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Abstract

This report (D5.6) presents strategic recommendations which have been derived from the overall project. In particular, they concern organizations potentially interested in WeGovNow deployment, policy-makers more generally and the research community.

Keywords

WeGovNow deployment, facilitating and constraining factors, project outcome exploitation, pilot municipalities, platform monitoring, stakeholder feedback

Statement of originality

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Executive Summary

The WeGovNow project aims at making a contribution to the transformation from viewing citizens as mere customers of public services towards what has occasionally been called We-Government, considering citizens as partners. To this end, an online engagement platform has been developed during the initial project phase (c.f. D3.5). During the final project year, this platform has been piloted under day-to-day conditions in terms of a publicly available online service in three municipalities (c.f. D2.6), namely the City of Turin (IT), the London Borough of Southwark (UK) and San Donà di Pave (IT).

This report (D5.6) presents strategic recommendations intended to potentially trigger further activities beyond the duration of the WeGovNow project. These have been derived from the experiences gained throughout the validation pilots conducted during the last year of the project's overall duration, as presented in another report (c.f. D3.4). Some content from D3.4 is presented again throughout the current report, with a view to enable reading it as a self-standing document.

All in all, 9.976 pilot users have registered to platform across the three pilot municipalities throughout the pilot duration. In terms of age these spread quite widely across different age bands. The majority (80%) was aged between 20 and 59 years. Slightly more than one half (56%) of the pilot users were female users. All in all, 22.324 single usage activities were observed across the different functional components integrated within the overall platform. Generally, the pilot users were free to make use of the pilot platform as they wished. For piloting purposes, the three pilot municipalities have nevertheless developed a number of policy scenarios. These were directed towards exploiting the capabilities provided by the pilot platform for addressing local policy challenges that had emerged independent of the WeGovNow project. In this context, the pilot platform was piloted with a view to:

- involving NGOs and citizen in decision making about cultural projects to be funded in the framework of an urban regeneration programme;
- co-developing and co-managing public spaces, thereby involving residents and other stakeholders as well as different departments of the public administration;
- developing sustainable local mobility solutions and facilitating sustainable practices in the community in line with a municipal sustainability strategy;
- promoting community cohesion by supporting cross-faith collaboration in joint activity in line with a municipal faith group strategy;
- stimulating the interest of young people to become involved in local public matters in general and to engage in employment and training in particular;
- collating differentiated feedback from local people and other stakeholders on planned road improvements;
- jointly identifying emerging problems in local neighbourhoods and transparently following-up remedial measures.

The recommendations presented in this report concern organizations potentially interested in WeGovNow deployment, policy-makers more generally and the research community, as follows.

Recommendations for potential WeGovNow deployed organizations:

- #1 Guide WeGovNow deployment planning by a consolidated strategy towards stakeholder participation in local policy development that goes beyond mere usage of the online platform.
- #2 Stakeholder participation process models to be supported by the online features available from WeGovNow need to be defined locally.
- #3 Take your time to obtain a detailed understanding of the current working processes, priorities and future direction of all parties to be involved in WeGovNow deployment.
- #4 Appropriate risk assessment and management procedures should be put in place.
- #5 Plan and implement process change in a multi-departmental and/or multi-stakeholder WeGovNow deployment environment.
- #6 Establish mechanisms for awareness raising and dialogue directed towards a “cultural change” towards increased self-organisation.
- #7 Pay appropriate attention to legal requirements right from the beginning.

Recommendations for policy makers:

- #8 Examine current e-Government legal and regulatory frameworks with a view to their receptiveness towards we-Government.
- #9 We-Government should be considered as a long-term investment rather than a means to achieve short-term rationalisation effects in public administrations.
- #10 Support awareness rising and mutual exchange about we-Government.

Recommendation for further research:

- #11 Beyond technology development further evidence on long-term impacts of we-Government should be generated.

1 Introduction

This report (D5.6) presents strategic recommendations intended to potentially trigger further activities beyond the duration of the WeGovNow project. These have been derived from the experiences gained throughout the validation pilots conducted during the last year of the project's overall duration, as presented in another report (c.f. D3.4). Some content from D3.4 is presented again throughout the current report, with a view to enable reading it as a self-standing document.

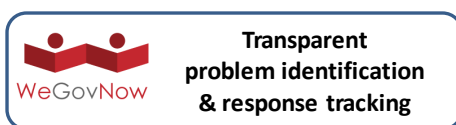
To enable reading these recommendations within context, the following Chapter 2 presents a very brief overview of the WeGovNow project and its main outcomes. This is then followed by a presentation of the actual recommendations according to three stakeholder groups to be addressed, namely potential deployment organisations of WeGovNow, policy makers more generally and the research community (Chapter 3).

2 Overview of the WeGovNow project

The WeGovNow project aims at making a contribution to the transformation from viewing citizens as mere customers of public services towards what has occasionally been called We-Government, considering citizens as partners. To this end, an online engagement platform has been developed during the initial project phase (D3.5). During the final project year, this platform has been piloted under day-to-day conditions in terms of a publicly available online service in three municipalities, namely the City of Turin (IT), the London Borough of Southwark (UK) and San Donà di Pave (IT).

2.1 The WeGovNow pilot platform

In contrast to commonly available single-purpose civic engagement tools such as online citizen surveys or petition systems, WeGovNow represents an online eco-system that supports co-creating responses to local policy challenges by the public administration, the residents, the civil society and local businesses. In operational terms, the pilot platform provides an integrated “tool box” enabling the support of diverse stakeholder participation process models rather than a single “work flow”. To this end, WeGovNow provides an integrated set of core functions as graphically summarised in Figure 1. These core functions can be briefly described as follows.



Highlight problems in the community with WeGovNow Improve My City: This WeGovNow component enables the pilot users to bring a problem they identify in their neighbourhood to the immediate

attention of a responsible party, be it a unit within the public administration or a named non-government organisation. Transparency on whether identified problems are immediately solvable or require further co-development of an adequate response is achieved by means of issue tracking functionalities.

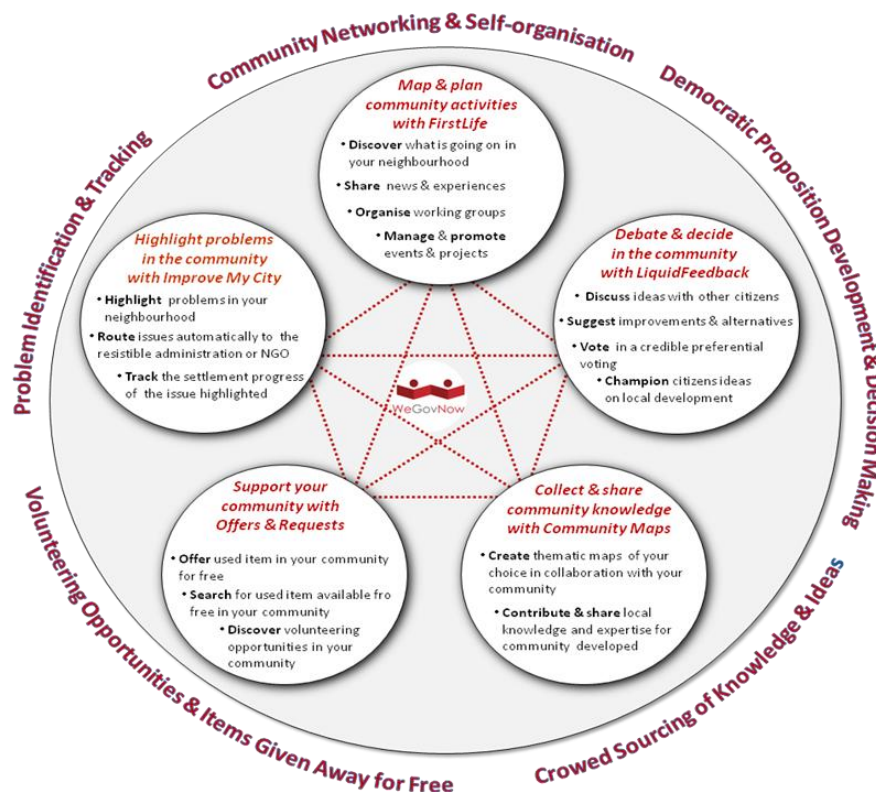


Debate and decide with WeGovNow LiquidFeedback:

This WeGovNow component enables the pilot users to feed own proposals into a structured and transparent process of collective proposition development and

democratic decision making in terms of voting, whereby the voting result may not necessarily binding to the public administration in a legal sense. In particular, the process allows considering pros and cons, enhancing existing propositions and suggesting alternatives as part of a structured and transparent deliberation process. Even if a subsequent voting result may not necessarily be legally binding, this WeGovNow component supports informed decision making by responsible representatives based on the popular vote.

Figure 1 – Overview of the WeGovNow core components visible to the end user



Community news,
networking &
self-organisation

Map & plan community activities with WeGovNow

First Life: Generally speaking, this WeGovNow component allows the pilot users to stay informed about what is going on in their municipality, promote

events and on-site activities happening throughout their municipality as well as network around things of interest along a timeline. In particular, the pilot users are able to create a newsfeed on places on a map, rather than on a personal page. By taking spatial aspects as focal point for user interaction, this WeGovNow component features community driven news sharing, networking and self-organisation in the sense of a social network based on a local map.



Crowded sourcing of
knowledge & ideas on
specified policy themes

Collect and share knowledge and ideas with WeGovNow Community Maps:

In short, this WeGovNow component enables “crowded sourcing” of knowledge, ideas and aspirations in relation to

specified policy themes, thereby taking spatial aspects of a given policy theme as a focal point of civic online engagement. The pilot users contribute their knowledge, expertise, interests and opinions through the medium of interactive local maps designed around particular policy themes which are to be collectively addressed. Such interactive maps can

easily be created and published with help of WeGovNow as a smart way of participatory community engagement and planning.



Community exchange on volunteering and items that are given away for free:

This WeGovNow component in particular enables the pilot users to post offers for items and services they give away for free within the

local community. Also, local non-government organisations can present opportunities for volunteering.

2.2 Overview of the local validation pilots

Generally, the pilot user was free to utilise the pilot platform as they wished. For piloting purposes, the three pilot municipalities have nevertheless developed a range of policy scenarios. These were directed towards exploiting the capabilities provided by the pilot platform for addressing local policy challenges that had emerged independent of the WeGovNow project. In this context, the pilot platform was used with a view to:

- involving NGOs and citizen in decision making about cultural projects to be funded in the framework of an urban regeneration programme;
- co-developing and co-managing public spaces, thereby involving residents and other stakeholders as well as different departments of the public administration;
- developing sustainable local mobility solutions and facilitating sustainable practices in the community in line with a municipal sustainability strategy;
- promoting community cohesion by supporting cross-faith collaboration in joint activity in line with a municipal faith group strategy;
- stimulating the interest of young people to become involved in local public matters in general and to engage in employment and training in particular;
- collating differentiated feedback from local people and other stakeholders on planned road improvements;
- jointly identifying emerging problems in local neighbourhoods and transparently following-up remedial measures.

To this end, nine stakeholder participation process models were designed by the pilot municipalities, based in different ways on the various online functions of the WeGovNow platform. For illustrative purposes, one of these is summarized in Textbox 1 overleaf. With help of this participation model, the City of Turin adopted the WeGovNow pilot platform for co-developing certain sections of an urban park, the Parco Dora, in the framework of a national program for suburban development. Apart from citizens a range of other stakeholders were involved including, amongst other groups, a formalised multi-stakeholder group that existed already prior to WeGovNow (for further details c.f. D2.6 and D4.3).

Textbox 1 – Summary of stakeholder involvement in the “Parco Dora” policy scenario

How the municipal administration could utilise WeGovNow:

The public administration prepared and held a series of offline co-design workshops. In parallel, the public administration monitored proposals and ideas posted by the citizens through WeGovNow, and systemised these as an input to a series of subsequent offline workshops. After each off-line workshop outcomes were systemised by the public administration and fed back into WeGovNow respectively. Proposals having emerged throughout this iterative loop were also assessed by the public administration in relations their feasibility and compliance with any requirements potentially emerging from relevant laws / regulations, e.g. when it comes to personal safety, public procurement processes and the like.



How the formalised Multi-Stakeholder Group could utilize WeGovNow:

An established group of local stakeholders representing citizen networks, associations and local businesses supported the public administration in conceptually planning and promoting the overall participation process.

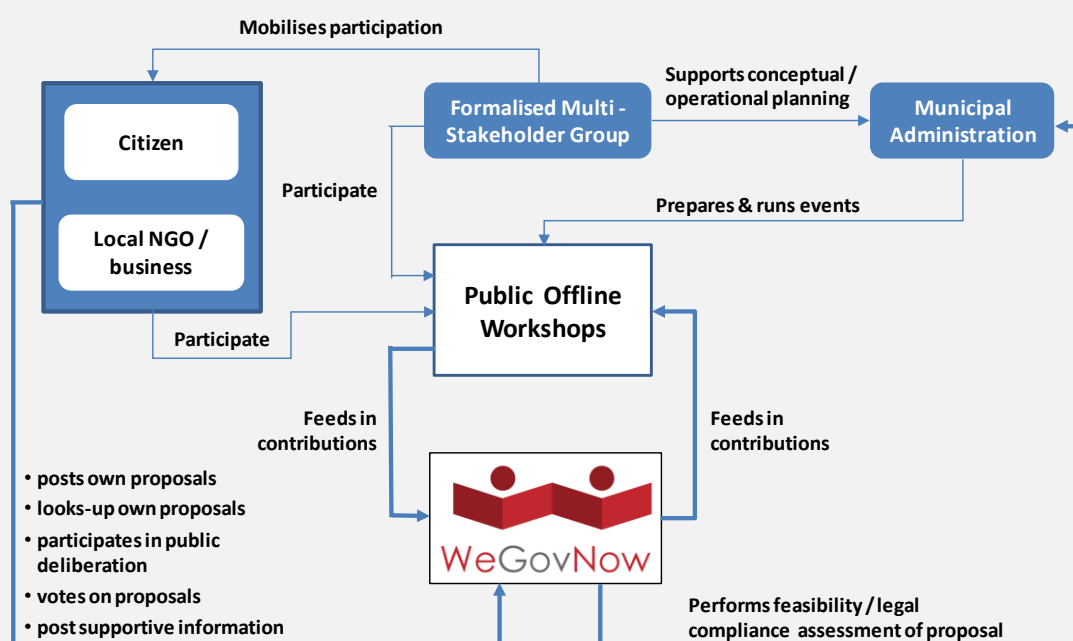
How local NGOs and businesses could utilise WeGovNow

Representatives of local NGOs and businesses participated in the offline workshops organised by the public administration. At the same time they were able to post proposals for public deliberation and additional supportive information on WeGovNow.

How the citizen could utilise WeGovNow:

Citizens participated in the offline workshops organised by the public administration. At the same time they were able to post proposals for public deliberation and additional supportive information on WeGovNow and vote on proposals posted for public deliberation. At the same time citizens were able to post on an interactive map of the Parco Dora area how they have up to now typically used the park.

Stakeholder participation process model:



2.3 Overview of pilot outcomes

Each of the pilot municipalities provided a publicly accessible online service to citizens aged 16 years and above upon registration to the WeGovNow pilot platform. A user validation process was put in place to ensure that access was enabled only to the intended target population. Users registering to the WeGovNow pilot service were instantly verified by means of an automated process. Only in cases where the automated validation process failed for some reason, an incoming registration request was validated manually by the pilot municipalities. Users could also explicitly request manual verification. Of the 9.976 pilot user accounts registered to platform across the three pilot municipalities, 79% were instantly verified by means of the automated verification process. The remaining share was verified manually.

In terms of age the pilot users spread quite widely across different age bands. The majority (80%) was aged between 20 and 59 years. Roughly one in ten pilot users was aged between 60 and 69 years. The youngest (16-19 years) and the oldest (70+ years) age bands were represented with 4% and 5% respectively. Slightly more than one half (56%) of the pilot users were female users. All in all, 22.324 single usage activities were observed across the different functional components integrated within the overall platform. Of these, 26% concerned the posting of original contributions by registered pilot users and 16% concerned the subsequent updating or deletion of own posts. The remaining share (58%) concerned responses to contributions made by others.

When it comes to the perceived functional utility of the platform features in relation to the policy scenarios piloted, the stakeholder feedback suggests their usefulness in terms of:

- strengthening the voice of the public;
- reaching out into the local community;
- achieving a better quality of the public discourse;
- and achieving multilateral stakeholder interaction.

Various benefits were perceived to flow from the platform's functional utility to the different stakeholder groups involved in the local pilots. They concern, on the one hand, commonly accepted democratic values such as enhanced democratic legitimacy of administrative decision making. On the other hand, utilitarian aspects such as better informed decision making came to the fore as well.

A closer look at the individual policy scenarios that were piloted reveals that the level of participation ultimately achieved varies quite a lot across individual scenarios (Table 1). While for instance more than 10.000 contributions were counted in the context of the "AxTO" policy scenario less than 50 occurred in the context of "Youth & Employment" scenario. The varying number of contributions observed across the different policy scenarios suggests that, beyond the mere functionalities encoded into the platform's software, other structural factors seem to have exerted an influence on whether or not citizens felt attracted by WeGovNow. The recommendation presented in the following sections take

account of the evidence gathered throughout the local pilots in this regard. (for further details c.f. D3.4)

Table 1 – Summary of contributions uploaded onto the pilot platform by policy scenario

| Short title | No of pilot contributions made through the WeGovNow pilot platform |
|----------------------|--|
| “Neighbourhood “ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 68 descriptions of issues to be addressed by assigned party uploaded - 23 pictures uploaded - 11 uploaded issues mapped - 5 comments on uploaded issues posted - 41 uploaded issues closed by assigned responsible party |
| “AxTO” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 73 cultural initiatives proposed by NGOs for public funding uploaded - 12.217 votes casted on which indicatives should receive public funding |
| “Parco Dora” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 synthesis reports about onsite co-development workshops uploaded - 18 posts on how the wider area is currently utilised uploaded - 7 elaborated proposals on how the public space should be developed uploaded - 84 votes casted on proposals for redeveloping the public space |
| “Energy Efficiency” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 125 contributions concerning new biking lanes uploaded - 36 pledges for sustainable behaviour uploaded |
| “Youth Engagement” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 58 empty shops mapped and related ideas uploaded - 444 places of interested mapped and descriptions uploaded - 7 initiative uploaded for deliberation |
| “Youth & Employment” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 28 employment related request for uploaded |
| “Highways” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 156 proposals on road improvement uploaded |
| “Faith Groups” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 86 description of local faith group activities uploaded |

3 Strategic recommendations

In the following sections a number of recommendations are presented. These are not intended to merely repeat information presented in other document generated throughout the WeGovNow project. Rather, they have been derived from the experiences throughout the local WeGovNow validation pilots conducted during the last year of the project's overall duration, as presented in another report (D3.4). Nevertheless, some content from D3.4 is presented again in the remainder of current report, with a view to enable reading it as a self-standing document.

3.1 Recommendations for WeGovNow deployment organisations

Wider participation of local stakeholders in policy development and/or implementation is unlikely to be achieved merely by going online with WeGovNow. An assessment of the pilot outcomes sheds light on a number of aspects deserving attention if sustainable participation of local stakeholders is to be achieved (c.f. D3.4). Two perspectives need to be taken into account, namely the perspective of the citizen's and the one of the public administration intending to operate the online platform in a given local setting.

When it comes to the citizens and other local stakeholders, the WeGovNow pilots have shown that there is no reason to assume that people would suddenly become passionate about the intricate policy decisions or administrative processes that impact their lives, just because a powerful online platform becomes available to them. Rather, the pilots suggest that the people who are supposed to use WeGovNow to influence politics and governance tend to be busy, and that there are plenty of ways they can spend their time aside from on the pilot platform. They may for instance have parents with health problems or need to pick the children from school or they may have other important tasks and interests on their personal agendas. In fact, people will make a decision whether the time they are willing to invest in engaging through WeGovNow is worth the time they would sacrifice from other activities or life tasks. The interest in engaging in public matters through WeGovNow thus depends to a large extend on peoples' personal agendas. Against this background, the adoption of WeGovNow by the citizens and other local stakeholders not at least depends on their perception as to whether they (c.f. D4.3):

- have the possibility to indeed exert an influences on policy development or implementation by utilising WeGovNow;
- are directly affected by or concerned about policy challenges or issues under discussion on WeGovNow;
- feel receiving intangible rewards when engaging in local matters through WeGovNow;
- have to bear intangible costs when engaging in local matters through WeGovNow.

When adopting the perspective of the local administration, attracting wider usage for WeGovNow requires taking due account not only the perspective of the citizens' but also of

the perspectives of various parties potentially concerned within the public administration. In both regards, local pilots have shown that the online features provided by WeGovNow should be seen as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Sustainable use of WeGovNow therefore requires embedding the technical infrastructure into a comprehensive strategy towards stakeholder participation in the co-redevelopment of local policies and/or services, both politically and administratively. Beyond a political will to give people a greater say in the shaping of local policies and/or public services, such an approach therefore also requires cross-cutting co-ordination within the local administration if sustainable outcomes are to be achieved. Amongst other aspects, these considerations are reflected by a set of recommendations presented throughout the remainder of this document

#1 Guide WeGovNow deployment planning by a consolidated strategy towards stakeholder participation in local policy development that goes beyond mere usage of the online platform

The integrated set of online features available from WeGovNow has been shown to be capable of supporting different strategies for the co-development of policies, be it in terms of giving people a formalised role in decision making or in terms of stimulating social capital for the public good, or both (c.f. D3.4). In this context, different decision making models were developed in the three pilot municipalities for being supported by WeGovNow, thereby reflecting local circumstances in various regards. A consolidated strategy towards stakeholder participation in local policy development and/or implementations therefore needs to guide further WeGovNow deployment planning on the operational level. To this end, agreement should be reached in what way current decision power is to be shifted - if at all - and how stakeholder knowledge, expertise and opinions flowing onto the platform are ultimately to be brought to bear on the further shaping of policy measures or administrative practices external to the online platform.

The ultimate outcomes of strategy development will enable a transparent communication vis-a-vis local stakeholders ultimately to become involved in civic engagement with help of WeGovNow, be it individual citizens, civic society organisations or local businesses. Transparency is likely to influence potential users' expectations about what will happen throughout the participation process supported by the online platform, and whether they may decide to invest time and effort in getting involved. Strategic considerations may not at least exert an influence on the configuring of the online platform as a technical infrastructure for stakeholder engagement. As a general rule, the various configuration options that come with individual WeGovNow components should be applied in a way that facilitates, not controls, the participation. When it comes to some platform components, it is for instance possible to restrict contributions the users can make to selected policy fields or topics. As a general rule, users should feel encouraged to address policy themes or topics as they wish, rather than merely being consulted in relation to very narrowly defined topics or policy options, albeit the latter can in principle be achieved with the online platform as well.

Beyond strategic co-ordination in relation to the aspects discussed above, the political will to give people a greater say in public matters should also be ensured in advance. Generally, this step should involve relevant expertise across all municipal departments that are potentially affected by the WeGovNow deployment, and it should cut across the deployment organisation's hierarchy ranging from the strategic to the operational decision levels.

#2 Stakeholder participation process models to be supported by the online features available from WeGovNow need to be defined locally

When compared with hitherto existing civic engagement tools, WeGovNow enables engagement with local stakeholders in a variety of ways. This opens up opportunities for implementing entirely new pathways for the co-development of adequate responses to local policy challenges. At the same time, the comparatively wide range of engagement features generally available from WeGovNow represents a challenge. In contrast to established e-government services, there is no single, pre-defined "workflow" to be followed internally and externally to the public administration. Rather, a number of platform functions can be combined in a flexible manner to achieve the desired co-production of outputs. Guided, by a high-level strategy towards stakeholder involvement as discussed above, the next step should therefore involve designing one or more participation processes models feeding into the more strategic goals ultimately to be achieved, e.g. to increase democratic legitimacy for certain decisions to be taken or to ensure that public investment is based on more people's expressed needs, or both. A number of generic requirements on designing sustainable participation processes with help of WeGovNow can be derived from the local pilots. These are discussed in the following subsections.

The assignment of roles and responsibilities across the overall stakeholder participation process

Roles and responsibilities of administrative units and/or particular staff need to be clearly defined, e.g. when it comes to directly interacting with citizens through the online platform or otherwise acting upon posted contributions. Careful consideration needs to be given to resources locally available for putting a desired participation process design into practice with help of the WeGovNow functionalities. Table 2 overleaf summarises some key characteristics of the different types of participation processes designed by the municipalities around the WeGovNow platform during the local pilots. They not at least tend to exert an influence on resources required for their implementation (c.f. D4.3). Typically, established work flows will need to be changed, thereby frequently cutting across established intra-organisational and sometimes even inter-organisational boundaries. This may not infrequently require the commitment and approval of more than a single decision maker internally and externally to the local administration

Table 2 – Structural characteristics of the stakeholder participation processes models supported by the WeGovNow pilot platform during the local pilots

| Process design dimension | Process design centred on case-based decision making | Process design centred on social capital |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Strategic participation goal | Collate opinions and preferences from the citizens and/or other stakeholders on specified policy issues and/or choices | Build up a sustainable WeGovNow community identifying policy issues and developing appropriate responses by itself |
| Participation process transparency | Tangible participation goal and scope which can be easily communicated to potential platform users | Abstract participation goal and scope requiring a higher level of communication complexity vis-à-vis potential platform users |
| Participation process promotion | Requires public relations strategies and means commonly applied for campaigning purposes in a time – limited manner | Requires innovative promotional strategies and measures designed to last of a longer duration |
| Time perspective | Short term perspective / fixed time line | Long term perspective / open ended |

The nature and volume of stake holder interactions that can be expected to occur through the online platform

To enable meeting strategic high-level goals, stakeholder participation process design with help of WeGovNow requires sufficient attention being paid to tangible outputs which can principally be co-created with citizens and/or other stakeholders. In practice, the type and volumes of stakeholder interactions occurring over the online platform typically varies quite a lot, ranging e.g. from casting a vote or mapping a place on a local map over posting a short statement or uploading supportive information (documents, pictures, web links) up to posting an extensively elaborated proposal for action. Although it seems generally desirable to achieve widest possible participation in terms of numbers, qualitative aspects deserve attention as well, particularly when it comes to issues that are complex and solicits creative solutions. Large participation numbers may not represent a key criterion in every case. This may particularly hold true for topics where the focus of stakeholder engagement is on looking for inspiration, learning and discovery rather than primarily on enhancing the democratic legitimacy of decisions to be made. It may also be useful to design participation processes involving complementary online and offline engagement activities, with a view to capitalising on the time and space transcending capabilities of the online platform, while at the same time exploiting the possibilities provided by off-line engagement events (c.f. D2.6 and D3.4).

The legal and regulatory framework conditions that impact on the design of local stakeholder participation processes

Legal and regulatory framework conditions may have an impact on the particular design of a participation process to be supported by WeGovNow. Generally, the WeGovNow pilot platform was implemented in the three local pilot municipalities in compliance with European data protection legislation, namely the General Data Protection Regulation which has taken effect almost half way through project's pilot phase. Legislation / regulation enacted on the national or local level may need to be considered as well, for instance rules on civic participation stipulated in municipal law or municipal ordinances concerning local matters to be addressed with help of WeGovNow. The City Council of Turin, one of the project's pilot municipalities, has for instance adopted a regulation on the collaboration between citizens and the public administration for the regeneration of urban commons some years ago which had to be taken into account when designing a local participation process relying on WeGovNow features for co-developing an approach towards the conversion of former industrial area (c.f. D3.4).

#3 Take your time to obtain a detailed understanding of the current working processes, priorities and future direction of all parties to be involved in WeGovNow deployment

Depending on the given local context, there may be different motivations for potentially deploying WeGovNow. In some cases, the interest may stem from a high-level strategic review of municipal priorities. Or deploying WeGovNow may be considered by a municipality due to the over-burdening of financial or other resources. The local pilots suggest however that neither civic participation technology in general nor WeGovNow in particular should be seen as magic when it comes to better coping with resource pressure. Generally, it has turned out as difficult to comprehensively assess efficiency gains achieved across the variety of stakeholder participation process designs that have ultimately been piloted. Some general conclusions can nevertheless be drawn in this respect (c.f. D4.3):

- When adopting a short term perspective, efficiency gains are most likely to be achievable when it comes to reaching out into the local community, in particular where stakeholder participation process designs are implemented triggering extensive platform utilisation in terms of large user numbers.
- Likewise, efficiency gains are likely to be achievable from the perspective of the citizens and other local stakeholders through the time and space transcending capabilities of the pilot platform. Participation through WeGovNow does not depend on the user's ability to take part in the overall process at a certain time or venue. This holds potentials for reducing / avoiding intangible costs, e.g. by reducing / avoiding negative impacts on other important life tasks or duties.
- WeGovNow was seen to be helpful by the local stakeholders in creating policies and service which ultimately fit better with the peoples' needs and expectations. This may in itself lead to more efficient solutions in the longer run. Apart from this,

WeGovNow was perceived in the local pilots to help in enhancing the transparency of local policy and service development as well as democratic legitimacy of decisions to be taken in this context. Likewise WeGovNow was seen helpful in building understanding and trust and improving relationships with public institutions as well as between individuals and groups locally. All this may reduce conflict at a later stage and thus reduce associated efforts or even monetary costs.

Although efficiency improvement potentials could thus be identified across the local pilots, it has generally turned out to be problematic to quantify qualitative outcomes of WeGovNow-supported stakeholder participation processes, e.g. enhanced democratic legitimacy of administrative decisions. The complexity of the stakeholder engagement processes designs that have emerged throughout the local pilots, thereby focussing democratic values as well as on utilitarian aspects such as better informed decision making, mean their long term outcomes cannot be reduced to a simple monetary calculation alone (for some generic cost dominions identified c.f. D3.4). Not at least, they will depend on the ultimate design of the stakeholder participation processes to be supported by the various WeGovNow features.

Against this background, for WeGovNow-based civic participation to meet expectations a process is required which gathers together the required knowledge and information across all municipal departments as well as relevant stakeholders external to the municipality, to be involved in WeGovNow deployment so that an informed decision can be made as to what expectation are to be ultimately met and how to proceed from there. Reaching, informing and engaging relevant stakeholders in a dialogue on joint strategy building is an important prerequisite for establishing a valid “value case” for all. The effort and time required for acquiring and consolidating knowledge concerning the expectations on WeGovNow which are ultimately to be met, on whether and how these can be met, and on related impacts on current practices and service delivery can easily be underestimated.

#4 Appropriate risk assessment and management procedures should be put in place

The local pilots have suggested a number of positive potentials generally provided by WeGovNow for the co-development of local policies and public services as summarised in Table 3 overleaf. Nevertheless, the pilots have shown that co-developing local policies with help of WeGovNow potentially bears certain risk as well. Not all risks initially perceived by the local stakeholders did finally materialise; creating exaggerated expectations at the part of the citizens on public service delivery that may not be addressable by the public administration due to lacking resources for instance. A sustainable approach towards civic participation with help of WeGovNow should nevertheless be sensitive towards potential risks. Being clear about the purposes of engaging with local stakeholders, and taking the perspective of the stakeholders to be involved seriously, seems the best way to avoid the risk of exaggerated expectations. The development of a comprehensive participation strategy at an early stage, and prior to the launch of the WeGovNow platform, should therefore also include reflecting on potential risks and options for mitigation.

One source of risks perceived in the framework of the WeGovNow pilots concerns legal aspects, as will be further elaborated in the subsequent recommendation #6. Here, the main issues are to avoid objectionable material being posted to the platform and material violating copy rights. The best way to mitigate this risk is the elaboration of clear Terms of Use (ToU) statement promising to remove posts that threaten users, use foul language or are basically spam.

Table 3 – Stakeholder related impacts of WeGovNow supported

| Administration | NGOs/business | Citizens |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better fit of policy and services with people's experiences and needs • Better mastering of future uncertainty by tapping people's knowledge and experience to design better policies and services • Higher transparency of policy / service development / implementation processes • Enhanced acknowledgement and valuation of citizens by knowledge/inputs by public administration • Enhanced reputation due to increased democratic legitimacy of governance processes, e.g. due to shared decision power and/or transparency • Efficiency gains due to electronic information exchange / communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher visibility throughout the local community • Enhanced access to participation processes time / location wise • Enhanced understanding of the purposes and processes involved in designing and delivering policies and programmes • Enhanced influence on improving policies and services affecting citizens • Enhanced accountability for the results of policies and programmes • Enhanced acknowledgement and valuation of citizens by knowledge/inputs by public administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances access to participation processes time / location wise • Enhanced understanding of the purposes and processes involved in designing and delivering policies and programmes • Enhanced influence on improving policies and services affecting citizens • Enhanced accountability for the results of policies and programmes • Enhanced acknowledgement and valuation of citizens by knowledge/inputs by public administration • Opportunities for self-organisation of communities around issues they see as important |

Another source of risk perceived in the framework of the pilots concerned technical issues potentially occurring during the use of the platform if there was no service support provided to address or rectify these. This has the potential to expose the municipality to reputational risk and could impact the potential uptake and use of the platform more broadly. Such risks can be addressed by agreeing and implementing clear processes and responsibilities for first-level support vis-à-vis the platform users and second-level support vis-à-vis staff operating backend of the WeGovNow platform.

#5 Plan and implement process change in a multi-departmental and/or multi-stakeholder WeGovNow deployment environment

As has become clear from the hitherto presented recommendations, simply adding WeGovNow to existing working practices is not likely to work well. Deploying WeGovNow tends to affect established roles and responsibilities internal/external to the public administration. Existing working practices, roles and responsibilities may need to be re-engineered to embrace WeGovNow under an appropriate migration control. Any process innovations potentially required should be driven by, and respond to, clearly defined objectives of participatory policy development/implementation, a mere “technology push” approach cannot be expected to deliver the hoped-for benefits. Practical strategies to support change and promote engagement across the various departments and/or external stakeholders involved may be required. A dedicated effort may help in convincing (selected) staff / volunteers at each administrative unit / organisation involved in WeGovNow deployment to ‘champion’ any WeGovNow-based participation processes that are to be newly established.

#6 Establish mechanisms for awareness raising and dialogue directed towards a “cultural change” towards increased self-organisation

The local pilots also suggest that in particular those stakeholder participation process models that have focused on stimulating social capital for the public good rather than giving the public greater say in case-by-case decision making may require a longer breath for achieving sustainable participation. In most local settings this is very likely to require a broader “cultural change” toward increased self-organisation. This aspect concerns public administration as well as other institutional stakeholders that may need to become involved in WeGovNow, e.g. local civic society organisations. Organisational cultures and resistance to change, as well as a lack of organisational capacity and willingness to innovate, may represent potential barriers to WeGovNow uptake. One approach that can help reduce resistance to change and break down barriers between different stakeholder groups is to set up mechanisms that allow for a genuine iterative dialogue on potential innovation. If stakeholders are involved in discussions on reform, they are more likely to have a sense of ownership over the outcomes of this process, which in turn can help to facilitate the adoption and acceptance of new structures more generally, including solutions such as WeGovNow. In a short term perspective, concentration on “low hanging fruits” in terms of promoting more self-organisation through WeGovNow in relation to very specific, selected local matters is perceived representing an auspicious strategy in this respect.

#5 Pay appropriate attention to legal requirements right from the beginning

Please note that the following elaboration shall by no means be considered as legal advice. Legal advice should always be obtained from an authorised body. No liability will be accepted by the authors of this document in relation to the correctness and completeness of the content provided.

In case WeGovNow is deployed by a municipality or any other organisation or body, a legal relationship will be established between the pilot service provider (pilot municipality) and the pilot service user (citizen, NGO, local business). As far as the processing of personal data is concerned European data protection legislation, namely the General Data Protection regulation (GDPR), creates obligations for the party (e.g. a municipality) offering the WeGovNow platform in terms of an online service (“data controllers”) to citizens (“data subjects”). In the following it is discussed what aspects deserve attention in this respect prior to deploying WeGovNow in the public domain.

All terms and rules by which the users must agree in order to use the municipal pilot service should be set out in a terms of use (ToU) statement. Generally speaking, the ToU need to be easily understandable by the pilot users. A municipality intending to deploy WeGovNow may have its specific ToU requirements. Nevertheless, some general questions deserve attention in this context.

What policy is to be adopted towards underage pilot users?

The GDPR establishes specific rules for protecting children’s personal data (Article 8). If an organisation offers online services (‘information society services’) to children and relies on consent to collect information about them, children can give their own consent to this processing at the age of 16 (the member states will have the possibility to lower this age to a minimum of 13 years). If a child is younger then it will be necessary to collect consent from a person holding ‘parental responsibility’. The latter would require establishing a suitable consent procedure.

What should be explicitly forbidden?

The ToU statement can be seen as a legal basis for excluding particular users from the WeGovNow platform in case specific rules or principles are violated. By means of the ToU users should be informed that by agreeing to use the pilot service, they are also agreeing to not do certain things. Any negative uses that should explicitly be forbidden should be anticipated, e.g. to abuse, harass, threaten, impersonate or intimidate any person. It should also be anticipated what will happen if a user indeed infringes on these rules. In a positive sense, it should be anticipated what the purposes of the pilot service is.

What policy is to be adopted towards user generated content?

The users will be able to upload different types of content onto the WeGovNow platform (e.g. photos). The ToU should make clear that certain content uploaded by the users, will be taken down if certain rules are violated, e.g. a photo which is found to be a copyright infringement. Also it may need to be ensured that all content posted or otherwise uploaded to the pilot platform will be the sole responsibility of the user from which such content originates, and that the municipality offering the WeGovNow service won't be liable for the correctness of any information provided by users. Generally, it should be anticipated which parties should be allowed to utilise user generated content and for which purpose.

How to meet obligations concerning user rights?

The GDPR puts an obligation on data controllers to ensure data subjects can rectify remove or block incorrect data about themselves. The GDPR in particular stipulates a number of rights for individuals as follows:

- the right to be informed;
- the right of access;
- the right to rectification;
- the right to erasure;
- the right to restrict processing;
- the right to data portability;
- the right to object; and
- the right not to be subject to automated decision-making including profiling.

To be able to respond to user request in relation to these rights, it will be necessary to identify in advance what personal data is held within the individual WeGovNow platform components, where it comes from, who it is shared it with, how its processing can be restricted and how it can be erased. Also, it seems useful to anticipate in advance how to react if a user asks to have their personal data deleted, for example. In such a case a municipality receiving such a request from one of its citizens should be able to rely upon a commonly agreed to monitor how the user claim is met and provide informed feedback on this matter to the pilot user.

3.2 Recommendations for policy makers

#8 Examine current e-Government legal and regulatory frameworks with a view to their receptiveness towards we-Government

According to a recent study on digital innovation in the public domain, views that power has shifted to the 'customer' have gained ground over the past few years not only in the private

sector but in the public sector as well.¹ Such developments have nourished hopes that the transition from ‘e-Government’ (citizen as customer) to ‘we-Government’ (citizen as partner) may represent the next big step in the public sector.² Some scholars envisage that we may witness even the emergence of a new kind of “social contract” in which society places greater trust in the public to play a far more active role in the functioning of their government.³ However, despite much experimentation having happened over the last decade, sustainable progress on the ground seems to have yet largely fallen below expectations.⁴ The experiences gained with the local WeGovNow pilots point into the direction that there is room for making the e-Government regulatory framework more conducive to the co-development of local polices and the co-delivery of community services with help of emerging we-Government solutions such as WeGovNow.

This aspect may be illustrated by means of the following example. During the course of the project, concerns about liability risks have for instance been identified as a barrier to the public piloting of the full range of functionalities which were in principle available from the WeGovNow pilot platform in the three pilot municipalities. Although most functionality could finally be piloted, one of participation components initially developed by the project was considered not being suitable for piloting in a public environment. During the course of extensive engagement activities conducted with local stakeholders prior to the launching of the project’s pilot phase, based on the available prototype strong concerns were raised in particular by representatives of public administrations. These concerned the envisaged automatic matching of demand and supply of voluntary personal support, e.g. when it comes to users offering help to older persons or young families living in the community. It was highlighted by municipal stakeholders that any municipality operating the WeGovNow platform could be held legally liable for damages or fraudulent behaviour potentially occurring in the context of supportive activities/services mediated through the platform, even if these were delivered on a voluntary basis. Taking such a risk was considered unacceptable by the municipalities independent whether the platform was operated in a pilot setting during the project duration or afterwards in a mainstream setting. Also, a build-in reputation mechanism as it had been envisaged so far was considered as not being suitable for mitigating the legal liability risk perceived. The legal liability issue identified at that stage was assessed as representing a “show stopper” for the public piloting of the

¹ Tinholt D. et. al. (2014): Delivering on the European Advantage? ‘How European governments can and should benefit from innovative public services’. eGovernment Benchmark. FINAL INSIGHT REPORT. A study prepared for the European Commission DG Communications Networks, Content.

² C.f. e.g. Neelie Kroes (2010): My vision for eGovernment, and how to make it real. "Lift-Off towards Open Government" conference, Brussels, 15 December 2010. SPEECH/10/752. available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-10-752_en.htm?locale=en (latest access: 6.01.2019).

³ Linders, D. (2012): From e-government to we-government: Defining a typology for citizen coproduction in the age of social media. *Government Information Quarterly* 29, 446–454.

⁴ Tinholt D. et. al. (2014): Delivering on the European Advantage? ‘How European governments can and should benefit from innovative public services’. eGovernment Benchmark. FINAL INSIGHT REPORT. Prepared for the European Commission DG Communications Networks, Content.

entire WeGovNow platform, and for its further mainstreaming beyond the project duration as well.

This example illustrates that we-Government solutions such as WeGovNow may bring up new questions for which the current e-Government legal and regulatory framework does not provide sufficient guidance on how to deal with dilemmas potentially emerging from these. WeGovNow's Trusted Market Place, for instance, triggered the question how best to balance the protection of the citizens with their potential right to take risks in relation to ICT-based innovation. The current e-Government legal and regulatory framework seems however to reflect the "traditional" concept of e-government ('citizen as a customer') in terms of regulating privacy, data protection, re-use of public data and so on, rather than addressing new dilemmas potentially emerging from new ways of service co-creation ('citizen as a partner'). Against this background, there would be merit in examining the current e-Government legal and regulatory frameworks in a systematic manner with a view to their receptiveness towards we-Government. The EU could have a useful role in supporting a more concerted focus and effort to address this aspect.

#9 We-Government should be considered as a long-term investment rather than a means to achieve short-term rationalisation effects in public administrations

WeGovNow offers a number of short term benefits over its "off-line" variants when it comes to fostering collective action, including the fact that it is easier to exchange information and make group decisions at a larger scale. However, the local pilots suggest that WeGovNow is likely to enfold its transformational impacts only in the longer run, by acting as a catalyst of change towards transforming public administration processes. The promised benefit does not simply come from digitising information or already established processes. Rather, they come from leveraging the new digital infrastructure for making public administrations more responsive and provide better services. While WeGovNow delivers the required technical innovation, an effort is required to be made by the public administration to redesign existing administrative processes to achieve this. Time and resources need to be invested in the development of innovative stake holder participation process models and related administrative work flows that go beyond mere platform usage. When investing in the development of such process models, it is also important to remember that there is no "one-size-fits-all" model for achieving success. Decisions to invest time and resources must therefore include strategies that fit given local settings, and be designed to succeed by meeting clearly identified policy objectives when it comes to the envisaged participation processes to be supported by WeGovNow (as discussed earlier).

#10 Support awareness rising and mutual exchange about we-Government

Policy-makers can play an important role in promoting participatory policy development and implementation by supporting awareness-raising efforts among relevant stakeholders and facilitating the exchange of good practice on successful approaches. This could also include

the development of strategies directed towards providing relevant organisations with hands-on advice for local participation planning.

3.3 Recommendations concerning further research

#11 Beyond technology development further evidence on long-term impacts of we-Government should be generated

Based on the experiences made so far, immediate benefits can be gained by WeGovNow in relation to a better outreach into the local community, e.g. to those typically not participating in more traditional engagements means such as town hall meetings as discussed earlier. The evidence generated by WeGovNow points, however, into the direction that many of the benefits potentially flowing from we-Government to the different stakeholder groups engaging through the online platform may fully materialise only in the longer run. At the same time, there is a perceived risk that in some cases exaggerated expectations may be voiced by WeGovNow users which might not be accomplishable by the public administration in a straight forward manner, e.g. due to given economic, legal or other constraints. This did not, however, materialise during the WeGovNow pilots. There would nevertheless be merit in extending the currently available evidence base on long-term impacts, e.g. as to whether such perceived risks would indeed materialise with a wider deployment of civic participation solutions such as WeGovNow, and if so how such risks could effectively be mitigated.

Annex: H2020 – European Project Policy Brief Template

H2020 - EUROPEAN PROJECT

Date: 15/02/2019

POLICYBRIEF

for EC internal use

Project title: WeGovNow – Towards We-Government: Collective and participatory approaches for addressing local policy challenges

I. INTRODUCTION

The WeGovNow project aims at making a contribution to the transformation from viewing citizens as mere customers of public services towards what has occasionally been called We-Government, considering citizens as partners. To this end, an online engagement platform has been developed during the initial project phase (D3.5). During the final project year, this platform has been piloted under day-to-day conditions in terms of a publicly available online service in three municipalities, namely the City of Turin (IT), the London Borough of Southwark (UK) and San Donà di Pave (IT).

The WeGovNow pilot platform in a nutshell

In contrast to commonly available single-purpose civic engagement tools such as online citizen surveys or petition systems, WeGovNow represents an online eco-system that supports co-creating responses to local policy challenges by the public administration, the residents, the civil society and local businesses. In operational terms, the pilot platform provides an integrated “tool box” enabling the support of diverse stakeholder participation process designs rather than a single “work flow”. To this end, WeGovNow provides an integrated set of core functions, including community networking & self-organisation (WeGovNow FirstLife), neighbourhood issue identification & tracking (WeGovNow Improve My City), democratic proposition development & decision making (WeGovNow LiquidFeedback), map based crowd sourcing of knowledge & ideas (WeGovNow Community Maps) and exchange of volunteering opportunity & free items (WeGovNow Offers & Requests).

The local validation pilots in a nutshell

Generally the pilot users were free to utilise the pilot platform as they wished. For piloting purposes, the three pilot municipalities have however developed a range of policy scenarios. These were directed towards exploiting the capabilities provided by the pilot platform for addressing local policy challenges that had emerged independent of the WeGovNow project. To this end, a number of stakeholder participation process models were designed, based in different ways on the various online functions of the WeGovNow platform.

Each of the pilot municipalities provided a publicly accessible online service to citizens aged 16 years and above upon registration to the WeGovNow pilot platform. A user validation process was put in place to ensure that access was enabled only to the intended target population. Users registering to the WeGovNow pilot

service were instantly verified by means of an automated process. Only in cases where the automated validation process failed a registration request was validated manually by the pilot municipalities. Users could also explicitly request manual verification. Of the 9.976 pilot user accounts registered to platform across the three pilot municipalities, 79% were instantly verified by means of the automated verification process. The remaining share was verified manually.

In terms of age the pilot users spread quite widely across different age bands. The majority (80%) was aged between 20 and 59 years. Roughly one in ten pilot users was aged between 60 and 69 years. The youngest (16-19 years) and the oldest (70+ years) age bands were represented with 4% and 5% respectively. Slightly more than one half (56%) of the pilot users were female users. All in all, 22.324 single usage activities were observed across the different functional components integrated within the overall platform. Of these, 26% concerned the posting of original contributions by registered pilot users and 16% concerned the subsequent updating or deletion of own posts. The remaining share (58%) concerned responses to contributions made by others.

When it comes to the perceived functional utility of the platform features in relation to the policy scenarios piloted, the stakeholder feedback suggests their usefulness in terms of:

- strengthening the voice of the public;
- reaching out into the local community;
- achieving a better quality of the public discourse;
- and achieving multilateral stakeholder interaction.

The architectural approach adopted for the purposes of WeGovNow and its operational implementation in terms of an integrated SaaS web service has generally proved scalable to larger numbers of users. Despite the almost 10.000 users having registered to WeGovNow across the three pilot municipalities, no major malfunctions or breakdowns have occurred in relation to the overall pilot platform or in relation to individual platform components.

When it comes to the pilot service's user registration and verification process, the available data suggests that the registration process in itself has principally proved scalable and reliable as well. Moreover, the large numbers of users that have registered to the pilot platform during the pilot phase suggests that the current registration process does not seem to represent a principal barrier towards utilising the WeGovNow pilot services.

A closer look at those instances requiring manual verification reveals however that failed registration attempts relate to a certain extent to user behaviour, e.g. resubmitting before entering a PIN or entering a wrong pin PIN several times. It seems worth further exploring to what extent usability improvements may help in avoiding such behaviour. Also relying upon third party identity providers such as SPID may in principal help in reducing such problems. Although the utilisation of third party identity providers is principally supported by WeGovNow, in reality their utilisation is however only meaningful in countries where these are used by larger sections of the population. In the current pilot countries this has however turned out that adoption levels among the population have remained quite low until today, although third party identity provider services were in principle available.

Although the available monitoring data suggest that the individual platform components have been utilised quite extensively throughout the pilots, user feedback points however into the direction that there is room for better guiding the user through the diverse functionalities available from the overall platform, e.g. by means of short video tutorials.

II. SOCIOECOMONIC AND DEMOCRATIC IMPACTS

A range of impacts were perceived to flow from the platform's functional utility to the different stakeholder groups involved in the local pilots. They concern, on the one hand, commonly accepted democratic values such as enhanced democratic legitimacy of administrative decision making. On the other hand, utilitarian aspects such as better informed decision making came to the fore as well.

Perceive benefits for the on the local administration:

- Better fit of policy and services with people's experiences and needs
- Better mastering of future uncertainty by tapping people's knowledge and experience to design better policies and services
- Higher transparency of policy / service development / implementation processes
- Enhanced acknowledgement and valuation of citizens by knowledge/inputs by public administration
- Enhanced reputation due to increased democratic legitimacy of governance processes, e.g. due to shared decision power and/or transparency
- Efficiency gains due to electronic information dissemination / communication

Perceive benefits for the on the citizens / NGOs:

- Enhances access to participation processes time / location wise
- Enhanced understanding of the purposes and processes involved in designing and delivering policies and programmes
- Enhanced influence on improving policies and services affecting citizens
- Enhanced accountability for the results of policies and programmes
- Enhanced acknowledgement and valuation of citizens by knowledge/inputs by public administration
- Opportunities for self-organisation of communities around issues they see as important

Although it has turned out as difficult to comprehensively assess efficiency gains achieved across the variety of stakeholder participation process designs that have ultimately been piloted, some general conclusions can nevertheless be drawn from the available evidence:

- When adopting a short term perspective the pilots have shown that that efficiency gains are most likely to be achievable when it comes to reaching out into the local community, in particular where stakeholder participation process designs are implemented triggering extensive platform utilisation in terms of large user numbers. As e.g. stated by a local representative in the context of the "AxTO" policy scenario, involving such a large number of citizens in the decision making process would have been impossible for the local administration without WeGovNow, both resource wise and logistically. Also, efficiency gains are likely to be achievable - albeit on a lower scale - where stake holder process designs put emphasis on the quality of the public discourse and the richness of information to be exchanged rather than merely on quantitative outreach.
- Likewise, efficiency gains are likely to be achievable from the perspective of the citizens and other local stakeholders through the time and space transcending capabilities of the pilot platform. Participation through WeGovNow does not depend on the user's ability to take part in the overall process at a certain time or venue. This holds potentials for reducing / avoiding intangible costs, e.g. by reducing / avoiding negative impacts on other important life tasks or duties. Monetary costs for participation may reduce as well, e.g. travel cost that would otherwise have been accrued for participating in onsite engagement activities.
- Efficiency gains potentially materialising in the longer run are difficult to predict. The feedback collated from the local pilots at least suggests that the stake holders perceived WeGovNow as helpful in creating policies and service which ultimately fit better with the peoples' needs and expectations. This may in itself lead to more efficient solutions in the longer run. Apart from this, WeGovNow was perceived to help in enhancing the transparency of local policy and service development as well as democratic legitimacy of decisions to be taken in this context. Likewise WeGovNow was seen helpful in building understanding and trust and improving relationships with public institutions as well as between individuals and groups locally. All this may reduce conflict at a later stage and thus reduce associated efforts or even monetary costs.

III. USE CASES

As mentioned above a number of policy scenarios have been developed by the three pilot municipalities, which were directed towards exploiting the capabilities provided by the pilot platform for addressing local policy challenges that had emerged independent of the WeGovNow project. In this context, the pilot platform was implemented with a view to:

- involving NGOs and citizen in decision making about cultural projects to be funded in the framework of an urban regeneration programme;
- co-developing and co-managing public spaces, thereby involving residents and other stakeholders as well as different departments of the public administration;
- developing sustainable local mobility solutions and facilitating sustainable practices in the community in line with a municipal sustainability strategy;
- promoting community cohesion by supporting cross-faith collaboration in joint activity in line with a municipal faith group strategy;
- stimulating the interest of young people to become involved in local public matters in general and to engage in employment and training in particular;
- collating differentiated feedback from local people and other stakeholders on planned road improvements;
- jointly identifying emerging problems in local neighbourhoods and transparently following-up remedial measures.

To this end, nine stakeholder participation process models were designed by the pilot municipalities, based in different ways on the various online functions of the WeGovNow platform. For illustrative purposes, one of these is summarized in the Textbox below. With help of this participation model, the City of Turin adopted the WeGovNow pilot platform for co-developing certain sections of an urban park, the Parco Dora, in the framework of a national program for suburban development. Apart from citizens a range of other stakeholders were involved including, amongst other groups, a formalised multi-stakeholder group that existed already prior to WeGovNow (for further details c.f. D2.6 and D4.3).

Textbox: Summary of stakeholder involvement in the “Parco Dora” policy scenario

How the municipal administration could utilise WeGovNow:

The public administration prepared and held a series of offline co-design workshops. In parallel, the public administration monitored proposals and ideas posted by the citizens through WeGovNow, and systemised these as an input to a series of subsequent offline workshops. After each off-line workshop outcomes were systemised by the public administration and fed back into WeGovNow respectively. Proposals having emerged throughout this iterative loop were also assessed by the public administration in relations their feasibility and compliance with any requirements potentially emerging from relevant laws / regulations, e.g. when it comes to personal safety, public procurement processes and the like.

How the formalised Multi-Stakeholder Group could utilize WeGovNow:

An established group of local stakeholders representing citizen networks, associations and local businesses supported the public administration in conceptually planning and promoting the overall participation process.



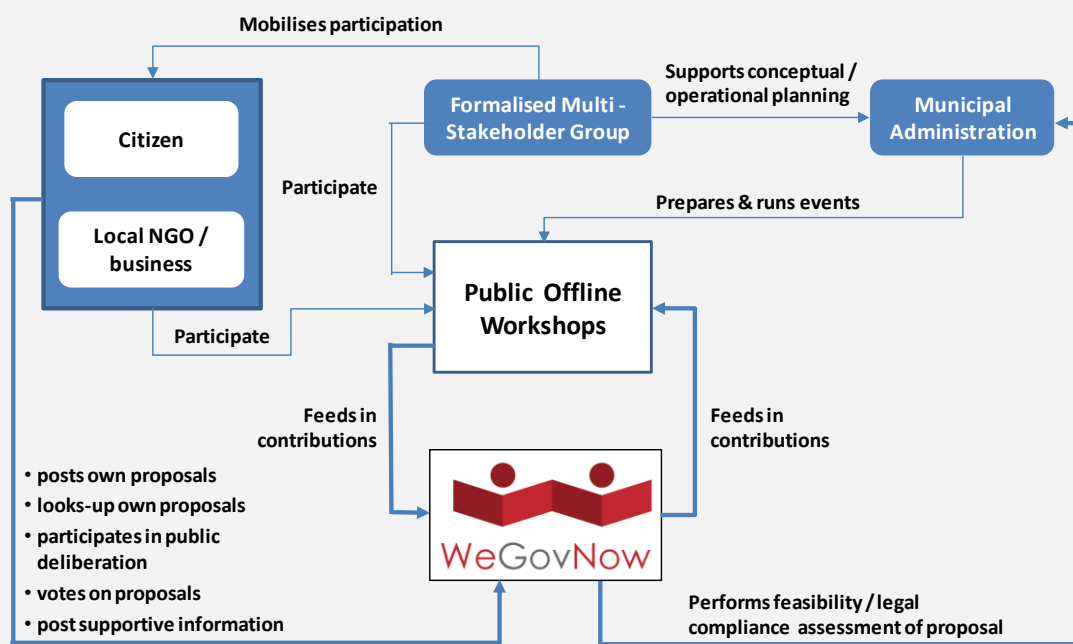
How local NGOs and businesses could utilise WeGovNow

Representatives of local NGOs and businesses participated in the offline workshops organised by the public administration. At the same time they were able to post proposals for public deliberation and additional supportive information on WeGovNow.

How the citizen could utilise WeGovNow:

Citizens participated in the offline workshops organised by the public administration. At the same time they were able to post proposals for public deliberation and additional supportive information on WeGovNow and vote on proposals posted for public deliberation. At the same time citizens were able to post on an interactive map of the Parco Dora area how they have up to now typically used the park.

Stakeholder participation process model:



IV. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Wider participation of local stakeholders in policy development and/or implementation is unlikely to be achieved merely by going online with WeGovNow. An assessment of the pilot outcomes sheds light on a number of aspects deserving attention if sustainable participation of local stakeholders is to be achieved (c.f. D3.4). Two perspectives need to be taken into account, namely the perspective of the citizen's and the one of the public administration intending to operate the online platform in a given local setting.

When it comes to the citizens and other local stakeholders, the WeGovNow pilots have shown that there is no reason to assume that people would suddenly become passionate about the intricate policy decisions or administrative processes that impact their lives, just because a powerful online platform becomes available to them. Rather, the pilots suggest that the people who are supposed to use WeGovNow to influence politics and governance tend to be busy, and that there are plenty of ways they can spend their time aside from on the pilot platform. They may for instance have parents with health problems or need to pick the children from school or they may have other important tasks and interests on their personal agendas. In fact, people will make a decision whether the time they are willing to invest in engaging through WeGovNow is worth the time they would sacrifice from other activities or life tasks. The interest in engaging in public matters through WeGovNow thus depends to a large extent on peoples' personal agendas. Against this background, the

adoption of WeGovNow by the citizens and other local stakeholders not at least depends on their perception as to whether they (c.f. D4.3):

- have the possibility to indeed exert an influences on policy development or implementation by utilising WeGovNow;
- are directly affected by or concerned about policy challenges or issues under discussion on WeGovNow;
- feel receiving intangible rewards when engaging in local matters through WeGovNow;
- have to bear intangible costs when engaging in local matters through WeGovNow.

When adopting the perspective of the local administration, attracting wider usage for WeGovNow requires taking due account not only the perspective of the citizens' but also of the perspectives of various parties potentially concerned within the public administration. In both regards, local pilots have shown that the online features provided by WeGovNow should be seen as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Sustainable use of WeGovNow therefore requires embedding the technical infrastructure into a comprehensive strategy towards stakeholder participation in the co-redevelopment of local policies and/or services, both politically and administratively. Beyond a political will to give people a greater say in the shaping of local policies and/or public services, such an approach therefore also requires cross-cutting co-ordination within the local administration if sustainable outcomes are to be achieved. Amongst other aspects, these considerations are reflected by a set of recommendations presented throughout the remainder of this document

In the following sections a number of recommendations are presented. They have been derived from the experiences throughout the local WeGovNow validation pilots conducted during the last year of the project's overall duration, with a view to potentially triggering further activities beyond the duration of the WeGovNow project.

Recommendations for potential deployment organisations of WeGovNow

#1 Guide WeGovNow deployment planning by a consolidated strategy towards stakeholder participation in local policy development that goes beyond mere usage of the online platform

The integrated set of online features available from WeGovNow has been shown to be capable of supporting different strategies for the co-development of policies, be it in terms of giving people a formalised role in decision making or in terms of stimulating social capital for the public good, or both (c.f. D3.4). In this context, different decision making models were developed in the three pilot municipalities for being support by WeGovNow, thereby reflecting local circumstances in various regards. A consolidated strategy towards stakeholder participation in local policy development and/or implementations therefore needs to guide further WeGovNow deployment planning on the operational level. To this end, agreement should be reached in what way current decision power is to be shifted - if at all - and how stake holder knowledge, expertise and opinions flowing onto the platform are ultimately to be brought to bear on the further shaping of policy measures or administrative practices external to the online platform.

The ultimate outcomes of strategy development will enable a transparent communication vis-a-vis local stakeholder ultimately to become involved in civic engagement with help of WeGovNow, be it individual citizens, civic society organisations or local businesses. Transparency is likely to influences potential users' expectations about what will happen throughout the participation process supported by the online platform, and whether they may decide to invest time and effort in getting involved. Strategic considerations may not at least exert an influence on the configuring of the online platform as a technical infrastructure for stakeholder engagement. As general rule, the various configuration options that come with individual WeGovNow components should be applied in a way that facilitates, not control, the participation. When it comes to some platform components, it is for instance possible to restrict contributions the users can make to selected policy fields or topics. As a general rule, users should feel encouraged to address policy themes or topics as they wish, rather than merely being consulted in relation to very narrowly defined topics or policy options, albeit the latter can in principle be achieved with the online platform as well.

Beyond strategic co-ordination in relation to the aspects discussed above, the political will to give people a greater say in public matters should also be ensured in advance. Generally, this step should involve relevant

expertise across all municipal departments that are potentially affected by the WeGovNow deployment, and it should cut across the deployment organisation's hierarchy ranging from the strategic to the operational decision levels.

#2 Stakeholder participation process models to be supported by the online features available from WeGovNow need to be defined locally

When compared with hitherto existing civic engagement tools, WeGovNow enables engagement with local stakeholders in a variety of ways. This opens up opportunities for implementing entirely new pathways for the co-development of adequate responses to local policy challenges. At the same time, the comparatively wide range of engagement features generally available from WeGovNow represents a challenge. In contrast to established e-government services, there is no single, pre-defined "workflow" to be followed internally and externally to the public administration. Rather, a number of platform functions can be combined in a flexible manner to achieve the desired co-production of outputs. Guided, by a high-level strategy towards stakeholder involvement as disused above, the next step should therefore involve designing one or more participation processes models feeding into the more strategic goals ultimately to be achieved, e.g. to increase democratic legitimacy for certain decisions to be taken or to ensure that public investment is based on more people's expressed needs, or both. A number of generic requirements on designing sustainable participation processes with help of WeGovNow can be derived from the local pilots. These are discussed in the following subsections.

The assignment of roles and responsibilities across the overall stakeholder participation process

Roles and responsibilities of administrative units and/or particular staff need to be clearly defined, e.g. when it comes to directly interacting with citizens through the online platform or otherwise acting upon posted contributions. Careful consideration needs to be given to resources locally available for putting a desired participation process design into practice with help of the WeGovNow functionalities. Table 2 summarises some key characteristics of the different types of participation processes designed by the municipalities around the WeGovNow platform during the local pilots. They not at least tend to exert an influence on resources required for their implementation (c.f. D4.3). Typically, established work flows will need to be changed, thereby frequently cutting across established intra-organisational and sometimes even inter-organisational boundaries. This may not infrequently require the commitment and approval of more than a single decision maker internally and externally to the local administration

To enable meeting strategic high-level goals, stakeholder participation process design with help of WeGovNow requires sufficient attention being paid to tangible outputs which can principally be co-created with citizens and/or other stakeholders. In practice, the type and volumes of stakeholder interactions occurring over the online platform typically varies quite a lot, ranging e.g. from casting a vote or mapping a place on a local map over posting a short statement or uploading supportive information (documents, pictures, web links) up to posting an extensively elaborated proposal for action. Although it seems generally desirable to achieve widest possible participation in terms of numbers, qualitative aspects deserve attention as well, particularly when it comes to issues that are complex and solicits creative solutions. Large participation numbers may not represent a key criterion in every case. This may particularly hold true for topics where the focus of stakeholder engagement is on looking for inspiration, learning and discovery rather than primarily on enhancing the democratic legitimacy of decisions to be made. It may also be useful to design participation processes involving complementary online and offline engagement activities, with a view to capitalising on the time and space transcending capabilities of the online platform, while at the same time exploiting the possibilities provided by off-line engagement events (c.f. D2.6 and D3.4).

The legal and regulatory framework conditions that impact on the design of local stakeholder participation processes

Legal and regulatory framework conditions may have an impact on the particular design of a participation process to be supported by WeGovNow. Generally, the WeGovNow pilot platform was implemented in the three local pilot municipalities in compliance with European data protection legislation, namely the General Data Protection Regulation which has taken effect almost half way through project's pilot phase. Legislation / regulation enacted on the national or local level may need to be considered as well, for instance rules on civic participation stipulated in municipal law or municipal ordinances concerning local matters to be addressed with help of WeGovNow. The City Council of Turin, one of the project's pilot municipalities, has for instance adopted a regulation on the collaboration between citizens and the public administration for the regeneration of urban commons some years ago which had to be taken into account when designing a local participation process relying on WeGovNow features for co-developing an approach towards the conversion of former industrial area (c.f. D3.4).

#3 Take your time to obtain a detailed understanding of the current working processes, priorities and future direction of all parties to be involved in WeGovNow deployment

Depending on the given local context, there may be different motivations for potentially deploying WeGovNow. In some cases, the interest may stem from a high-level strategic review of municipal priorities. Or deploying WeGovNow may be considered by a municipality due to the over-burdening of financial or other resources. The local pilots suggest however that neither civic participation technology in general nor WeGovNow in particular should be seen as magic when it comes to better coping with resource pressure. Generally, it has turned out as difficult to comprehensively assess efficiency gains achieved across the variety of stakeholder participation process designs that have ultimately been piloted. Some general conclusions can nevertheless be drawn in this respect (c.f. D4.3):

- When adopting a short term perspective, efficiency gains are most likely to be achievable when it comes to reaching out into the local community, in particular where stakeholder participation process designs are implemented triggering extensive platform utilisation in terms of large user numbers.
- Likewise, efficiency gains are likely to be achievable from the perspective of the citizens and other local stakeholders through the time and space transcending capabilities of the pilot platform. Participation through WeGovNow does not depend on the user's ability to take part in the overall process at a certain time or venue. This holds potentials for reducing / avoiding intangible costs, e.g. by reducing / avoiding negative impacts on other important life tasks or duties.
- WeGovNow was seen to be helpful by the local stakeholders in creating policies and service which ultimately fit better with the peoples' needs and expectations. This may in itself lead to more efficient solutions in the longer run. Apart from this, WeGovNow was perceived in the local pilots to help in enhancing the transparency of local policy and service development as well as democratic legitimacy of decisions to be taken in this context. Likewise WeGovNow was seen helpful in building understanding and trust and improving relationships with public institutions as well as between individuals and groups locally. All this may reduce conflict at a later stage and thus reduce associated efforts or even monetary costs.

Although efficiency improvement potentials could thus be identified across the local pilots, it has generally turned out to be problematic to quantify qualitative outcomes of WeGovNow-supported stakeholder participation processes, e.g. enhanced democratic legitimacy of administrative decisions. The complexity of the stakeholder engagement processes designs that have emerged throughout the local pilots, thereby focussing democratic values as well as on utilitarian aspects such as better informed decision making, mean their long term outcomes cannot be reduced to a simple monetary calculation alone (for some generic cost dominions identified c.f. D3.4). Not at least, they will depend on the ultimate design of the stakeholder participation processes to be supported by the various WeGovNow features.

Against this background, for WeGovNow-based civic participation to meet expectations a process is required which gathers together the required knowledge and information across all municipal departments as well as relevant stakeholders external to the municipality, to be involved in WeGovNow deployment so that an informed decision can be made as to what expectations are to be ultimately met and how to proceed from there. Reaching, informing and engaging relevant stakeholders in a dialogue on joint strategy building is an important prerequisite for establishing a valid “value case” for all. The effort and time required for acquiring and consolidating knowledge concerning the expectations on WeGovNow which are ultimately to be met, on whether and how these can be met, and on related impacts on current practices and service delivery can easily be underestimated.

#4 Appropriate risk assessment and management procedures should be put in place

The local pilots have suggested a number of positive potentials generally provided by WeGovNow for the co-development of local policies and public services. Nevertheless, the pilots have shown that co-developing local policies with help of WeGovNow potentially bears certain risk as well. Not all risks initially perceived by the local stakeholders did finally materialise; creating exaggerated expectations at the part of the citizens on public service delivery that may not be addressable by the public administration due to lacking resources for instance. A sustainable approach towards civic participation with help of WeGovNow should nevertheless be sensitive towards potential risks. Being clear about the purposes of engaging with local stakeholders, and taking the perspective of the stakeholders to be involved seriously, seems the best way to avoid the risk of exaggerated expectations. The development of a comprehensive participation strategy at an early stage, and prior to the launch of the WeGovNow platform, should therefore also include reflecting on potential risks and options for mitigation.

One source of risks perceived in the framework of the WeGovNow pilots concerns legal aspects, as will be further elaborated in the subsequent recommendation #6. Here, the main issues are to avoid objectionable material being posted to the platform and material violating copy rights. The best way to mitigate this risk is the elaboration of clear Terms of Use (ToU) statement promising to remove posts that threaten users, use foul language or are basically spam.

Another source of risk perceived in the framework of the pilots concerned technical issues potentially occurring during the use of the platform if there was no service support provided to address or rectify these. This has the potential to expose the municipality to reputational risk and could impact the potential uptake and use of the platform more broadly. Such risks can be addressed by agreeing and implementing clear processes and responsibilities for first-level support vis-à-vis the platform users and second-level support vis-à-vis staff operating backend of the WeGovNow platform.

#5 Plan and implement process change in a multi-departmental and/or multi-stakeholder WeGovNow deployment environment

As has become clear from the hitherto presented recommendations, simply adding WeGovNow to existing working practices is not likely to work well. Deploying WeGovNow tends to affect established roles and responsibilities internal/external to the public administration. Existing working practices, roles and responsibilities may need to be re-engineered to embrace WeGovNow under an appropriate migration control. Any process innovations potentially required should be driven by, and respond to, clearly defined objectives of participatory policy development/implementation, a mere “technology push” approach cannot be expected to deliver the hoped-for benefits. Practical strategies to support change and promote engagement across the various departments and/or external stakeholders involved may be required. A dedicated effort may help in convincing (selected) staff / volunteers at each administrative unit / organisation involved in WeGovNow deployment to ‘champion’ any WeGovNow-based participation processes that are to be newly established.

#6 Establish mechanisms for awareness raising and dialogue directed towards a “cultural change” towards increased self-organisation

The local pilots also suggest that in particular those stakeholder participation process models that have focused on stimulating social capital for the public good rather than giving the public greater say in case-by-case decision making may require a longer breath for achieving sustainable participation. In most local settings this is very likely to require a broader “cultural change” toward increased self-organisation. This aspect concerns public administration as well as other institutional stakeholders that may need to become involved in WeGovNow, e.g. local civic society organisations. Organisational cultures and resistance to change, as well as a lack of organisational capacity and willingness to innovate, may represent potential barriers to WeGovNow uptake. One approach that can help reduce resistance to change and break down barriers between different stakeholder groups is to set up mechanisms that allow for a genuine iterative dialogue on potential innovation. If stakeholders are involved in discussions on reform, they are more likely to have a sense of ownership over the outcomes of this process, which in turn can help to facilitate the adoption and acceptance of new structures more generally, including solutions such as WeGovNow. In a short term perspective, concentration on “low hanging fruits” in terms of promoting more self-organisation through WeGovNow in relation to very specific, selected local matters is perceived representing an auspicious strategy in this respect.

#7 Pay appropriate attention to legal requirements right from the beginning

!!! Please note that the following elaboration shall by no means be considered as legal advice. Legal advice should always be obtained from an authorised body. No liability will be accepted by the authors of this document in relation to the correctness and completeness of the content provided !!!

In case WeGovNow is deployed by a municipality or any other organisation or body, a legal relationship will be established between the pilot service provider (pilot municipality) and the pilot service user (citizen, NGO, local business). As far as the processing of personal data is concerned European data protection legislation, namely the General Data Protection regulation (GDPR), creates obligations for the party (e.g. a municipality) offering the WeGovNow platform in terms of an online service (“data controllers”) to citizens (“data subjects”). In the following it is discussed what aspects deserve attention in this respect prior to deploying WeGovNow in the public domain.

All terms and rules by which the users must agree in order to use the municipal pilot service should be set out in a terms of use (ToU) statement. Generally speaking, the ToU need to be easily understandable by the pilot users. A municipality intending to deploy WeGovNow may have its specific ToU requirements. Nevertheless, some general questions deserve attention in this context.

What policy is to be adopted towards underage pilot users?

The GDPR establishes specific rules for protecting children’s personal data (Article 8). If an organisation offers online services (‘information society services’) to children and relies on consent to collect information about them, children can give their own consent to this processing at the age of 16 (the member states will have the possibility to lower this age to a minimum of 13 years). If a child is younger then it will be necessary to collect consent from a person holding ‘parental responsibility’. The latter would require establishing a suitable consent procedure.

What should be explicitly forbidden?

The ToU statement can be seen as a legal basis for excluding particular users from the WeGovNow platform in case specific rules or principles are violated. By means of the ToU users should be informed that by agreeing to use the pilot service, they are also agreeing to not do certain things. Any negative uses that should explicitly be forbidden should be anticipated, e.g. to abuse, harass, threaten, impersonate or intimidate any person. It should also be anticipated what will happen if a user indeed infringes on these rules. In a positive sense, it should be anticipated what the purposes of the pilot service is.

What policy is to be adopted towards user generated content?

The users will be able to upload different types of content onto the WeGovNow platform (e.g. photos). The ToU should make clear that certain content uploaded by the users, will be taken down if certain rules are violated, e.g. a photo which is found to be a copyright infringement. Also it may need to be ensured that all content posted or otherwise uploaded to the pilot platform will be the sole responsibility of the user from which such content originates, and that the municipality offering the WeGovNow service won't be liable for the correctness of any information provided by users. Generally, it should be anticipated which parties should be allowed to utilise user generated content and for which purpose.

How to meet obligations concerning user rights?

The GDPR puts an obligation on data controllers to ensure data subjects can rectify remove or block incorrect data about themselves. The GDPR in particular stipulates a number of rights for individuals as follows:

- the right to be informed;
- the right of access;
- the right to rectification;
- the right to erasure;
- the right to restrict processing;
- the right to data portability;
- the right to object; and
- the right not to be subject to automated decision-making including profiling.

To be able to respond to user request in relation to these rights, it will be necessary to identify in advance what personal data is held within the individual WeGovNow platform components, where it comes from, who it is shared it with, how its processing can be restricted and how it can be erased. Also, it seems useful to anticipate in advance how to react if a user asks to have their personal data deleted, for example. In such a case a municipality receiving such a request from one of its citizens should be able to rely upon a commonly agreed to monitor how the user claim is met and provide informed feedback on this matter to the pilot user.

Strategic recommendations for policy makers

#8 Examine current e-Government legal and regulatory frameworks with a view to their receptiveness towards we-Government

According to a recent study on digital innovation in the public domain, views that power has shifted to the 'customer' have gained ground over the past few years not only in the private sector but in the public sector as well. Such developments have nourished hopes that the transition from 'e-Government' (citizen as customer) to 'we-Government' (citizen as partner) may represent the next big step in the public sector. Some scholars envisage that we may witness even the emergence of a new kind of "social contract" in which society places greater trust in the public to play a far more active role in the functioning of their government. However, despite much experimentation having happened over the last decade, sustainable progress on the ground seems to have yet largely fallen below expectations. The experiences gained with the local WeGovNow pilots point into the direction that there is room for making the e-Government regulatory framework more conducive to the co-development of local polices and the co-delivery of community services with help of emerging we-Government solutions such as WeGovNow.

This aspect may be illustrated by mans of the following example. During the course of the project, concerns about liability risks have for instance been identified as a barrier to the public piloting of the full range of functionalities which were in principle available from the WeGovNow pilot platform in the three pilot municipalities. Although most functionality could finally be piloted, one of participation components initially developed by the project was considered not being suitable for piloting in a public environment. During the

course of extensive engagement activities conducted with local stakeholders prior to the launching of the project's pilot phase, based on the available prototype strong concerns were raised in particular by representative of public administrations. These concerned the envisaged automatic matching of demand and supply of voluntary personal support, e.g. when it comes to users offering help to older persons or young families living in the community. It was highlighted by municipal stakeholders that any municipality operating the WeGovNow platform could be held legally liable for damages or fraudulent behaviour potentially occurring in the context of supportive activities/services mediated through the platform, even if these were delivered on a voluntary basis. Taking such a risk was considered unacceptable by the municipalities independent whether the platform was operated in a pilot setting during the project duration or afterwards in a mainstream setting. Also, a build-in reputation mechanism as it had been envisaged so far was considered as not being suitable for mitigating the legal liability risk perceived. The legal liability issue identified at that stage was assessed as representing a "show stopper" for the public piloting of the entire WeGovNow platform, and for its further mainstreaming beyond the project duration as well.

This example illustrates that we-Government solutions such as WeGovNow may bring up new questions for which the current e-Government legal and regulatory framework does not provide sufficient guidance on how to deal with dilemmas potentially emerging from these. WeGovNow's Trusted Market Place, for instance, triggered the question how best to balance the protection of the citizens with their potential right to take risks in relation to ICT-based innovation. The current e-Government legal and regulatory framework seems however to reflect the "traditional" concept of e-government ('citizen as a customer') in terms of regulating privacy, data protection, re-use of public data and so on, rather than addressing new dilemmas potentially emerging from new ways of service co-creation ('citizen as a partner'). Against this background, there would be merit in examining the current e-Government legal and regulatory frameworks in a systematic manner with a view to their receptiveness towards we-Government. The EU could have a useful role in supporting a more concerted focus and effort to address this aspect.

#9 We-Government should be considered as a long-term investment rather than a means to achieve short-term rationalisation effects in public administrations

WeGovNow offers a number of short term benefits over its "off-line" variants when it comes to fostering collective action, including the fact that it is easier to exchange information and make group decisions at a larger scale. However, the local pilots suggest that WeGovNow is likely to enfold its transformational impacts only in the longer run, by acting as a catalyst of change towards transforming public administration processes. The promised benefit does not simply come from digitising information or already established processes. Rather, they come from leveraging the new digital infrastructure for making public administrations more responsive and provide better services. While WeGovNow delivers the required technical innovation, an effort is required to be made by the public administration to redesign existing administrative processes to achieve this. Time and resources need to be invested in the development of innovative stake holder participation process models and related administrative work flows that go beyond mere platform usage. When investing in the development of such process models, it is also important to remember that there is no "one-size-fits-all" model for achieving success. Decisions to invest time and resources must therefore include strategies that fit given local settings, and be designed to succeed by meeting clearly identified policy objectives when it comes to the envisaged participation processes to be supported by WeGovNow (as discussed earlier).

#10 Support awareness rising and mutual exchange about we-Government

Policy-makers can play an important role in promoting participatory policy development and implementation by supporting awareness-raising efforts among relevant stakeholders and facilitating the exchange of good practice on successful approaches. This could also include the development of strategies directed towards providing relevant organisations with hands-on advice for local participation planning.

Recommendations concerning further research

#11 Beyond technology development, further evidence on long-term impacts of we-Government should be generated

Based on the experiences made so far, immediate benefits can be gained by WeGovNow in relation to a better outreach into the local community, e.g. to those typically not participating in more traditional engagements means such as town hall meetings as discussed earlier. The evidence generated by WeGovNow points, however, into the direction that many of the benefits potentially flowing from we-Government to the different stakeholder groups engaging through the online platform may fully materialise only in the longer run. At the same time, there is a perceived risk that in some cases exaggerated expectations may be voiced by WeGovNow users which might not be accomplishable by the public administration in a straight forward manner, e.g. due to given economic, legal or other constraints. This did not, however, materialise during the WeGovNow pilots. There would nevertheless be merit in extending the currently available evidence base on long-term impacts, e.g. as to whether such perceived risks would indeed materialise with a wider deployment of civic participation solutions such as WeGovNow, and if so how such risks could effectively be mitigated.

V. SUSTANABILITY TOOLKIT

The WeGovNow project has extended / newly developed a set of civic participation applications which can be combined in a flexible manner. In addition, various software components were developed to enable running WeGovNow as an integrated online platform. All software components developed / extended within the project are available as open source solutions for downloading downloading (<https://wegovnow.eu/how-to-getwegovnow>). Further to this, augmenting information is provided to support those interested in implementing and / or further developing WeGovNow open source software components. This concerns diverse WeGovNow civic participation software components as well as a range of WeGovNow integration software components. It is also worth noticing that the modular architecture approach together with the integration principles adopted for the purposes of WeGovNow (c.f. D3.5) enables straightforward integration of further civic participation application software solutions, be it existing or newly emerging ones

Within their usual business operations, the technical consortium partner will be available to provide consultancy services not only in relation to the three WeGovNow pilot municipalities but also when it comes to further municipalities that may be interested in deploying the WeGovNow platform locally. Different levels of support can be flexibly agreed according to a typical open source business model. No fees will therefore be imposed for any software licensing. Depending on the desired levels of support requested from the component developer organizations, these may impose service fees respectively.

All three pilot municipalities are keen to maintain WeGovNow beyond the project duration. They are still in the process of exploring internal to their administrations which level of support may best suit their local circumstances. At each municipality different parties are currently involved in the decision-making process, the general aim being to prevent any interruptions of WeGovNow services availability in the three pilot municipalities if ever possible. The component developer organizations are ready to support this process in a flexible manner, depending on the level of support ultimately required by the individual pilot municipality. Moreover, they are prepared to offer WeGovNow to any other municipality potentially interested in local deployment.

Beyond mainstreaming of the WeGovNow platform as it currently stands, project exploitation also concerns further research and development activities. In particular, WeGovNow laid the foundation for the CO3 project, a H2020 research and innovation action on the impact of Digital Disruptive Technologies to Co-create, Co-produce and Co-manage Open Public Services along with Citizens. The WeGovNow partners City of Turin, FlexiGuided GmbH (LiquidFeedback) and the University of Turin have joined CO3. The project will build on the integration work accomplished by WeGovNow applying the very same integration paradigms developed by the

WeGovNow project. The adoption of the WeGovNow integration paradigms will ensure compatibility with WeGovNow. It will be possible to combine any set of CO3 applications with any set of WeGovNow applications. Existing and future WeGovNow platforms will thus benefit from additional functionality developed in the CO3 project.
