15th "Best Practice in Citizens' Participation" Award
Application Form

PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience: Implementation of webGIS system for citizens		
Name of the city/region: City of Velika Gorica		
Country: Croatia		
Institution presenting the candidacy: City of Velika Gorica		
Start date of the experience: July 2019		
End date of the experience: - Still in progress		
Type of candidacy	New experience	X
	Innovation on an existing experience	
Type of experience (*you may choose more than one*)	Participatory budgeting	
	Urban planning	X
	Council	
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	
	Audience/forum	
	Poll/referendum	
	Citizen jury	
	E-government/open government	
	Citizen initiative	
	Other (specify):	
Objective of the experience (*you may choose more than one*)	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion	
	Community empowerment	X
	To empower non-organised citizens	
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation	
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"	
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	
Territorial area	All the territory	X
	District	

	Neighbourhood	
Thematic area	Governance	
	Education	
	Transport	
	Urban management	
	Health	
	Security	
	Environment and/or urban agriculture	
	New social movements and associationism	
	Culture	
	Housing	
	Job creation	
	Decentralization	
	Local development	X
	Training/learning	
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
	Social inclusion	
	All	
	Other	

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

Main objective of the innovative experience:
The main goal of the project is to reduce administrative procedures and make it easier for citizens to participate in creating or updating spatial plans and thus improve the quality of life in their own area by using online technology.
How have you achieved this objective?
The City of Velika Gorica recognized the advantages of using the webGIS (Geo) system in the entire business, and in 2014 the system was implemented with its own funds. In the following years, the City of Velika Gorica upgraded the webGIS system for reviewing and managing part of the spatial data (unclassified roads, real estate register, waste management, communal infrastructure, line cadastre, reports of communal problems by citizens via mobile applications, etc.).
Following that City of Velika Gorica achieved this objective by creating an innovative application that allows citizens to make online suggestions for changing spatial plans using their mobile phones or home computer without additional administrative procedures such

2

as: obtaining various documents, visiting public institutions (covid-19 crisis + reducing CO2 emissions for not using cars + preserving the environment and saving money on paper + losing time). The new application is an additional module of the existing GIS (Geographic Information System) that enables full digitalization of the process of proposing changes to spatial plans.

To what extent has this objective been achieved?

63,517 residents of the city of Velika Gorica were given access to an innovative application through which they can give suggestions and opinions to change the spatial plan but also get all information regarding spatial plans. Also, by the experience of employees of the City department for Urbanism and environmental protection, by using this new innovative application, the number of arrivals has been reduced by 4 per day from citizens.

By using some calculations regarding on reducing 4 arrivals per day form citizens who will came by car, approx. 1.9t / year of CO2 will be reduced in the area (4 arrivals * 15km * 22 days / month * 12 months * 120gCO2 / km = 1,900,800 g / year = 1.9 t / year).

Dimensions of the experience

Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?

The most innovative part of the project is the fact that we are the first city in the Republic of Croatia to offer this type of service to citizens. Also, in addition, we believe that we have provided the citizens of the city of Velika Gorica easier access to spatial planning documentation, allow them better and simpler communication with the city authorities with almost no financial costs for the citizens. At the end, all citizen's participation through new application will ultimately culminate in online participation in the public debate.

To what extent is the procedure transferable?

The innovative application/solution can be replicated in other sectors as well. It has easy access (requires only an Internet connection), universality (it is possible to manage all types of spatial data), it's easy to use (user-oriented interface for citizens on the public portal and public employees) and unlimited system users. It is possible to extract all the data in different formats and send it to other institutions or to open the access to this system to selected employees of the institutions. So, it is good for small and big systems (large base of users).

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

It is considered that spatial planning must be public and transparent but with the involvement of a whole range of stakeholders (especially citizens and experts). Administrative procedures have so far made it difficult for citizens to contribute in spatial planning. With this project, we have involved various stakeholders in a simple (and above all inexpensive) way. Namely, only an internet connection and a mobile phone are needed and each person can give their suggestion. Also, this solution facilitates the work of employees of public institutions who can more easily receive proposals from various stakeholders, while not wasting resources of paper, fuel and similar.

In the end, the cost of the experience (creating innovative app/solution) which was realized in the amount of HRK 243,250.00 (approximately EUR 32,500) with VAT, is justified in many ways because it primarily includes the impact on all citizens of the City (and beyond) by simple access to information using modern technologies, and additionally supports other

strategic projects of the City in their records and marketing presentation to citizens and potential investors.

How has the experience been coordinated with other actors and processes?

The new application was made on the basis of previous problems and experiences gained by citizens, employees of public institutions and experts themselves. Citizens expressed dissatisfaction with the large amount of administration when making proposals, employees of the institution wasted a lot of time in clarifying the administrative procedure while the experts themselves did not have a quality "feed-back" by the citizens themselves.

The public welcomed this type of submitting proposals to change spatial plans as well as employees of public institutions. With this type of contribution from the citizens in a timely manner, spatial planners can adjust plans to public opinion before public debate which saves a lot of time for all stakeholders of this process.

What has been the level of co-responsibility?

Political actors took over the role of media expansion of the project, promoting it among citizens and encouraging them, experts took over the role of creating a better spatial plan thanks to the active participation of various stakeholders (especially citizens) and citizens took over the role and obligation to participate in it and to be an active stakeholder in improving a (local) quality of life but also to feel like an equal participant in creating spatial plans.

Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

The information has been disseminated among the citizens through City web site, local newspapers (also national newspapers when the City won the award in the category "Smart Administration" organized by the Poslovni dnevnik (national newspaper) "Smart Cities - Cities of the Future 2019").

The main goal was to increase the number of submitted proposals before opening the public debate. This was measured in numbers so we can see that the number of submitted proposals in just one month after realising this e-service has increased by 700% monthly basis. Of the proposals received, 85% were received in digital form (July 2019).

The average annual number of proposals submitted before the introduction of the e-service was: 40.

The number of submitted proposals in 2020 was 191, and there are already 54 proposals in the year of 2021 by this date.

Based on continual growth in this numbers, it is visible that this way of submitting proposals to changing of spatial plans was well accepted by the public.

Summary of the experience

The new solution (application) has been in use since 2019 and it has reduced citizen arrivals in the City Department for Urbanism and environmental protection, reduced spending paper, increased communication online, increased the number of suggestions from the citizens, has increased citizen participation in making important decisions for the development of the city, but also increased the quality of life of all stakeholders involved in the process.

The application is actively used and so far, has not required technological improvements, additional financial expenses and has not had any problems within the GIS system itself. We

receive positive comments from citizens for ease to use application, as well as from experts who receive more (quality) suggestions than before using innovative solution.

The mentioned GIS system is regularly supplemented with new spatial plans and other official documentation, all in order to provide a better insight to all stakeholders and which will all ultimately culminate in online participation in a public hearing.

By further upgrading the GIS system, the City of Velika Gorica wants to confirm and continue with an innovative and effective approach to managing regular activities of the City, city property and city projects, but this time with emphasis on additional involvement of citizens in spatial planning.

Finally, we can say that we expect an increase in the productivity of City employees due to the reduction in the number of citizens who come to the city administration for information that is now publicly available on the City's website, and thus eliminate the possibility of potential costs of hiring additional staff.