



European Public Sector Award EPISA 2017



An Innovative Public Sector in 2017
New Solutions to Complex Challenges



European Institute of Public Administration
Institut européen d'administration publique

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What is the European Public Sector Award?

The EPSA brings together the best, most innovative and efficient performers from the European public sector. The vision of EPSA and EIPA is to create an arena in which Europe's public sector institutions can excel and become exemplars for the rest of the world. Therefore, the objective of EPSA is to make this valuable experience transparent, available and usable.

The European Public Sector Award: the European Network of Public Sector Excellence

The EPSA is the only Europe-wide public sector award, which is open to all public administrations from all levels across Europe. It is a biennial scheme started in 2007, which will be run and managed for the fifth time in 2017 by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA).

So far, EPSA has brought together over 1000 cases of public excellence. All awarded cases contain inspirational and working solutions which are ready to be replicated by other countries in a new context and in new forms.

Consequently, EPSA is an important **European learning arena**.



Target: EPSA targets all sectors of public administration, with an emphasis on specific themes/categories;

Scope: EPSA awards projects which have proven their success by tangible results and impact;

Focus: EPSA focuses on recognition and dissemination of good practice.

The EPSA 2017 provides an excellent opportunity for innovative and efficient performers from the public sector to present their work and to become part of an extensive European network of public sector excellence, in which they can benchmark their achievements with their peers and at the same time learn from each other.

The EPSA 2017 awards will be presented on the occasion of a high-level event to be held **mid-November 2017 in Maastricht**, the Netherlands, during the Estonian presidency of the Council of the EU. This event offers a significant opportunity for European public sector bodies to demonstrate innovative performance and outstanding achievements to an extensive audience and to be recognised for being at the leading edge of public sector innovation across Europe.

Moreover, EPSA 2017 is taking place in the framework of a series of events organised by the Province of Limburg and the Municipality of Maastricht to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Treaty of Maastricht, and - as such - will enjoy even broader visibility.

‘I would like to congratulate EIPA for this very well organised, interesting and useful event. It was the first time that I attended, but I really enjoyed listening to such good speakers on issues and good practices very suitable for our daily work’.

EPSA 2015 Best Practice recipient

General context of EPSA 2017

The multiple challenges the public sector has been confronted with in recent years persist. Historically low levels of growth, increasing competitive pressures from outside Europe, constraints in public finances, pressures on demand for both services and social benefits as a means of enhancing equality of opportunity and social inclusion are still in the focus of public entities across Europe. Furthermore, demographic change, climate change and the pace of technological transformation, continuing austerity and the resultant austerity fatigue add to the highly complex context the public sector has to navigate in and in which it strives to provide the most appropriate solutions.

Public administrations are also faced more than ever with challenges to economic and social stability and social cohesion such as uncertainty about the future stability of the banking sector, uncertainty about the stability of the Eurozone, historically unprecedented levels of migration from outside of Europe's external borders, the increased threat of terrorism and its challenge to the functioning of Schengen (and thus one of the core principles of the EU - free movement of people) and security (including maintenance of cyber security and addressing external cyber threats to the EU's security).

Even if not all public administrations will be faced by all of these challenges, many will be faced by the broadly applicable consequences of them. Examples include the need:

- to redefine their role in a world of global markets;
- to be more focused in setting priorities;
- to manage the 'hollow state' at a time of delegation/marketisation of service delivery;
- to balance decentralisation with affordability; and
- to address the combined challenge of budget constraints, limitations on managerial and other human resources to tackle issues and to control rising/difficult demand for services/social benefits.



Public administrations in Europe thus continue to face many very difficult and complex challenges. This topic will give public change agents, innovators and their institutions the chance to showcase how they developed innovative and working solutions to the interplay of political, economic, fiscal and security challenges and how they are balancing competing demands on them in an uncertain environment.

The EPSA 2017 will be a unique opportunity to celebrate their achievements.

The EPSA 2017 theme



Under the overarching theme **An Innovative Public Sector in 2017 - New Solutions to Complex Challenges**, EPSA 2017 seeks to showcase and reward those cases submitted by public administrations which have demonstrated an innovative approach to public service delivery and policy-making to the increasingly complex, difficult to address and often multi-dimensional challenges faced by the public sector in Europe. These challenges come at a time of an increasingly rapid pace of change, requiring public sector bodies to address both immediate needs and issues with important future consequences and to effectively prioritise actions. Solutions are sought where public entities contribute to the enhancement of trust in their ability. In the current context, public sector intervention is particularly needed both to address the impact of continuing economic uncertainty and to meet the needs of different stakeholders in a way that is demonstrably equitable and inclusive. Put simply, in many cases new solutions are called for by this theme where previously tried solutions to address challenges may no longer be optimal.

The EPSA 2017 thus aims to reward public innovative solutions in administrations that show how the public sector is responding effectively to major challenges and is performing efficiently.

What are complex challenges?

By complex challenges*, we understand complex issues faced by the public sector in Europe such as:

unparalleled levels of migration ~ economic uncertainty ~ low economic growth ~ high unemployment ~ uncertainty about future stability of the banking sector ~ uncertainty about the stability of the Eurozone ~ public finance constraints ~ lack of trust in government ~ pressure on external borders ~ terrorism and its challenge to the functioning of Schengen ~ security (including cyber security and external threats) ~ demographic change ~ climate change ~ the pace of technological change...

** It should be emphasised that these examples of complex challenges are not exhaustive and are in no particular order of priority.*

Applications submitted to EPSA 2017 should demonstrate successful initiatives with **tangible results**, in one or several of the following domains:

- Effectively address the societal challenges that are highest priority for their stakeholders.
- Introduce systemic changes, which improve the sustainability of successful outcomes such as the modernisation of governance and leadership within an organisation, increase the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer and take into account the diversification of the workforce.
- Improve the accountability of public sector entities to their stakeholders.
- Deal with digital transformation by applying solutions provided by new technologies as well as by facilitating the way into a digital future for society and businesses.
- Address very poor past levels of service and/or critical service failures, which may arise in response to unexpected events outside the control of the public sector entity such as high levels of migration or natural phenomena.
- Enhance trust in government by delivering better results for stakeholders.

The examples above are also intended to emphasise that the notion of innovation may be related to organisational change, policy formulation, service design and delivery and monitoring of outcomes that may involve digital transformation, while recognising that this is not the only dimension of innovation.

Successful projects will contain appropriately prioritised, effectively planned and effectively executed innovation, meet the highest priority needs of stakeholders and show proven and concrete results.

The EPSA 2017 award categories

All levels of public administration will be rewarded since the theme aims to be inclusive. Therefore, EPSA 2017 will present awards in three different categories based on the level of administration:

Category 1: Projects/cases submitted by organisations from the **European or National level**. The European level refers to European institutions or agencies and the National level refers to the level of sovereign states.

Category 2: Projects/cases submitted by organisations from the **Regional level**. The Regional level refers to the first level of administrative and political sub-division of a state.

Category 3: Projects/cases submitted by organisations from the **Supra-Local or Local level**. The Supra-Local and Local level refers to the administrative and political levels below the regional level.



In case of projects that include partners from different levels of government, the administrative category will be defined by the status of the lead applicant as designated by the partners.

This will enable the recognition of good practice at all levels of government, which may include co-operative actions between different levels within the public sector.

There will be three levels of recognition in each administrative category - Award Winner, Nominees and Best Practice Certificates.



Projects tackling the integration of migrants and marginalised groups are especially invited for submission to the EPSA 2017 as integration represents one of the most difficult problems currently faced by public administrations in Europe.

Projects benefitting from EU supportive actions, such as the European Social Fund (ESF) Thematic Objective 11 ('Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration'), are asked to identify any such support during the registration process.

Previous EPSA participants may re-submit projects from the previous EPSA editions insofar as they are based on a material adaptation, update and/or extension of past projects, including the achievement of significant results since any previous submission.

Application period

The online application period is open from

**13 February 2017 until
13 April 2017 (24.00 CET)**

www.epsa2017.eu
[REGISTER and LOGIN]



More information on EPSA



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The EPSA 2017 timeline at a glance



Why should you participate in the EPSA 2017?

1. Your projects are offered the opportunity to be **showcased, rewarded and to benefit from an increased visibility at European level** – irrespective of the size or type of your administration. Your administration will improve its image by having **its results and achievements published** on www.epsa2017.eu and via other channels of dissemination;
2. The EPSA offers you maximum benefits and new **collaboration opportunities** as part of a **network of excellence**, promoting **efficient networking, practice exchange and knowledge transfer across Europe**;
3. The EPSA works with an independent, impartial and **internationally acknowledged pool of experts** throughout its evaluation process. They conduct an **external assessment (the Evaluation Summary Notes) of your project's potential** at the European level, whilst also indicating options for improvement and further development. These ESNs will be provided to you by the EPSA Team in case your project is awarded a Best Practice Certificate.

4. Participation in the EPSA is an **excellent opportunity** to show **appreciation to your employees and partners** and bring their work to the attention of a wider European audience;
5. The online application process is **simple and straightforward** and participation in the competition is **free of charge**;
6. The travel and hotel accommodation for the **EPSA 2017 nominees** participating in the final event will be **at the expense of EPSA/EIPA**. (1 person per nominated delegation).

The EPSA assessment and evaluation methodology: impartial, independent and effective

All submitted projects, which meet the eligibility criteria, are assessed against **seven evaluation criteria**:

- 1** Innovation
- 2** Stakeholder involvement
- 3** Relevance of actions taken
- 4** Impact/Results
- 5** Sustainability
- 6** Transferability and Learning Capacity
- 7** Social Inclusion

Sufficient detail must be provided in the applications to demonstrate the quality of the achievements of the case and the lessons learnt.

The assessment is carried out in an independent and impartial multi-step evaluation process.



STEP 1: a set number of projects within a concrete award category is allocated to each evaluator based on their professional background and sector (a mix of academia, the practice field and the private sector), nationality (evaluators may not assess projects from their country of origin or employment) and gender. **Each project is assessed online**, independently and exclusively, by different experts. The evaluators do not know each other, or how the other evaluator assessed the respective project.

STEP 2: During the **Consensus Meeting**, all evaluators come together to review and discuss the first available provisional ranking based on their individual scorings and possible discrepancies. Furthermore, they unanimously decide on the Best Practice Certificate Recipients and on the top short-listed projects in each award category for the onsite visits.

STEP 3: The **onsite visits** serve to validate and verify the results and recommendations of the previous two evaluation steps, i.e. to spot-check whether the content of the application form of the project corresponds to the ‘reality’; to find the answers to the unanswered questions raised by the evaluators, to detect possible inconsistencies and to gather additional or missing information and data. EIPA representatives do not re(assess) the projects!

STEP 4: the final step consists of the **Jury Meeting**, where several jurors (high-ranking stakeholders and/or political personalities, separate from the evaluators) decide on the nominees and the award winners in each category based on the short-listed projects of the onsite visits.

The EPSA 2017 official partners

EPSA 2017 is supported by 9 official partners: the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), Austria, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. Moreover, the Final Event and Award Ceremony will be hosted by the City of Maastricht and the Dutch Province of Limburg.



European Commission



Luxembourg



Austria



the Netherlands



Hungary



Norway



Italy



Sweden



Gemeente Maastricht

provincie limburg



The EPSA 2017 team



Harry Scholtens (NL)

EPSA 2017 Project Leader; Supra-Local and Local category leader;
EIPA Expert



Michael Burnett (UK)

EPSA 2017 Theme Leader; European and National category leader;
EIPA Expert



Julia Bosse (DE)

EPSA 2017 Project Officer; Regional category leader;
EIPA Research Assistant



Claude Rongione (IT)

EPSA 2017 Information Officer



Jolanda Peters (NL)

EPSA 2017 Project Assistant

The European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)



Established in Maastricht in 1981 and having Centres in Luxembourg and Barcelona, the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) is ***Europe's leading centre of excellence on European integration and the new challenges for public management.***

It is EIPA's mission to support the European Union and its Member States and the countries associated with EIPA by providing relevant and high quality services to develop the capacities of public officials in dealing with EU affairs. We offer our services to officials from the EU institutions and related bodies, and to civil servants within the national, regional and local administrations of the Member States, applicant countries and other countries in the framework of their relationship with the EU.

EIPA is the leading centre of European learning and development for the public sector. With over 35 years of experience, EIPA is the place where people who deal with European affairs can learn in a multi-cultural environment benefiting from our unique combination of practical know-how and scientific excellence. We help you to meet the challenges of Europe and the complexities of modern public management.



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