European Commission

ESF project "LabX - Experimentation Lab for Public Administration"

Portugal

Key facts

MEASURE OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
'Improve the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and the efficiency of public administration'

TARGET GROUPS

Entities of Public Administration

BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION
Administrative Modernisation Agency (AMA)

PROJECT DURATION
01/09/2017 – 31/08/2020

COORDINATOR

Bruno Monteiro, LabX Coordinator

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BUDGET

EUR 569,500.00
ESF contribution

EUR 430,500.00
Other contribution
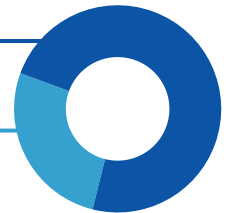
PROJECT/ORGANISATION WEBSITE

http://labx.gov.pt
http://www.ama.gov.pt

https://www.facebook.com/labx.gov.pt/

PARTNERS
Entities of Public Administration and public and private entities

Activities implemented

PROJECT IN NUMBERS

14 Projects developed

45 Partner public entities involved

~7,000 Participants involved

47 Products delivered

MAIN PROJECT TASKS

Implement the following projects: Death and Bereavement Service, Online Job Portal; Methodological monitoring of the Business Spot; Land registration service; Attendance at Citizens Shops; Electronic Official Journal; Electronic Invoice; Pro'LabX; Education for Citizenship, Participatory approach to user-centered design, Attendance at Tax Authority, Innovators' Network, Public Service as Living Lab and Promotion of Behavioral Sciences applied to Public Policy.

Develop a participatory process in each project, according to its own methodology that includes three phases: investigate, design and experiment, to respond to the real problems of citizens and companies.

Deliver to the public administration entities a product that may be taken into consideration by them for the improvement of the public services provided.

Evaluate and communicate the results obtained.

Develop strategies for the sustainability of public administration innovation, notably by creating and strengthening a public administration innovation ecosystem.

INITIAL STAGE

CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

In 2016, Maria Manuel Leitão Marques, at the time Minister of the Presidency and Administrative Modernisation, launched the challenge of generating an experimental project, focused on innovation and with the objective of **transforming public administration**. The public administration in general can be characterised as a vast and complex reality, which is materialised through a system of organs, services and agents of the State and other public entities, and at the same time is itself the activity developed by them. This context can be defined as **extremely bureaucratic and hierarchical**.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

As LabX team says **"we exist for public administration stop guessing what citizens and companies want and to provide public services that respond to their needs and expectations!"**. To this end, LabX aims to: 1) Involve citizens, businesses and decision-makers in the process of interpreting real needs / opportunities for the design of new services; 2) Design new public services, redesign existing services, realise where there are bottlenecks and promote the use of currently complex and difficult-to-use electronic services; and 3) Empower the public administration with methodologies that promote innovation through design.

MAIN CHALLENGES FACED, AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

It is because of a highly bureaucratized and formal reality, where nothing is questioned, where expert people who are convinced of their ideas operate and who are stuck in complying with guidelines, that LabX faces its first challenge - the reluctance and disbelief of entities and public officials to collaborate on projects that could be transformative of public administration. In addition to these challenges, other more procedural constraints are identified, related to the time taken to purchase goods and services and the implementation of pilot projects.

PROJECT PHASE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND EVENTS DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

LabX's three initial projects focused on service design and usability. **Due to LabX's experimental character, the demonstrating effect of the development of these projects was quickly verified**, which led to the creation of other projects, as well as restoring the trust and credibility that it is possible to change within the public administration. Other important events include: 1) Pro'LabX sessions, which began to infect public entities with disruptive thinking; 2) The development of projects, such as prototyping weeks in Citizen Shops and the pilot project of "Death and Bereavement Services"; and 3) The introduction of approaches to behavioral economics and emerging technologies.

KEY RESULTS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

The main result is the culture transformation of the entities with which LabX has collaborated. The entities say that this collaboration is **"transformative" and changing** the perspective with which they look at the citizen and companies. They are now wondering what the citizen and companies really need. Also noteworthy are the results inherent in each project, including the production of recommendation reports and product development. The participatory approach and the methodology used was fundamental to the success of the intervention.

RESULTS, IMPACTS

(EXPECTED) IMPACT ON BUSINESS, AS WELL AS ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN GENERAL

The project is expected to be able to **sensitize, empower and transform** public entities to focus on the real needs of citizens and companies, using, if possible, a participatory approach to problem solving / service design and the need to collaborate for the public service. In this way, the services provided will be better suited to the real needs of the target audience.

LESSONS LEARNT: THE ROLE OF ESF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This ESF-supported project has contributed to transform public administration and to make it more responsive to evidence-based decisions in order to respond to the real needs of citizens and companies. The ESF has enabled LabX to have a team exclusively allocated to this purpose and gave it the necessary resources to develop the projects, to ensure that the schedule is met, as well as to reinforce the dissemination of experience at national and international level.

REFLECTIONS

INVESTIGATE

UNDERSTAND   DISCOVER

DESIGN

DEFINE   EXPLORE

EXPERIMENT

PROTOTYPE   IMPLEMENT

Phases of LabX methodology
Source: Presentation by the LabX

Personal experiences

'It is possible to transform public administration to make it more responsive to evidence-based decisions, more sensitive to drawing its end users (citizens and companies), to questioning and investigating its processes, and then co-create and test new solutions and even, since LabX is a safe space, to learn from failures'

Bruno Monteiro, *Coordinator of LabX*

'There was something that settled in, something fracturing. We started thinking about things we had never thought of, and now I can't help but wonder - are we responding to what people want?' –

Marina San-Bento, *Institute of Registries and Notaries*

PPMi

Find out more about the project by following the link http://bit.ly/PAPA-PPMI or scan the QR code using your smartphone camera.