov, <http://www.svishtov.bg/> in “e-Municipality” section (Electronic Municipality).

Module 3: Establishment of Centre for administrative services and information

In 2000 Municipality of Svishtov was approved for funding from “Danubian Initiative” Programme of U.S. Agency for International Development with project “Establishment of municipal information centre for complex and integrative servicing citizens and management of information in the municipal administrative management activity”, who establish modern Centre for administrative services and information. The American agency donate 30 000 dollars, as the Municipality also contribute by own financial means.

The project was implemented with expert assistance of the specialists of Foundation for Local Government Reform and Innovative Practices Team.

The Centre is functioning on principle of the front office. It is situated on the first floor in the building of the administration and there all servants from all divisions provide administrative services to citizens and companies.

The project goals are:

- Increasing efficiency and quality of services for the citizens of municipality of Svishtov;
- Establishment of modern technical and programme body, according to present day requirements for interconnection and distribution of information;
- Establishment of friendly administration and open office premises;
- Abolishment of conditions for personal view and corruption

At the Centre are provided more than 80 services to citizens and companies. With funding of the Municipality were purchased two software products “Aktis +” – for completing acts and for issuing certificates for birth, marriage, copies of certificates for death, and the second one is “Rental relations”, which is monitoring the collection of rental fees for the municipal property. It was received the authority of full access to national database about the citizens status.

Since its beginning in 2001 it is a highly professional division, which is fostering the interaction with the local authority.

Module 4: Creation of database for non-moveable property of Municipality of Svishtov

During the period 2001-2004 in accelerated pace was organized the process of making profiles of the municipal property. By the initiative of the leadership of Municipality of Svishtov, numerous properties was delisted as state property and recorded as municipal. In June 2001 was introduced in practice specialized software for issuing acts for municipal property, which facilitated at a great degree the process of making profiles of the municipal properties.

Module 5: Creation of public Internet register of the honorary citizens of Svishtov town

In order to encourage the residents in the municipality of Svishtov to work for the progress of local community and aiming to introduce the elements of e-administration, in 2003 was implemented the first stage of the public register of the honorary citizens of Svishtov town. The register is created on the basis on the existing paper register. It contains biographic information about 36 honorary citizens of the town and their contribution for developing the town and the country since 1902 to 2005. For the second stage, which will be implemented during this year, will be place photos of the honorary citizens.

Module 6: Ensuring optimal communication connectivity in the divisions of the municipal government

In 2004 were invested means for connecting every division to the Internet. For the mayors’ offices in the villages were created e-mail accounts.

Module 7: Creation of Citizens' forum at the web site of Municipality of Svishtov

In 2003 Municipality of Svishtov started forum, where every citizen and user of the Internet can express his/her opinion for the matters with local importance, information and events, announce on the site. The forum is one of the most frequently visited sections of the site, which most clearly express the attitude and opinions of the residents of the municipality.

Module 8: Issuing electronic bulletin of Municipality of Svishtov

In the second half of 2005 Municipality of Svishtov plans to start electronic bulletin with information about the activities of the mayor, the divisions, news, awarded projects, current initiatives, etc. At the moment the procedures for functioning of the bulletin are been considered.

Module 9: Profiles of local NGOs

Aiming to encourage development of the civil society, was ensure space of the municipal web site, where every non-governmental organization can publish its profile – mission, goals, tasks, activities, contact data.

Module 10: Introducing information and communication technologies in Municipality of Svishtov

In 2002 Municipality of Svishtov started middle term plan for introduction of information and communication technologies. In 2004 was purchased computers and office furniture, as follows: 16 personal computers, 20 laser printers, 2 servers Titan 2 GHz, 3 multifunctional devices Hewlett Packard, 3 copiers Ricoh, 3 scanners Cannon, 2 dual-processors servers ASUS and SuperMicro.

For 2005 is planed to be purchased server for 5 000 euro and software for 5 000 euro.

Since the beginning of module 10, seventy personal computers were purchased, which are forming the local area network of the Municipal administration.

Module 11: Providing services to citizens and companies via the Internet by using digital certificates

Regarding the implementation of the Bulgarian obligation to the EU, by the end of 2005 to be provided 20 web-based services for citizens and companies in July 2004 Municipality of Svishtov had formed clear goals for implementation of its commitments. Three digital certificates was purchased to be used by three divisions in the municipal administration. Training to work with digital certificates is currently implemented for several municipal servants. The possibilities for participation of Municipality of Svishtov in the European programme e -Europe+ and the European network of the public administration (IDA) are currently examined.

Module 12: Formation of electronic databases with theme information

In order to increase the qualifications and skills of the servants in the municipal administration was made decision for forming databases with theme information in the local area network of the administration, in the following fields:

- “News” database about European integration, economy, laws, etc.
- “Bulletins” database, comprised by the Internet bulletins of many Bulgarian and foreign organizations, among them are: Access to Information Programme, Market Economy Institute, Association of Danube River Municipalities, Municipal network for energy efficiency, Open Society Foundation – Sofia, District Governor, State Gazette, Delegation of the European Commission in Bulgaria, Bulgarian Economic Chamber, Bulletin of State administration, Foundation for Local Government Reform, Embassy of Japan in Bulgaria, Communication strategy of Bulgaria – monitoring of the Bulgarian and European press, Public administration Institute at the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria, National service for advices in agriculture, and the foreign ones: UNESCO, UNITAR, European Association of Border Regions, Bertelsmann Foundation, Directorate-General “Enlargement” of the European Commission, Directorate-general “Protection of the consumers” of the European Commission, EUpolitics, European integration online papers, etc.

- “Software” database, it contains the software products purchased by the Municipality, which the servants can use.
- “Legislation” database, it contains very big database with the Bulgarian legislation.

Module 13: Information services in the villages in the municipality

In 2004 the Municipality of Svishtov and the Business centre – Svishtov, jointly implemented the project “Information services in the villages”, funded by the Swiss agency for development and cooperation and Municipality of Svishtov.

Summery: Providing computer equipment for all village mayor administrations and mayor’s representatives, aiming to facilitate the servicing the residents of the villages and improving and lowering the price of administrative services. Establishment of connectivity between the village mayor’s administrations by creation of internal information system (intranet), as well as connection between the villages and the municipal centre. Creation of conditions for establishment of network in the every village, and on a later phase and the possibility to enlarge this network by inclusion of new institutions (school, community centre internet clubs, etc.)

Presenting the idea: Municipality of Svishtov is comprised by one town and 15 villages. The village residents have no any access to information services. The idea is in every building of the village mayors’ offices to be made suitable conditions for better and cheaper administrative services, access to information, and training of persons to do this services, as well, as enlarging the scope of services in later stages.

Taking into consideration the scope of the idea, this can be achieved on three stages:

- First stage: Ensuring the necessary equipment and software for the village mayors’ offices, mounting, setting up, and training of the staff.
- Second stage: Creation of internal information system, which ensure access to the documents, issued at the front office of Municipality of Svishtov.
- Third stage: Expanding the information services into the other institutions in the settlement (connecting to the network the school, the community centre, the kindergarten, etc.).

The project idea is supported by the local community, the mayors of the villages, and “Public forum – Svishtov” programme. Main motive for that, was the wish of the village mayor offices to provide administrative service “on site”. Data was announced that 35% of the population in the municipality is living in the villages, which are 15, and the Strategy for sustainable development was cited, in which one of the priorities is improving the connection between the town and the villages. The project idea was unanimously supported.

Goals: Accession of population in the villages to the information structure of Municipality of Svishtov; opportunity for administrative services “on the site” in the village itself; abolishment of the problems (transport, financial, delays in time, etc.) for the elderly in the villages when receiving different official documents, which until than was prepared only in the town; improvement of work environment in the village mayor’s administrations; increasing the degree of qualification and possibilities for self qualification; quick access to world information space.

Target group: The residents in the villages in the municipality.

Partners: The mayors’ office administrations in the villages of Alekovo, Balgarsko Slivovo, Vardim, Gorna Studena, Dragomirovo, Kozlovets, Morava, Ovcha Mogila, Oresh, Hadzhidimitrovo, Tsarevets, and the mayor’s representative offices in the villages of Aleksandrovo, Delyanovtsi, Sovata and Chervena.

Activities: Delivery of technical equipment on the sites’ Mounting and setting up the systems; training the staff in the administrations; promotion of the new services among the population.

Expected results: Improving the conditions for work in the 15 village administrative office in the municipality of Svishtov, increasing the degree of qualification and possibilities for self qualification of at least 15 persons, quick access to the world information space. Improving the administrative services for 34% of the population in the municipality (according the last census, the population of the villages is 17 008 residents against 33 195 persons, living in the town). Improving the connection between the town and the villages, which is described in the Strategy for sustainable development in municipality of Svishtov.

Informing the public about the project: Through the local press, local televisions, radio, the bulletin of the Forum. The project is good instance for all villages in the country and it attracted attention from the national media.

Evaluation of the project's impact: Abolishing the existing difference between the residents of the town and the villages regarding using the world information space and achieving quality administrative services.

Indicators for measuring the results: number of resident, ensured by administrative services, number of trained servants; number of institutions, connected to the information network.

Sustainability: The mayors' offices in the villages are committing themselves to preserve, maintain and use the purchased equipment.

Via the created Intranet network can be exchanged and to be downloaded forms about: Municipal Technical Service, rental relations, persons, taxi transportations, integration, civil status, accommodations, economic development, municipal property, territorial planning, general matters.

Budget: Funding from the Swiss agency is 13 450,92 euro; funding from the Municipality of Svishtov is 5 978,17 euro; own non-financial contribution 13 804,88 euro; total budget is 33 233,97 euro.

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