

The State of UserCentriCities

How Cities and Regions are Creating Better Digital Services
by Putting Citizens' Needs at the Centre

By Alice Iordache, Chrysoula Mitta, David Osimo and the UserCentriCities Community



Legal Notices

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent the view of the members of the UserCentriCities consortium, the European Commission or any of their associates.

About UserCentriCities: Towards Common Digital Government Indicators and Support for European Cities project



UserCentriCities is a 27-partner consortium co-financed by the European Union. The consortium includes the Lisbon Council, VTT Technical Research Centre (Finland), Eurocities, 23 leading cities and regions (the founding partners – Espoo, Milan, Murcia, Rotterdam, Tallinn and Emilia Romagna region – and participating cities and regions: Arezzo, Barcelona, Catalonia region, Brussels Capital region, Ghent, Glasgow, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Kronoberg region, Kyiv, Lisbon, Ljubljana, Madrid, Mataró, Paris, Porto and Riga) and the Centre for C-Centricity at the IE University in Spain. The three-year project binds local authorities together to provide metrics, support toolkits, best practices and policy debates for driving digital government at the local level. For more information, visit <https://www.usercentricities.eu>

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Digital government promises to make the lives of citizens better. But moving complicated and unwieldy services from the physical to the digital space does not alone result in better public services. Digitalising only for the sake of digitalisation is not a panacea, as low levels of adoption of digital government services across Europe demonstrate.¹ For digital government to succeed and digital services to be effective and adopted in mass, they require a relentless focus on citizens' needs.²

One inspiring example of this focus is the city of Helsinki's pre-primary education allocation service. Many families, and in particular the most vulnerable ones, find registering their children to a school stressful, difficult to understand and time consuming. They are required to research, fill in forms, meet deadlines and wait long periods of time for the decisions to be made. Helsinki addressed this problem by proactively offering parents a school placement for their children through text messaging. Helsinki's preschool placement for six year-olds with one SMS message saw a staggering response rate of 93% and an acceptance rate by parents of 89%.³

Policymakers have taken note. Ministerial declarations and strategies make frequent reference to the concept of user-centricity.⁴ But what does it mean concretely to be user-centric? How can cities assess to what extent their services are user-centric? How well are local and regional governments performing in addressing citizens' needs when they design digital services and what are the crucial areas where more progress is needed? To answer these questions, the UserCentriCities consortium launched a year-long initiative to develop indicators for measuring user-centricity and gather the data. The effort started with adapting the user-centricity principles set by *The 2017 Tallinn Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment*⁵ to the context and the practice of local and regional authorities, and continued with the definition of the right key performance indicators to measure user-centricity: a process that involved 28 cities and regions and gathered more than 217 individual comments from stakeholders.⁶

The result is the [UserCentriCities Dashboard](#), a unique online interactive benchmarking tool for measuring user-centricity in local authorities. The UserCentriCities Dashboard has been applied to gather data from 10 leading cities and three regions in Europe: Barcelona, the Catalonia region, the Emilia Romagna region, Espoo, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Kyiv, the Kronoberg region, Madrid, Milan, Murcia, Rotterdam and Tallinn.⁷

1. Eurostat, Individuals Using the Internet for Interaction with Public Authorities, March 2022 update.

2. This report builds on research co-created for the UserCentriCities project, a 27-partner consortium co-financed by the European Union. The consortium includes the Lisbon Council, VTT Technical Research Centre (Finland), Eurocities and 23 leading cities and regions (the founding partners – Espoo, Milan, Murcia, Rotterdam, Tallinn and Emilia Romagna – and participating cities and regions: Arezzo, Barcelona, Catalonia Region, Brussels Capital Region, Ghent, Glasgow, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Kronoberg Region, Kyiv, Lisbon, Ljubljana, Madrid, Mataró, Paris, Porto and Riga) and the Centre for C-Centricity at the IE University in Spain. The three-year project will provide metrics, support toolkit and policy debates for driving digital government at the local level. For more information, visit <https://www.usercentricities.eu/>. The authors would like to thank Roberta Cocco, Karl-Filip Coenegrachts, Giorgio Constantino, Mayra García-Blásquez Lahud, Eddy Hartog, Markku Markkula, Evgenia Malikova, Grace Milne and Paul Hofheinz. Any errors of fact or judgement are the authors' sole responsibility.

3. Helsinki won the Best User-Centric Service in Europe prize, awarded by UserCentriCities in Espoo in June 2022. Visit: <https://www.usercentricities.eu/news/2022-usercentricities-award-helsinki-wins-best-user-centric-service-europe#:~:text=Bringing%20together%20leading%20European%20cities,user%2Dcentric%20service%20in%20Europe.> For more examples in user-centric local public services visit: <https://www.usercentricities.eu/services>

4. To date, there have been six eGovernment manifestos negotiated and agreed at ministerial level, including Como (2003), Manchester (2005), Lisbon (2007), Malmö (2009), Tallinn (2017) and most recently Berlin (2020). The Berlin Declaration added the additional goal of delivering services that were "human-centric." For the latest iteration, see Federal Government of Germany et al, The Berlin Declaration on Digital Society and Value-Based Digital Government (Berlin: Federal Government of Germany, 2020).

5. Council of the European Union, The 2017 Tallinn Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment (Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2017).

6. For more information, see "Adapted User-Centricity Principles: Localised Tallinn Declaration User-Centricity Principles", UserCentriCities Deliverable D1.2, 2021. The comments can be accessed publicly in the dedicated platform <https://discuss.usercentricities.eu/>

7. Interested readers can visit the UserCentriCities Dashboard at <https://www.usercentricities.eu/ucdashboard>, where the results are displayed in full including all the evidence to support the data collected. Local administrations that would like to contribute their data or be involved in UserCentriCities can contact the consortium at usercentricities@lisboncouncil.net.



Figure 1: UserCentriCities Dashboard Overview

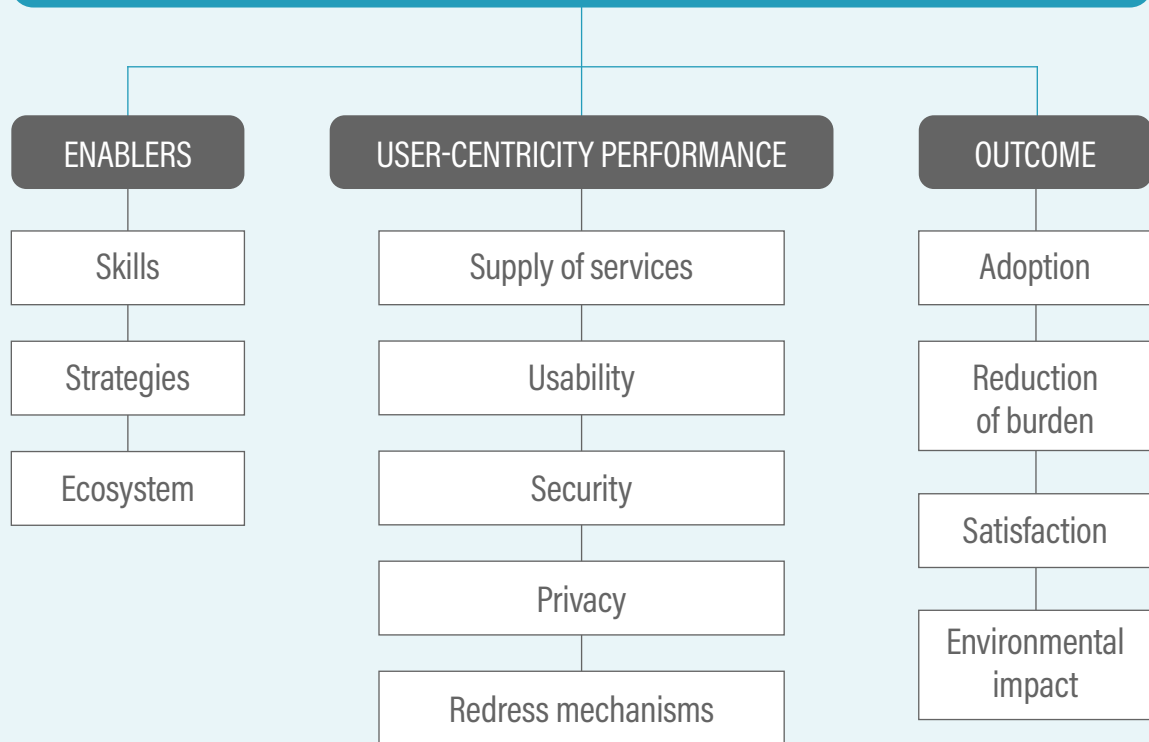
The UserCentriCities Dashboard provides a comprehensive, data-driven overview of how European local authorities perform in designing and delivering user-centricity to their citizens. It evaluates progress based on key performance indicators grouped in three key pillars:

1. The “enablers”, which are the different factors that support the development of user-centric services. These indicators are grouped in three sub-pillars: skills; strategies; and ecosystem.
2. The “user-centricity performance”, assessing how user-centric the digital services are that are offered by local authorities. The indicators are grouped in five sub-pillars: supply of services; usability; security; privacy; and redress mechanisms in place.
3. “Outcome”, assessing whether user-centric digital services are translated into concrete results in terms of citizens’ adoption and satisfaction, reduction of the administrative burden, and overall environmental impact.

The evaluation is intended to be dynamically presented, using a traffic light system to measure commitment and progress as and when it happens.

Green indicates a region or city is racing ahead in that particular area;
 yellow indicates that a region or city is on the right path but more progress is needed;
 and red indicates there has been relatively little progress.

UserCentriCities Dashboard



Key Findings

1. Local governments are more and more committed to user-centric digital services and recognise its benefits for citizens, businesses and society. Ten out of the 13 local authorities who answered the Dashboard have a **digital strategy** that is less than three years old and eight of them mention service design or user experience in those documents.
2. However, the guiding principles of user-centric service design are not yet fully translated into practice. Only a handful of the local authorities in the Dashboard have in place formal **service standards** related to user-centric service design. And while many local authorities have issued design guidelines for making user-centricity happen, most of them lack the essential monitoring and enforcement tools to assess their actual implementation.
3. Accordingly, the majority of solutions come from necessity rather than **strategy**. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the need to replace the physical counter with the virtual one. **Rotterdam** launched the pioneering *Digitale Balie*, within a few days after the first lockdown in the Netherlands and started issuing birth certificates for babies born during the pandemic. The solution has since become a beacon in local government user-centric service delivery.⁸
4. The vast majority of local authorities report that they employ in-house service designers. Training programmes for employees and citizens are also mainstreamed with many large scale and innovative initiatives in place to boost citizens' competences and extend employees' expertise.
5. **More progress is needed in the field of co-creation.** Cities need to involve citizens more in the creation of public services and make user involvement an integral part of digital government. Municipalities and regions do recognise that this is an area they should be more active in but it has yet to be adopted systematically. Less than half of the authorities surveyed apply the use of co-creation as a standard practice in service design and adopt an iterative approach to service delivery.
6. The **supply of online services** is an area where more progress is needed. Only six of the 13 cities and regions provide the majority of their services digitally and only three offer services proactively to citizens. While the vast majority of the cities and regions surveyed have at least one mobile application in place, only half of them offer their citizens the possibility to check online the progress status of the services they request.
7. Local governments in the Dashboard show little interest in systematically assessing how usable their digital services are through available standard tools like system usability scale (SUS).⁹ Only **Tallinn** assesses the **usability** of online services, but based solely upon citizen feedback.
8. Many cities and regions are increasingly focusing their efforts on improving **security and privacy** and fully adopting national and regional eID authentication, a sign of their advanced progress in digital transformation. Citizen redress mechanisms are also applied and rolled out consistently.
9. All 13 local authorities are among Europe's most innovative and digitally advanced municipalities and regions. But despite their increasing focus on user needs, most of them report a reduced effort in measuring and understanding the **impact** of their digital services, making "outcome" the lowest-performing pillar on the dashboard.
10. Local governments are increasingly focusing on raising the **adoption rates** of their services. But the monitoring of adoption is not systematic, and most cities are unable to report on application programming interface (API) users, digital training programmes, or the supply of online services. On the bright side, the majority monitors adoption rates for online services and citizen satisfaction (eight and ten respectively).

⁸ Read more about Digitale Balie in the User-Centric Services Repository at <https://www.usercentricities.eu/services/digital-counter-rotterdam-digitale-balie>

⁹ For more information on SUS, see: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/system-usability-scale>

11. Measuring the outcomes of user-centricity seems to be a transversal challenge, since cities and regions show little interest in monitoring the adoption, reduction of burden, **satisfaction** and environmental impact of digital services. Measuring the levels of satisfaction is an area where more progress is made. However, the reported citizen satisfaction rates are not high enough: only five out of 13 report satisfaction rates above 80%.
12. Overall, the data paints a picture of **increasing focus on user-centricity** in the local government sector but it also shows the lack of systematic approaches in terms of deployment at scale. The growth of user-centricity is based more on organic mechanisms and flexible response to citizen demand than on large scale strategies. But at the same time, this capacity to listen and adapt is perhaps the most important strength of participating cities – provided there is sufficient in-house capacity to deliver.



1. Enabling Factors in User-Centricity

With an overall score of 72%, the “enablers” pillar is by far the pillar on which cities and regions perform best, meaning cities are on the right path to set up the framework and components to drive digitalisation and to implement user-centricity in public service delivery.

Enablers include three sub-pillars: “skills”, “strategy” and “ecosystem”.

‘For digital government to succeed and digital services to be effective and adopted in mass, they require a relentless focus on citizens’ needs.’



1.1 Skills

Cities and regions show great interest in setting up service design teams equipped with the right skills to deeply understand and address user needs.

Seven out of the 13 of the local authorities surveyed report that they employ internal positions such as service designers, user experience designers and researchers, a positive result given how difficult it is for the public sector to compete with private companies in attracting talent in such principles. However, there are major differences: **Helsinki** and **Rotterdam** lead on the number of positions covered by service designers, user researchers or user experience experts internal to the administration, each reporting a total of 20 employers in this category, but the majority of cities report less than five such profiles, and six cities do not yet employ any of these skills in their administrations.

Most cities and regions have training programmes on digital skills. Twelve out of the 13 cities and regions surveyed provide ICT training to their employees and ten out of the 13 have provided training on service design or user research to their employees in the last three years. **Madrid** planned a large-scale ICT training plan available to their entire administration's workforce. Based on 2021 data, 46.4% of the employees "*actively participated in the training and took the final certification tests.*" However, few other cities were able to provide the number of participants, pointing to possible limitations in the monitoring effort.

And they don't stop at training only civil servants. Ten out of 13 local authorities have offered training in digital technologies to citizens in the past three years. **Espoo** has introduced [Omnia](#), a municipality-owned educational consortium providing upper secondary vocational education and training, youth and adult workshops, liberal adult education, vocational courses and support in recruitment for enterprises. During the years 2020-2021, *Omnia* arranged 253 courses in digital technologies and courses which counted 3,588 participants.

'Local governments are more and more committed to user-centric digital services and recognise its benefits for citizens, businesses and society.'

Milan follows a different approach. Through the *Milano Digital Week*, Italy's flagship digital conference, which gathered 85.000 participants in 2019, Milan offered 500 sessions including workshops, seminars, shows, and training courses for all levels of digital skills. **Barcelona** has been offering ICT training to citizens for the past 20 years. The [Cibernàrium programme](#) has scheduled more than 52,000 training sessions attended by 140,000 different citizens. The impact these sessions have had on users (cibers) is so positive that they scored them with an average point of 8.3/10.

Overall, in terms of "skills", local authorities reach an average 75% score across all indicators, a testament of their increased efforts in employing the right skills towards providing user-centric services to their citizens and investments in training both their workforce and their population.

1.2 Strategies

Ten cities and regions out of the 13 have digital strategies in place that are less than three years old, accounting for an overall average score of 64%. Moreover, seven of the cities and regions mention service design or user experience in their digital strategies or other similar documents.

In its 2035 Development Strategy **Tallinn**¹⁰ explicitly mentions that the city “provides user-centric services in a variety of fields, which support the achievement of the city’s strategic goals. Services are designed and provided by the service design principle, which means that services are human-centred and user-friendly, relevant and valuable for the user as well as efficient and sustainable from the service provider’s viewpoint. The city collects data in a user-friendly manner, requesting data only once.” **Barcelona**’s Digital Plan calls on service designers to begin with the needs of users: “users’ needs have to be understood and research carried out to develop more knowledge on who the service users are and what this means for the service design.” The **Catalonia region**, **Emilia Romagna region** and **Milan** all mention service design and user experience in their digital strategies, while **Helsinki** commits to provide “rapid, equal, transparent, anticipatory and easily accessible city services by using the best possible expertise and allocating skills to where they are needed most.” **Gothenburg** is working on a new strategy for 2023 where service design and user experience will become a default feature.

However, this doesn’t always translate into formal standards. Only five out of 13 cities and regions surveyed have in place service standards describing the fundamental rules of service delivery.¹¹ The **Catalonia** region has issued a decree according to which the principles for user-centric digital service design are defined. **Rotterdam** goes so far as to adopt service standards for services via phone calls, online, in person and when handling a complaint by a citizen. **Espoo** has enterprise architecture principles that are comparable to standards. They give guidelines to digital service design and are in line with national legislation considering digital service delivery. **Kyiv** has been drawing its own service standards for urban digital services which will be published in 2023.

Perhaps the most comprehensive standards have been developed by **Barcelona**. The city has released “an open-source policy toolkit for cities to develop digital policies that put citizens at the centre and make governments more open, transparent, and collaborative.” The toolkit, which is accompanied by a manifesto in favour of technological sovereignty and digital rights for cities, calls for radically improved digital public services with the use of free software, open standards, data sovereignty, developing digital services in an agile manner, and ensuring privacy, ethics and security by design.¹²

Ten out of the 13 respondents have service design guidelines in place valid across departments. While in most cases they are established locally (Catalonia region, Espoo, Helsinki, Kronoberg region, Kyiv, Madrid, Murcia and Rotterdam) some cities follow the ones set at the national level (Gothenburg, Milan and Tallinn). However, the enforcement of such guidelines remains a challenge. Only four out of 13 cities and regions enforce formal methods and monitor service standards and design guidelines. **Tallinn** reports that all the new services and webpages are reviewed by a user-experience designer. **Rotterdam** follows a different approach and uses dashboards showing the extent to which norms and standards are met. **Milan** performs several checks to verify that standards are fulfilled when a new service is implemented or when an existing one is revised.

Lastly, all of the local authorities surveyed have introduced the role of chief digital officer in their constituencies, a key position tasked with drawing the strategies that help cities harness the opportunity of digital

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/nrp_2022_estonia_annex_en.pdf

¹¹ The first and arguably most famous document on service standard is the United Kingdom’s Government Digital Service standard, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/service-standard>

¹² For more information on Barcelona’s Ethical Digital Standards, visit <https://www.barcelona.cat/digitalstandards/en/init/0.1/index.html>

'The guiding principles of user-centric service design are not yet fully translated into practice.'

transformation. In addition to the chief digital officer, the **Kronoberg** region has also introduced the position of the chief medical digital officer, who oversees the digitalisation of the region's medical services, as the Kronoberg region delivers more than 75% of their services in the healthcare sector. **Kyiv's** chief digital transformation officer, Petro Olenych, also holds the position of deputy mayor and is responsible for the departments of information and communication technologies, land resources, urban planning and architecture.

Overall, local authorities score 64% in the "strategies" sub-pillar. While many local authorities have developed strategies and guidelines for making user-centricity happen, the majority still have not issued formal standards or adequate monitoring and enforcement tools to assess their actual implementation.



1.3 Ecosystem

The “ecosystem” sub-pillar covers the activities related to collaborative services with public and private players.

As a start, 11 cities and regions provide access to public sector datasets through APIs for public and private actors. For instance, **Madrid** acts as a supplier and consumer of data through the State Data Intermediation Platform, enabling interaction with other public bodies through the defined interoperability standards and counts an average of 12 public administrations that use the municipality’s services. However, besides Madrid, few provide specific information in relation to the number of users of these APIs.

When it comes to adoption and implementing national key digital services such as electronic identification or invoicing, local administrations have made impressive strides. All of the surveyed cities and regions use standardised services modules, provided at the national or European level: for instance, the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) building blocks such as eDelivery, eID, eInvoicing, eSignature and eTranslation. **Tallinn** goes a step further by using [Estonia](#)’s X-road infrastructure that allows data exchanges between information systems.

When it comes to collaboration with the private sector, it is no news that public administrations undergo slow and complex procurement processes that often result in limited participation of innovative small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, recent attention and guidance from the European institutions on the topic are changing the ecosystem and allowing more ways for local authorities to engage with innovative forms of procurement, such as pre-commercial procurement, hackathons and a wide range of collaborations with local SMEs and startups.¹³ Accordingly, nine out of the 13 surveyed local and regional authorities are actively pursuing such types of innovative forms of procurement or have done so in the past. The most frequently employed initiatives are hackathons, while **Tallinn** owns and runs two incubators.

The “ecosystem” sub-pillar is an area where cities and regions perform best, with an average score of 85%, indicating excellent progress in this field.



¹³ For more information, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/public-procurement/tools-public-buyers/innovation-procurement_en

'Small municipalities are increasingly keen to apply user-centricity principles to public service design but they lack the right strategies and skills to bring it to scale.'

User-Centricity in Smaller Municipalities: A Zoom into Emilia Romagna Region (Italy)



The UserCentriCities Dashboard takes a closer look into 18 municipalities and unions of municipalities in the Emilia Romagna region.¹⁴ This survey provides an opportunity to zoom into smaller municipalities in Europe and gain insights into their readiness and efforts compared to the main sample of the Dashboard which includes larger and more digitally advanced local authorities. While the 13 cities in the dashboard score 72% in the “enablers” pillar (“skills”, “strategies” and “ecosystem”) when we add the 18 municipalities to the sample, this score is reduced to 54%. Indeed, smaller municipalities in the Emilia Romagna region find it more difficult to employ the right skills for user-centric service design.¹⁵ While each of them have a chief digital officer in their teams, only three out of the 18 municipalities have reported that they have internal positions such as service designers, user researchers or user experience experts. Equivalently, only a small percentage of municipalities in the sample have design standards or guidelines in place, unlike the 13 cities and regions in the Dashboard that show a great interest in issuing guidelines for making user-centricity happen.

When it comes to “performance in user-centricity”, the score comes down to 49% when the Emilia Romagna region municipalities are added, compared to 57% for the 13 cities in the Dashboard.

Regarding co-creation, perhaps not surprisingly, smaller municipalities report a reduced focus on co-creation and rely heavily on web analytics and other service data to improve digital services. When it comes to supply of online services and usability, small municipalities are increasingly keen on using national eID authentication solutions and mobile applications for public service-delivery. In fact, each of the 18 municipalities in the Emilia Romagna region offer a dedicated app to their citizens. And most of them apply consistent design to their websites and are in line with accessibility guidelines (WCAG), a sign of an increasing user-centricity mindset and an awareness of user needs. However, when it comes to more advanced indicators, such as the provision of proactive services or the application of usability assessment tools, indicators that require advanced user experience (UX) and data analytics skills, small municipalities show a much slower uptake.

Regarding the pillar on “outcomes” that focuses on measuring the impact of user-centricity, small municipalities show no interest in measuring any of the indicators in the Dashboard and rather rely on automatically generated data. From a 41% score for the main sample of 13 cities the score when we add the 18 municipalities falls to 30%.

In a nutshell, small municipalities are increasingly keen to apply user-centricity principles to public service design but they lack the right strategies and skills to bring it to scale. They rather rely on solutions provided by the central government or the regional authorities, an indication of reluctance to build their own capacities and move further from tried and off-the-shelf methods of delivering government services.

¹⁴ The 18 municipalities surveyed are: Bologna, Cesena, Ferrara, Mirandola, Parma, Ravenna, Riccione, San Lazzaro di Savena, Santarcangelo, Valsamoggia, Distretto Ceramico, Nuovo Circondario Imolese, Provincia di Ravenna, Unione Bassa Reggiana, Unione Bassa Romagna, Unione Romagna Faentina, Unione Terre d'Acqua, and Unione Terre di Castelli. The data from this sample are not included in the Dashboard because they lack the evidence to support the answers.

¹⁵ The average population in the 18 municipalities surveyed is 122,020 inhabitants.

2. Performance in User-Centricity

The second pillar – “performance in user-centricity” – investigates five different aspects to measure the performance of cities and regions in user-centricity: the adoption of co-creation in the design of digital services; the level of supply of online services; the usability of these services; their security and privacy levels; and lastly, it assesses whether citizens have the possibility to report complaints and provide their feedback.



Cities and regions in the Dashboard score an overall 57% in performance in user-centricity. While cities and regions have made impressive strides in setting up and providing the right conditions to enable user-centricity, this hasn't translated into an equally increased performance. To be sure, the results from setting up the right levers for user-centricity don't often show immediate effect. For this reason and to reflect the progress made, the UserCentriCities Dashboard will be updated with a second iteration in 2023.

'Local authorities don't apply co-creation systematically when they design user-centric services.'

2.1 Co-Creation

One important aspect of developing user-centric services is the commitment to engage in co-creation to involve citizens in the creation, production and after the launch of services.

Only a handful of the 13 cities and regions report that they use service co-design or user research sessions as standard practice before the launch of every new digital service. Within the last two years, **Espoo** has made it common practice to add a service design or user research phase in the projects that develop services for end-users. **Milan** reports that service co-design sessions are used when a local service is reengineered in order to be digitised. **Helsinki** uses [Osallistu](#), a citizen participation portal where citizens are offered different ways to participate at different levels in service design. In addition, through [OmaStadi](#), a participatory budgeting services platform, Helsinki not only asks citizens to propose ideas to be funded but also uses co-creation to turn those ideas into viable proposals together with citizens. **Gothenburg** actively engages citizens in the design of all services. And **Tallinn** conducts user research and testing with the users for the design of every service.

Moreover, only three cities and regions report that they engage in co-creation or user research sessions after the launch of a service. And when they do so, in most cases they heavily rely on surveys and data automatically generated by web services rather than more deep and full-fledged co-creation techniques, such as small group co-design workshops and advanced prototyping. Equally and perhaps predictably, only five of the cities and regions habitually plan to release regular (at least once per year) new versions of existing digital services. **Rotterdam** reports that the city uses the reviews and responses to citizen surveys to make iterations and changes to existing services.

Milan reports a staggering 500,000 users sessions since the launch of their services. However, the city also includes in this number the tickets received through the city's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution. **Gothenburg** offers citizens the opportunity to get informed and provide feedback in-person at one of the three service centres available around the city. Citizens can get access to these civic offices and collect information on the services offered, ask association, consumer or housing questions, and read documents and minutes. Citizens can also submit comments and complaints about the city's activities.

Few local authorities deliberately engage in co-creation exercises with disadvantaged groups, and those exercises that do occur are mostly for services specifically addressed to these groups. **Rotterdam** holds co-creation sessions with minorities, elderly people, people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and vulnerable families in the design of social and welfare services. **Milan**, via the [We-Mi](#) service (Social affairs department), organises research sessions to co-design ICT services with disadvantaged communities. On this, **Helsinki** follows the CLEAR protocol for co-creation, a diagnostic tool used for encouraging participation.¹⁶

Perhaps not surprisingly, the use of web analytics to monitor digital services and improve them is more widespread than co-creation. Eight out of the 13 respondents report that they gather data to improve digital services through analytics websites, dashboards or surveys. Some of them do so through Google analytics, while others gather data via dedicated dashboards developed in-house or otherwise outsourced.

With an overall score of 37%, co-creation is the area where cities and regions need to make more progress. Local governments are adopting co-creation on a case-by-case basis and tend to rely more on surveys than on sessions with citizens and other advanced co-creation methods. Local governments need to take decisive steps in taking co-creation to a higher level and making user involvement an integral part of user-centric digital government.

¹⁶ Lowndes, Vivien, Pratchett, Lawrence and Stoker, Gerry (2006). Diagnosing and remedying the failings of official participation schemes: the CLEAR framework. *Social Policy and Society*, 5 (2), 281–291 (doi:10.1017/S1474746405002988).
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231914301_Diagnosing_and_Remedying_the_Failings_of_Official_Participation_Schemes_The_CLEAR_Framework



‘Many cities and regions are increasingly focusing their efforts to improve security and privacy and fully adopting national and regional eID authentication, a sign of their advanced progress in digital transformation.’

2.2 Supply of Online Services

The supply of services online remains very challenging for local authorities. Six cities provide the majority of their services digitally, although four fail to answer the indicator, pointing to a lack of monitoring or to the need to redefine the indicators. **Tallinn** and **Emilia Romagna** region manage to offer all of their services digitally.

The vast majority of the cities and regions surveyed have at least one mobile application in place to facilitate communication with citizens. Some of them even cluster them by topics (tourism, health, culture and entertainment, administration).

On the fulfilment of the Single Digital Gateway requirements, only two out of 13 of the respondents have answered positively. This is particularly worrying considering that the implementation deadline is October 2022. And when it comes to the right to check online the progress status of the services they request, seven out of the 13 cities and regions provide this possibility to their citizens.

Proactive services are often mentioned as the next frontier of public service delivery.¹⁷ According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for public administrations to be proactive, they have to “eliminate the need for end users to initiate requests to the government where they can be automated or predicted.”¹⁸ Only three local authorities in the Dashboard provide at least one proactive service to their citizens. **Helsinki** aims at moving from a reactive administration to a proactive one and plans to roll out more proactive services in the near future. Its pre-primary education allocation service, an innovative system for offering and registering pre-primary educational places to families through simple text messaging, won the 2022 UserCentriCities Award for the best user-centric digital service in Europe.¹⁹ The **Catalonia** region offers an alert to eligible students to apply for annual university grants as well as a pre-filled form with all the data they had provided the year before. **Espoo** proactively offers free sports and exercise services to its residents aged 68 and up through the +68 sports wristband. Every year without the requirement of any registration or application, citizens that turn 68 get a letter informing them that they are entitled to this service. To determine the eligible citizens, the city analyses address and birth year data.



¹⁷ For more on proactive services, read: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0740624X15300046>

¹⁸ Visit: https://engagement.oecd-opsi.org/engagement/processes/9/draft_versions/6

¹⁹ For more information, see <https://www.usercentricities.eu/news/2022-usercentricities-award-helsinki-wins-best-user-centric-service-europe>

2.3 Usability

Tallinn is the only local authority in the Dashboard to habitually carry out usability assessments of its online services using standard tools. Usability is measured on the basis of feedback received from users (both on a scale ranging from one to five and based on the comments added). On the other hand, almost all (ten out of 13) of the local authorities' web services are in line with the accessibility guidelines WCAG. Moreover, 12 out of 13 respondents apply a consistent look and feel to their websites, which is in most cases the main online contact point with citizens.

A second common feature among the respondents is that the vast majority (12 out of 13) provide citizens with the possibility to contact the local authority via audio and/or video channels. It is not specified whether these tools have been planned before or after the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless, the pandemic has certainly positively impacted the ways in which local administrations communicate with their citizens and fostered the development of such tools to simplify and accelerate communication.

With an overall score of 67%, the results on the “usability” indicator show a promising level of the actions undertaken by cities and regions for usability and accessibility.



2.4 Security and Privacy

All cities and regions in the Dashboard offer national eID to their citizens as a means of online services authentication. And when it comes to whether local authorities have documents or measures, or practices or procedures on ICT security in place, the vast majority (12 out of the 13) of local authorities answer positively.

While progress in implementing national eID at local level and the availability of documents on ICT security is impressive, the opposite is true when it comes to the application of measures to ensure citizen control over their data. Only five local authorities report that they offer this possibility to their citizens. In the **Catalonia** region, the MyGov service provides citizens with insights into which administrative units have looked into their data. **Espoo** provides citizens with the right to request information about their data via email or in person, while **Tallinn** also gives the right for data rectification and deletion. **Madrid** gives citizens the “right to receive free, clear, concise and transparent information from the Madrid City Council” on a large variety of aspects, including if the data were subject to international transfers.

With an overall score of 77%, local authorities appear to take security and privacy issues seriously and fulfil most basic requirements on this indicator.

2.5 Citizen Redress and Feedback Mechanisms

Eleven out of the 13 cities and regions provide online mechanisms for both citizens and businesses to complain and seek changes to a decision. **Madrid** offers citizens the possibility to complain online about issues of general nature as well as file tax-related complaints online. In addition, the city also offers the option to follow online the progress of each complaint filed. In **Tallinn**, the law obliges the city to accept complaints by email while in **Milan**, **Rotterdam** and **Murcia**, citizens can file complaints via the city's mobile applications. In **Espoo**, while complaints and appeals of legal nature must be filed in written form, online documents are also accepted and redressal requests can also be submitted online. **Gothenburg** collects feedback and proposals from citizens through their participation portal [Göteborgsförslaget](#), which provides information in 12 languages, including in sign language. In the cases where there is no specific procedure foreseen, the **Catalonia** region offers the possibility to citizens to file any request via a dedicated website. **Barcelona** offers the option to citizens to either file an online complaint for each procedure opened or via a general form.



Cities and regions also show a great interest in collecting feedback from citizens. Eleven out of the 13 cities and regions have in place standardised and user-friendly ways for citizens to provide their suggestions, comments and complaints or even praise for a service. **Helsinki**, the **Kronoberg** region and **Madrid** offer citizens the opportunity to provide feedback through a dedicated page on the city's main web portal. Meanwhile, **Tallinn** has added a standardised feedback button in most of the information systems and webpages. In **Espoo**, citizens can give feedback online on the [Trimble Feedback](#) mobile application, an application using geographical information for giving, managing and publishing feedback. The **Catalonia** region offers a variety of support measures to citizens, such as a chatbot, the region's unified phone service and also in-person assistance at the citizen service offices. **Gothenburg** also collects user feedback in-person at the city's service centres. Murcia collects feedback through the [TutMurcia](#) mobile application as well as the municipal registers which are accessible both online and offline. Finally, in addition to the city's web portal, **Milan** uses the mobile chat application WhatsApp to collect feedback and reports the opening of more than 1,000,000 tickets per year through the different channels. Apart from complaints for specific services, **Kyiv** also offers citizens the opportunity to file online petitions for an issue of their choice. Petitions that gather more than 6,000 signatures are considered by the city council within ten working days and receive a formal answer.

Citizen redress and feedback mechanisms are a must for the majority of the surveyed cities and regions, with an average score of 85%, facilitating a communication channel with citizens and showing their interest in listening to their needs.

3. Outcomes in User-Centricity

In the “outcomes” pillar, local authorities score an average of 41%, making it the pillar where local authorities perform the weakest. Even though most local authorities have suitable enablers of user-centricity in place (pillar 1) and also show good results in user-centricity performance (pillar 2), it is clear that there is a lack of interest in measuring the outcomes of user-centric service delivery and follow-up in their implementation.

Measuring and collecting data on the impact of digital services is indeed a difficult task and in some cases it may even fall outside the capabilities of local authorities. European cities and regions have clearly made it a priority to design and deliver user-centric digital services, but haven't made equal progress in measuring the impact of those services on citizen's lives and society at large.



‘Despite their increasing focus on user needs, most cities and regions report a reduced effort in measuring and understanding the impact of their digital services.’

3.1 Adoption

Seven out of the 13 local authorities report that the majority of transactions between citizens and the local authority are carried out online. Most strikingly, **Madrid** reports that 63.09% of transactions were carried online, an increase of 41% compared to 2019, when the rate reached only 22.58 %. **Rotterdam** and the **Emilia Romagna** region report a remarkable 100% of transactions being completed online and **Tallinn** a rate of 90%. When it comes to publishing data on usage of digital services, eight out of the 13 the local authorities report that they publish them on a regular basis. **Tallinn** gathers and publishes data on usage of online services internally in the city's intranet. The **Emilia Romagna** region publishes a benchmarking report each year on digital innovation in the region, where data on the usage of digital services are included. **Espoo** uses surveys to gather such data, while **Rotterdam** relies on online dashboards. The **Catalonia** region, **Helsinki** and **Madrid** publish usage data through their open data portals. **Milan** gathers data in real time through internal dashboards and publishes regular reports on the city's portal. The results are displayed in charts and presented by service type, such as education allocation, certificate issuing, urban planning and building and more.

'Only five out of 13 cities and regions surveyed have in place service standards describing the fundamental rules of service delivery.'



The adoption and use of digital services is a key indicator of their effectiveness. Citizens simply do not use services that are not user-friendly or that don't meet their needs. The Dashboard data reveals an encouraging trend towards the increased adoption of user-centric services, with an overall score of 58% in the “adoption” sub-pillar.

3.2 Reduction of Burden

Milan scores positively on both indicators, while the remaining local authorities either do not provide sufficient data or do not report on it. Milan measures both the time saved by citizens when using digital services as opposed to the offline and the financial savings to the administration itself. The city states that in 2021, for every digital certificate issued online, citizens saved eight minutes compared to the analogue procedure (for example, if the certificate would be issued in person) and €1.2 million would be saved each year to be used in the design and delivery of other municipal services. **Kyiv** measures the average time saved by citizens when using the city's mobile application to pay for parking fares or getting back a car after its evacuation.

The results provide an interesting glimpse into the strategies perpetuated by the respondents. If it is true that public digital services do work and provide clear benefits to the large majority of the population, why is the return in terms of burden reduction not equally evaluated and documented? The answers from the results show that, for the moment, local administrations are not interested in measuring this aspect, neither for the internal administration nor with respect to citizen choices. The “reduction of burden” sub-pillar is therefore one of the areas where cities and regions are less active, showing an average score of 19%.

‘Only Tallinn assesses the usability of online services, but based solely upon citizen feedback.’

3.3 Satisfaction

Digitalisation and user experience have redefined how we measure citizen satisfaction. Deep customer understanding implies getting to know much more about customers/citizens, not with a traditional survey or focus groups, but how they interact with digital public services available, apps and websites. Understanding the citizen journey by using metrics such as Net Promoter Score (NPS) is key.²⁰

Looking more closely, while the majority (ten out of 13) of the local authorities measure satisfaction, only three out of 13 report that they reach 80% or above in citizen satisfaction rates.

The majority of local authorities use surveys to measure satisfaction and few report that they use the standard Net Promoter Score method, such as **Espoo**. More specifically, the **Kronoberg** region, whose primary competences include health and transport, report an 82% satisfaction rate in primary patient care, a result of the Swedish national patient survey.²¹ In **Tallinn**, citizens can rate the services provided on a scale from 0-5 and leave comments on whether they found what they were looking for. The results are a score of 4.67 out of 5 in citizen satisfaction.

The private sector has significant experience in customer satisfaction and has invested heavily in measuring this. While the public sector hasn't always been able to catch up, cities and regions in the dashboard are showing an increased interest in measuring user satisfaction with an average score of 58% in this sub-pillar.

²⁰ Net promoter score (NPS) is a market research metric in the form of a single question asking respondents to indicate how likely they would be recommending a company, product, or service. Conceived for the private sector initially, this method is also used by public administrations to measure citizen satisfaction. For more information, visit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net_promoter_score

²¹ Visit: <https://patientenkat.se/>

3.4 Environmental Impact

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Dashboard indicates that most local authorities have only recently started to show interest in measuring the impact of digital services on the environment. Only two of the 13 surveyed cities and regions report that they measure the impact of their efforts to digitise service on the environment.



'When it comes to adoption and implementing national key digital services such as electronic identification or invoicing, local administrations have made impressive strides.'

One exception is **Madrid**. In 2021 the municipality saved 1.451 tonnes of CO2 emissions thanks to the digitalisation of services especially focused on electronic registration, digital signatures and electronic notifications. In **Milan**, the municipality has gone further and developed a tool to visualise and communicate to citizens the CO2 savings derived from the digitalisation of some services and processes.²² The city reports that the registry certificates available online have allowed the citizens of Milan to save, in one year, one hour of travel to the registry office, which translated into 49 tons of CO2 not emitted and therefore 3,266 trees saved.

Overall, illustrated by an overall score of 15% on this sub-pillar, local authorities show a lack of interest in measuring and monitoring the financial and time savings as well as the environmental impact.

²² Visit <https://www.comune.milano.it/-/milano-digital-week.-il-comune-di-milano-presenta-il-modello-per-l-analisi-dei-benefici-del-digitale>

CITIES AND REGIONS PROFILES

BARCELONA



Barcelona has made important strides towards radical improvement of digital public services through the use of open data, open standards and ensuring privacy, digital rights, ethics, and technology and innovation procurement. The city excels in the way it interacts with the private sector, in providing security and privacy as well as redress mechanisms to its citizens. Barcelona's digital service standards are a clear statement of the city's intention to deliver excellent digital services that meet users' needs. Despite the increased focus on standards, security, privacy and redress mechanisms, the city shows little interest in co-creating services with citizens and in gathering data on digital services adoption. Despite Barcelona's ambitious digital strategy, the city doesn't provide data on how it measures the outcomes of its services such as satisfaction, time savings, and on the environment.

CATALONIA



The Catalonia region is one of the few local authorities in the dashboard that deployed clear standards and guidelines for the design of use-centric digital services, but as with the vast majority of the cities and regions, it does not have formal methods to monitor and enforce them. The region has also started to provide proactive services. In terms of "skills", the region is also leveraging private sector knowledge and competences by hiring managers with expertise in user experience and service design. When considering co-creation, the Catalonia region shows a reduced commitment to involving citizens in service design and production. The region's efforts to focus their service around the needs of citizens seem to be paying off with a 92% satisfaction rate. Finally, in terms of supply and demand, the region offers 83% of their services online but reports reduced adoption of online services, with most transactions carried out in person.

EMILIA-ROMAGNA



The Emilia-Romagna region finds itself in a special place in this analysis. A larger constituency than its fellow local municipalities, the Emilia-Romagna region does its best to ensure citizens have access to fast and easily-accessible online services. One of the region's focuses is healthcare, which is managed at the regional level in Italy, and several apps and services are designed around the topic. Perhaps because regions are not the main contact point for citizens, the administration lags behind in co-creation and does not systematically engage citizens in the design of public services. Furthermore, it does not assess the impacts and outcomes of service digitalisation, yet simultaneously reports very high levels of adoption of digital services and provides high level of training to employees and citizens alike. Moreover, the region demonstrated its ecosystem approach by involving 20 additional local authorities in the project as intermediaries.

'Only three local authorities in the Dashboard provide at least one proactive service to their citizens.'

ESPOO



Espoo shows mixed results in user-centricity performance. It scores highly on enablers, with its training and educational programmes, enterprise architecture principles and tactical and operational level guidelines. Espoo is one of the very few local authorities that have started providing proactive services to its citizens and puts extra effort in measuring citizen satisfaction with the application of the net promoter score: a clear testament to its commitment to user-centricity. However, the city currently lacks systematic adoption of co-creation, in-house design skills, a consistent design and look and feel in its websites as well as monitoring mechanisms to address the reduction of burden and environmental impact.

GOTHENBURG



Gothenburg demonstrates an increased focus on the enabling factors of user-centric service design mainly by setting up the right strategies, employing the right skills and its ecosystem. The city also shows a strong performance in co-creation and uses varied methods to engage citizens in service design, such as online forms, surveys and physical interactions in the city's service centres, where citizens can participate in the production and design of services but also find information and provide feedback. The city has put several measures in place to enable the usability and security of its services, but performs less well when it comes to the supply of online services. The majority of Gothenburg's services are not provided online and the city does not have a dedicated app or offers proactive services or the possibility to check online the progress status of the services. Gothenburg needs to put additional effort into systematically measuring the adoption of its digital services as well as the impact on satisfaction, reduction of burden and the environment.

HELSINKI



Helsinki is among the top-performing cities when it comes to enablers and user-centricity performance, but scores less well in outcomes. It leads in terms of internal skills, with 20 in-house designers, while also having a strong ecosystem approach, for instance funding many small scale experimental projects. It also excels in usability, closely monitoring the accessibility guidelines, and is a clear leader in providing proactive services. However, the city needs to make more progress in the supply of online services, as well as the monitoring of the reduction of burden on citizens or on the administration, the environmental impact of digital services, satisfaction and adoption.

'Kyiv's electronic petitions platform is a pioneering example of citizen participation.'

KRONOBERG



The Kronoberg region focuses primarily on healthcare, covering 75% of the region's responsibilities. Through its Reality Lab Verklighetslabbet, the Kronoberg region, strives to provide patient-centred healthcare and puts a special focus on digital services in the sector. It performs well when it comes to the enabling factors of user-centricity. The region also devised a long-term strategy for the digitisation of health and medical care and created the positions of both a chief digital officer and a chief medical digital officer. The region employs at least one user experience expert in its teams and trains their employees on service design or user research. But the region's overall performance is drawn down by its limited focus on co-creation and reduced adoption of digital services. And while the Kronoberg region does not measure the financial and time savings of its digital services it tops the satisfaction sub-pillar with an 82% patient satisfaction rate reported in the region's annual patient survey.

KYIV



In these times of unprecedented challenges, Kyiv has responded to the needs of its citizens with unmatched resilience and digital services that went from improving lives to saving them. The city demonstrates increased performance in the way it interacts with the private sector, the use of national or banking eID, in providing citizens with redress mechanisms and feedback as well as measuring satisfaction. Kyiv's electronic petitions platform is a pioneering example of citizen participation. And while the city lags behind in the supply of online services, Kyiv Digital, the city's mobile application was repurposed to help citizens find shelter and alert them of incoming air raids and became a life-saving tool. While Kyiv clearly demonstrates a strategic vision towards user-centric digital services, it still needs to make more progress in areas such as the employment of service designers and user experience experts; the increase of adoption rates of digital services; in providing more services fully online and in involving citizens in co-creation.

MADRID



Madrid demonstrates an increased focus on user-centricity performance well above average in the vast majority of the indicators. With a sound local digital transformation plan in place, increased security and privacy measures, and a nearly 80% share of satisfied citizens, the city secures a position among the top performers in the Dashboard. In recent years, the city's efforts towards addressing citizen needs are paying off as it has seen its adoption rates rise from 23% in 2019 to 63% in 2021. In contrast, Madrid also shows weak results on employing the adequate skills for user-centric service design and in deploying co-creation methods.

'All cities and regions in the Dashboard offer national eID to their citizens as a means of online services authentication.'

MILAN



Milan shows strong performance across the board. It has a strong training programme, a mature digital transformation plan and clear guidelines on service design. Co-design, web analytics and CRM tickets are systematically used. In terms of impact, Milan is one of the few cities in the Dashboard that in addition to the reduction of the administrative burden on the citizens and internal to the municipality, also measures the environmental impact resulting from the online service provision. On the down side, Milan employs just five service designers, has not yet developed any proactive services to which users are automatically signed up and is not active in innovation procurement.

MURCIA



With a high level of digitalisation of the service provision, Murcia shows promising results but still needs to make fast and steady progress. The city's Smart Strategic Plan does mention addressing citizen needs and is currently under revision, but Murcia lacks service standards and guidelines to enforce this vision. Co-creation is not high enough on the city's agenda and much progress is needed when it comes to monitoring adoption, satisfaction, reduction of burden and environmental impact. The city's mobile application, TuMurcia and Murcia Decide, the city's participation platform as well as the increased focus on citizens redress and feedback mechanisms and security and privacy are steps towards the right direction, but the same cannot be said for strategies, security and privacy and the employment of the right skills.

ROTTERDAM



Rotterdam is one of the leaders in skills, with an impressive team of 20 designers in house, training on service design provided to hundreds of employees and regular user research sessions. The city also adopted a highly strategic approach, with service standards, design guidelines and formal monitoring tools to ensure implementation, including ad hoc monitoring dashboards and data analytics. The result is a close to 100% adoption of digital services. However, the city's user-centricity performance in terms of monitoring is not yet excellent, and impact evaluation is not yet among the administrations' priorities. Rotterdam needs to make concentrated efforts in offering citizens means for structured feedback, in assessing the usability of their services and in applying co-creation more systematically.

Tallinn is a trailblazer when it comes to digital public service provision. The capital city of Estonia, one of Europe's most digitally advanced countries, demonstrates high results in security and privacy, high satisfaction levels among its citizens and increased usability and adoption rates. And while Tallinn does not offer proactive services or dedicated apps to its citizens, it reports a staggering 90% of adoption in digital services. Despite its good overall performance, Tallinn is not yet committed enough to applying co-creation systematically and to gathering data on the impact of its digital services, namely on the amount of financial or time savings or the environment.

'Cities and regions show great interest in setting up service design teams equipped with the right skills to deeply understand and address user needs.'



RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The results of the UserCentriCities Dashboard and this policy brief offer a 360-degree view of the state of user-centric service design in local authorities. Policymakers can use these data-informed conclusions in their work towards making user-centric public services a reality for European citizens.

There is a strong need for a critical mass of data to achieve impact and lead to more assertive and widespread conclusions. The UserCentriCities consortium will continue working on adding more cities and regions to the Dashboard and extending its reach to a larger sample of local authorities with improved geographical and demographic representations.

In the coming year, the existing 13 cities and regions of the UserCentriCities Dashboard will continue updating their data on a regular basis, which will allow for tracking their progress in user-centricity. A new, improved, final version of the State of the UserCentriCities in Europe Report will be published in 2023.

In this light, the consortium will continue working on assessing the impact of the selected indicators. Concretely, it will consider removing or adding new indicators and will work to improve some of the existing indicators, carefully taking into account the surveyed local authorities' feedback.

The indicators under the “enablers” pillar have proven easier to answer for local authorities and offered them the opportunity to assess their readiness to provide user-centric services, an important first step to establish optimal conditions for a user-centric digital government.

In contrast, the indicators under the “outcomes” pillar have delivered limited insights. Specifically, the indicators that measure the impact on reduction of burden and environmental impact have proven less useful for local authorities as they don't assist them in assessing user-centricity directly and have no obvious correlation to user-centricity performance.

The indicators in the “user-centricity performance” pillar have proven most reliable and offer a better understanding of what citizen-centred service design means and how it can be achieved. Through assessing their performance, local authorities have been able to challenge classic assumptions such as how much they are aware of the needs of their citizens and re-assess the importance of the correlation between co-creation and user-centricity. Therefore, the consortium will continue adding more indicators under this pillar to shed light on performance in user-centricity such as the use of simple language, trust in public services and more.

Last but not least, more insights are needed on what makes local authorities succeed in user-centric service delivery and ultimately to improve citizens' lives and deliver better economic and social outcomes for society.

‘Overall, the data paints a picture of increasing focus on user-centricity in local government but it also shows the lack of systematic approaches in terms of deployment at scale.’

ANNEX: DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

The dashboard is divided into three main pillars, each containing a variable number of indicators (i.e. questions). The first pillar totals 13 indicators divided on three sub-pillars. The second pillar lists 19 indicators spread across five sub-pillars. Lastly, the third pillar accounts for seven indicators distributed along four sub-pillars.

PILLARS	INDICATOR	SUB-INDICATOR
I. Enablers	I.1. Skills	I.1.1. Does the local authority have internally any position such as service designers OR user researchers OR user experience experts?
		I.1.2. Has the local authority provided training on service design or user research to its employees in the last three years?
		I.1.3. Has the local authority provided training on ICT to its employees in the last three years?
		I.1.4. Has the local authority provided training on ICT to citizens in the last three years?
	I.2. Strategies	I.2.1. Does the local authority have a digital strategy less than three years old?
		I.2.2. Does the local authority have a position of Chief Digital Officer or equivalent?
		I.2.3. Does the local authority have formal service standard (e.g. the United Kingdom Government Digital Service Standards)?
		I.2.4. Does the local authority have design guidelines valid across departments, including for instance standards or protocols for simple language?
		I.2.5. Does the local authority have in place formal methods to monitor and enforce such service standards and design guidelines?
		I.2.6. Are service design or user experience mentioned in digital strategy or some other strategy level document?
	I.3. Ecosystem	I.3.1. Does the local authority provide APIs to other administrations and to private companies?
		I.3.2. Does the local authority use standardised services modules, provided at national or European level (e.g. CEF building blocks, national payment service or eID)?
		I.3.3. Has the local authority carried out within the last two years innovative forms of procurement, such as pre-commercial procurement, hackathons, other forms of collaboration with SMEs and startups?

PILLARS	INDICATOR	SUB-INDICATOR
II. User-Centricity Performance	II.1. Co-creation	<p>II.1.1. Does the local authority habitually (as standard practice on every new digital service) use service co-design / user research sessions in developing its services before their launch?</p> <p>II.1.2. Does the local authority habitually carry out users' research sessions on a regular basis (at least once a year) AFTER the launch of a service?</p> <p>II.1.3. Does the local authority habitually use specific service co-design / user research sessions with disadvantaged communities (e.g. minorities, elderly people, people with disabilities, etc.)?</p> <p>II.1.4. Does the local authority habitually use web analytics and other service data to improve digital services (e.g. completion rates and most frequent errors)?</p> <p>II.1.5. Does the local authority habitually plan for releasing regular (at least once a year) new releases for existing digital services (not including technical updates automatically provided by software provider)?</p>
	II.2. Supply of online services	<p>II.2.1. Does the local authority provide the majority of services fully online (out of total services provided that could potentially be digitalised)?</p> <p>II.2.2. Does the local authority have a dedicated app?</p> <p>II.2.3. Does the local authority offer at least one proactive service, where users are automatically signed up for a service based on the government-held data?</p> <p>II.2.4. Has the local authority already fulfilled the requirements of the Single Digital (deadline end of 2022)?</p> <p>II.2.5. Does the local authority provide habitually to citizens the possibility to check online the progress status of the services they request?</p>
	II.3. Usability	<p>II.3.1. Does the local authority habitually carry out usability assessment of its online services, using standard tools such as System Usability Scale (SUS)?</p> <p>II.3.2. Do all the websites or websites sections of the local authority have consistent design and look and feel?</p> <p>II.3.3. Does the local authority provide the possibility to citizens to have live audio/video interaction (such as videoconference or single telephone number)?</p> <p>II.3.4. Are the local authority web services in line with accessibility guidelines (WCAG)?</p>

	II.4.3. Security and privacy	<p>II.4.1. Are the users able to use national eID, as a means of authentication for online services requiring authentication?</p> <p>II.4.2. Has the local authority put in place measures to ensure citizens' control over the data held about them (such as seeing who has access to the data and for what reason, correcting data, etc.)?</p> <p>II.4.3. Has the local authority in place documents on measures, practices or procedures on ICT security?</p>
	II.5. Citizen redress and feedback mechanisms	<p>II.5.1. Does the local authority provide online mechanisms for both citizens and businesses to complain and seek change to a decision?</p> <p>II.5.2. Has the local authority put in place structured means for users to provide feedback?</p>
PILLARS	INDICATOR	SUB-INDICATOR
III. Outcome	III.1. Adoption	<p>III.1.1. Considering only services that are available online, are the majority of transactions carried out online?</p> <p>III.1.2. Does the local authority publish data on usage of online services (such as a dashboard with metrics on transactions) on a regular basis?</p>
	III.2. Reduction of burden	<p>III.2.1. Does the authority measure the average time saved by citizens when using an online service compared to the offline one?</p> <p>III.2.2. Does the authority measure the amount of annual financial savings for the public administration?</p>
	III.3. Satisfaction	<p>III.3.1. Does the local authority measure the citizens' level of satisfaction with regards to the services' provision?</p> <p>III.3.2. Is the share of satisfied users above 80%?</p>
	III.4. Environmental impact	<p>III.4.1. Does the authority measure the volume of CO2 saved by the citizens when using an online service compared to the offline one?</p>

Table 01: Dashboard list of indicators

To ensure sufficient simplicity of data collection, the indicators are a simple binary choice (yes or no). But to ensure the high quality of data and enforce transparency, when answering “yes” to any question, the respondent is compelled to provide evidence supporting the affirmative claim. Evidence types can differ according to the question: public websites, information detailed in official reports, or other resources. The UserCentriCities team has then reviewed all submitted data prior to publication and validated the consistency of proposed evidence to ensure coherence and validity.¹

Thirteen cities and regions agreed to provide data. Each of these cities directly uploaded their data on the selected indicators, based on the detailed guidelines provided. Obviously, the results are not statistically representative of the reality of the thousands of European municipalities. Thirteen cities and regions is not a representative sample, and is certainly biased towards the leaders. Yet, the results provide a uniquely useful service to cities to compare their digital performance objectively, through data backed up by evidence, rather than stories, PowerPoint presentations or perception-based surveys.

The second year of the project aims at involving a larger number of cities. The aim is not, however, to provide a statistically valid picture, but to clearly measure the progress in the participating cities.

¹ This methodology is well consolidated and has been used by the Lisbon Council in five previous high profile dashboards, one such example being the Startup Manifesto Scoreboard https://lisboncouncil.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/EDF_Startup-Nation-Scoreboard-2016.pdf

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