



ICHNOS PLUS Innovation and CHange: Network of One-stop Shops Business – PLUS

The project [ICHNOS PLUS](#), funded under [INTERREG IVC](#) programme, aims to build on the achievements of the INTERREG III C project entitled “ICHNOS: Innovation and CHange – Network of One-Stop Shops”, concluded in April 2007, that produced a **model of Regional Centre of Competence (RCC) for One-Stop Shops for business (OSS)**.

To start-up a new business, an entrepreneur undertakes a wide range of activities: developing a business plan; obtaining financial resources; registering the business entity; and obtaining any mandatory sector or activity specific licences. A survey (2006-2007), carried out by the Observatory of European SMEs, highlighted that the most significant business constraints perceived by SMEs is the compliance with the administrative regulations.

As a **capitalisation project**, ICHNOS PLUS focuses on the **transfer and deployment of the RCC model and its mainstreaming into the regional policies through the ERDF Operational Programmes**. The RCC model has been conceived as a structure to co-ordinate one-stop shops acting as single points of contact for enterprises. Although the establishment of one-stop shops is foreseen by the EU legislation and was expected in all Member States by 2007, most regions have not accomplished yet this task.

The **partnership** is made of 6 partners: Ancitel Sardegna (Italy); CESGA Foundation: Fundación Centro Tecnológico de Supercomputación de Galicia (Spain), Vysocina Region (Czech Republic), North Aegean Region (Greece), Science & Technology Park of Tartu (Estonia) and Ruda Slaska Business Incubator (Poland).

The **main objectives** of ICHNOS PLUS are both optimising the implementation of this model in the three regions which carried out ICHNOS and promoting its effective transfer and deployment in other European regions.

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PROGRESS ACHIEVED

The Toolkit: a step-by-step guide for implementing the RCC (Regional Centre of Competence) for OSSes (One-Stop-Shops)

The aim of toolkit document is to build a step-by-step implementation **guide of the optimised RCC model for managers and practitioners** committed in facilitating the enterprise creation.

This document will present a flow diagram that reflects all this step-oriented approach and also a detailed index about each step of the process. The toolkit is committed to become a more human-readable guide, with all the information needed to understand the importance of an RCC and the necessary steps to be taken into account, prior the implementation of an RCC for OSSes in a region.

The aim of toolkit document is to build a step-by-step implementation **guide of the optimised RCC model for managers and practitioners** committed in facilitating the enterprise creation.

The guide is structured in various parts:

First of all, a description of the Services Directive and Small Business Act and the impact in the regions of Europe.

Then, some topics related with which kind of **governance model the countries or regions should have** in order to support an OSS. This section recommends the local governance principles that should be adopted, like a more centralized approach or maybe a self-governing approach. This will have a direct impact in the legislation, because in order to build a legal framework, identification of potential legal Instruments for RCC development and concrete action plan are needed.

Also, a very good approach to consolidate an RCC is to **raise awareness and commitment of stakeholders** and key actors in the region, like Chambers of commerce, Business incubators, tech parks or other initiatives strongly linked to the OSS, that can be part of the RCC network, based in the aforementioned specific regional characteristics and the legal framework. Moreover the possible transfer of the RCC competences to a regional government or dependant agency is a very interesting cost-saving solution.

The RCC model is described in the toolkit, that is a modified and evolutionary version of the ICHNOS RCC model, but adapted to each region specifics. A chapter will talk about management and organisational issues related to the model and also a cost briefing and which IT paradigms like interoperability are commonly used in this type of scenario.

And finally, the RCC study cases chapter that the three partner regions of the previous ICHNOS project will prepare as a basis for the feasibility study.

The toolkit will be soon available on the project website: <http://www.ichnos-project.org/>

The 2nd staff exchange

The 2nd staff exchange was held in Santiago de Compostela on 17th June. The Estonian delegation visited CESGA and the Galician OSS on 17th and 19th June having face-to-face meetings with regional representatives on innovation & SMEs and technology centers. The outcome of these meetings was that several initiatives and best-practices were taken into consideration by Estonian partner. These meetings combined with the fruitful experience of the OSS visit, developed a **strong relationship between the Galician and Estonian partners**, because they share common objectives of **simplifying starting up businesses** as well as **fostering innovation in SME-s in their respective regions**.



NEXT PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Proceedings and expectations arisen throughout the 2nd semester of the project will be presented by all partners, at the **2nd Dissemination Conference**, that is planned to be held in the **21st and 22nd of September in Lesvos Island (Greece)**. At the same dates, the **2nd Scientific Committee meeting** is planned to take place, as well as the **5th Steering Committee meeting**, where partners will talk about the preparation of the **3rd staff exchange** between the Greek and Sardinian partners.

Probably a **study visit** will be also implemented, which is something dependant on the time schedule that will be formed for the conference.

What's new in Service Directive implementation?

Single Market project is definitely one of the most ambitious activities of European Union in recent years. The Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on services in the Internal Market was adopted (after three years of complicated negotiation) on December 11th, 2006. Since this moment, the three years implementation period has been started. There are many requirements that Member States have to meet. Besides adoption of concrete legislative measures, the Directive asks them to put in place a variety of practical measures such as points of single contact for service providers, electronic procedures and administrative cooperation. The internal market information system should be developed and put into operation. It is indeed clear that the Services Directive will not just require a one-off act of implementation but will also trigger a dynamic process. The deadline for finishing the implementation phase of the Services Directive is 28 December 2009.

Mr. Jörgen Holmquist from DG Internal Market and Services said in his keynote address: *"Europe cannot aspire to return to the path of economic growth and job creation without fully functioning Internal Market"*.

During the Czech Presidency issues of Service Directive implementation and impact were discussed at the conference "The Future of Services in the Internal Market" (Prague, 2nd February 2009). Mr. Jörgen Holmquist from DG Internal Market and Services said in his keynote address: *"Europe cannot aspire to return to the path of economic growth and job creation without fully functioning Internal Market"*. He added, that services are the main driver for economic growth in Europe. They represent around 70% of EU total GDP and the overwhelming majority of new jobs created in Europe in recent years. Over 9 out of every 10 jobs were created in the services sector. However, administrative and regulatory barriers still discourage the setting up of new businesses and hamper the trade in European services market. The motto of the Czech Presidency "Europe without barriers" well described the current strong aspiration of EU service providers.

The Service Directive is very important for EU Internal Market because it combines legislative and practical measures that, if properly implemented, will remove most of barriers. In addition, the Directive will establish new mechanisms to simplify the business as well as public administration.

As Mr. Holmquist pointed out, implementing of the Services Directive brings several challenges for Member States:

- undertaking a major review of national legislative

- setting up of Points of Single Contacts
- organising administrative cooperation including electronic communication

Current situation in the Czech Republic

Ministry of Industry and Trade is a public administration body responsible for Services Directive in the Czech Republic. The Ministry was very active during the past negotiation phase as well as in the current implementation phase. Main activities are focused on three challenges mentioned above:

I. Review of national legislative:

- January 2009: Czech Cabinet approved a bill on Free movement of services that lays down terms for services market and also transposes the EU Services Directive
- May 2009: Czech Parliament - Chamber of Deputies passed the bill on Free movement of services
- June 2009: Czech Parliament – Senate passed the bill on Free movement of services
- The last step in legislative process will be a signature of the President. This is expected soon.

The new law incorporates an EU Services Directive into Czech legislation. It will make it easier above all for small and medium sized companies to do business in all EU countries as well as on the Czech market.

Czech Republic is quite ahead in transposition of the Directive. The appropriate law is incorporated only in 2 member States so far (Denmark and Romania), Czech Republic keeps a "bronze medal". However, speed is not so important as quality of transposition.



2. Setting up of Points of Single Contacts:

In the Czech Republic, local Trade Licence Offices will operate as Points of Single Contacts. There are more than 200 (228) trade licence offices in all bigger cities. The "office network" is well supported by "electronic communication network" and connected to a centralised Trade Register Central Electronic Registry. The procedures

are unified from the central level and staff is trained regularly. In the present, these offices work as Central Registration Points (CRM) for notification of trade or for registration of regulated trade. Since October 2008, entrepreneurs can use electronic submission into Trade Register from their PC through Unified Registration Form. This framework of offices is well proven in day-to-day running and solving entrepreneur's issues. This model was assessed as the best and the least risk for smooth and quick implementation of the Directive.

3. Organising administrative cooperation including electronic communication:

Local Trade Licence Offices are well prepared for administrative cooperation. Besides measures mentioned above, the Czech Republic is active also in other activities, e.g. IMI system.



IMI system (Internal Market Information System) is a project prepared by the European Commission in relation to Services Directive to create an information system interconnecting the competent authorities of the individual Member States, thus making their mutual administrative cooperation and communication prompt and efficient. Ministry of Industry and Trade has started an IMI pilot project and has already trained 170 public administration bodies that will be obliged to use IMI system for exchange of information with other EU Member States authorities from the next year. IMI system is one of fundamental prerequisites for simplification of the cross border supplying of services as well as establishing of service providers in other EU Member State. Outstanding acceleration of provision of services as well of subsequent supervision by the inspection bodies is expected. At present, this cooperation is highly restricted, mainly because of the different systems of state administration in place, the language differences, the lack of agreed procedures, the unclear identification of partners in proceedings, the delays caused by cross-border postal services, etc. During ongoing pilot process 38 requests have been exchanged so far, that gives evidence of interest of stakeholders.

Different models of One-Stop-Shops for businesses: two different regional cases within the ICHNOS Plus project

One-Stop-Shops (OSSes) are conceived as **single interlocutors** for would be entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs, to provide for the possibility to complete procedures and formalities which entrepreneurs have to comply with to set-up to or exercise a business activity, in an easy and quick way, without having to deal with several different administrations.

One-stop-shops can have **different tasks**. They are frequently used for **setting up a business** in a quick and simple way, but they can also be put in place as "**points of single contact**" as set out under Article 6 of the European **Services Directive**, where service providers can take care of all the declarations, applications, notifications etc. needed for them to be authorised to provide services in another EU country.

Within the ICHNOS Plus project, these two different models of one-stop-shops are well represented respectively in Galicia and Sardinia.

Moreover, the role of one-stops shops can be played by different authorities/bodies (regional authorities, provinces, municipalities, professional chambers, other professional organisations or even private operators). In any event, the State or Regional authority decide to whom they want to attribute the tasks of the OSS. This do not prejudice the allocation of competences among competent authorities, however the **communication between the "one-stop-shops" and the competent authorities should be organised** in order to ensure the efficiency and promptness of services delivered by the OSS.

Within the ICHNOS Plus project, these two different models of one-stop-shops are well represented respectively in Galicia and Sardinia.

In **Galicia** the one-stop-shop, Enterprise Creation Advisory and Initiation Point (**PAIT**), is directly **responsible for the registration of business**; specifically for New Enterprise Limited Company (S.L.N.E.) and Private Limited Company (S.R.L.). There entrepreneurs can get advice and assistance in the planning, administrative processing and start-up of their business ventures and during their first years of operation

In Galicia, the PAITs are hosted in the premises of IGAPE (Galician Institute for Promotion) or chambers of commerce distributed all over the region. An online portal, with an array of multimedia contents, offers online information and guidance to entrepreneurs.

With the electronic processing system, the entrepreneur only needs to physically visit the PAIT and the notary. All remaining formalities can be completed electronically. It is

the **CIRCE** system that does the work of forwarding applications to the competent authorities using the details entered in the Single Electronic Document (SED). Through this system in Galicia it is possible to set up a business in **only 48 hours**.

On the other hand, in **Sardinia** one-stop-shops, known as **SUAP** (Points of Single Contact for Businesses) are responsible for the **granting of authorisations for all specific sectors** of business activities (commercial retailers, constructions; etc.). There is an OSS in nearly each municipality or association of municipalities. A great impulse to administrative simplification was given by the Regional Law n.3/2008 which introduced **self-certification** in order to replace a long series of administrative forms. With the self-certification forms, the entrepreneur provides the information needed to certify compliance with all applicable obligations and technical requirements for the specific business activities. It is the OSS that asks for the remaining documentation or authorizations to the other third bodies involved in the proceeding.

The entrepreneur can start its activity after 20 days since when its request for setting up a business has been submitted to the OSS, without waiting any longer for the response or authorisations of the public administration and its frequent delays.



To facilitate the creation and functioning of the one-stop-shops throughout the region, a coordinating body may be needed. Through the **ICHNOS Plus** project, the **Regional Centre of Competence (RCC)**, will be implemented in the partner regions. It is clear that the RCC is encouraged to fulfil all those tasks aimed at supporting the OSSes. Particular emphasis needs to be placed on the structure consisting of 4 modules: 1) an **Observatory** to assess the assumptions for the creation of new OSSes; monitor the performance of the existing ones and update them with the latest information and recommendations for simplifying the bureaucratic procedures of the public services provided by OSS; 2) **Advisory, consultancy and assistance** on legal, technological, marketing of the territory and organizational matters; 3) **Training** of the OSS staff and third bodies connected with OSSes' activities; 4) **Information and**

communication activities relating to the results and good practices achieved by the network of OSSes. More information and a detailed description of the RCC is available on the Toolkit, one of the main outputs of the ICHNOS Plus projects.

The Vysocina Region Study Case

The Vysocina Region has resigned to create another contact point for business since there are many of them placed in the region and the region was not able to give a new OSS a power to provide complex service (it was delegated by national ministry to the Trade Licensing Offices in the municipalities).

Under these circumstances the Vysocina Region decided to reassess the OSS/RCC concept to fit better present situation.

Suitable model that could meet these requirements is so called **Contact Centre of Vysocina region**. Its objective is to provide equal and transparent access to information concerning relations citizen – public administration and citizen – region, regardless of communication means, from anywhere anytime.

Since June 2009, the Contact centre started to become a regional access point for citizens that will require communication with public administration whether to solve their life situation (thus, process providing) or for gaining any kind of information concerning the region.

Suitable model that could meet these requirements is so called **Contact Centre of Vysocina region**. Its objective is to provide equal and transparent access to information concerning relations citizen – public administration and citizen – region, regardless of communication means, from anywhere anytime.

The Vysocina Region Contact Centre will operate several topics that will be under unambiguous control of a responsible person, one of the main topics operated in the contact centre could be the “business issues”.

A specific type of a citizen will be an entrepreneur that can play a role of:

- A citizen that is interested in starting a business (potential entrepreneur)
- or a citizen that already provides business

Some services of the Contact centre will be addressed to meet requirements of those type of users. Their life situation will be related to (by example):

- registration of business (trade)
- founding of the company
- changes of identification, personal or contact details

- extension of business (new licences are needed)
- handling of tax matters and all financial duties towards public administration (contributions, payment etc.)
- notification of cross-border service provision
- establishment of service provider with domicile in other EU member state



The Vysocina Region Contact Centre will consist of the central management structure placed in the Regional Authority and the service operators which can come from municipalities, information offices or other organizations. The only requirement is to have specialists related to the specific topics operated under the contact centre services. **Individual operators are considered as OSS** (a virtual OSS). The Contact Centre Management placed in Regional Authority will manage them, provide technological and content background for them, communicate with topic managers (thus OSS managers) and provide all necessary back-office functions as well as the knowledge base operation and content. **For this fact, the Contact centre will play a role of RCC of those virtual OSS.**

ICT Solutions for administrative simplification.

One of the key topics of the 2nd interregional seminar of the ICHNOS Plus project, held in Santiago de Compostela on 19th June 2009, was the ICT solutions that contribute to an easy administrative simplification. This topic was developed around the idea of **Interoperability between ICT systems**. Interoperability means the ability of information and communication technology (ICT) systems and of the business processes they support to exchange data and to enable the sharing of information and knowledge between public bodies and agents. So, interoperability is the key tool to administrative simplification.

As usual, best practices and recommendations are very important in order to build interoperable systems, so the European Union is proposing an interoperability framework as a set of standards that should be considered as a prerequisite in order to implement interoperability.

The **European Interoperability Framework** defines a set of recommendations and guidelines for multilateral framework with a pan-European dimension. In doing so, it also creates benefits such as economies of scale and the re-use of knowledge and resources, whilst ensuring that each Member State is given the maximum level of independence.

The European Interoperability Framework focuses on **supplementing, rather than replacing, national interoperability guidance** by adding the pan-European dimension. In order to operate at pan-European level, a Member State administration must therefore already have a national interoperability framework or equivalent technical strategy for the delivery of **eGovernment services** in place.

Also, the European Union recommends the use of **Open Standards** and as a fact **Open Source Software (OSS)** to design and implement interoperable ICT systems. OSS corresponds to the objectives of this Framework and should be assessed and considered favourably alongside proprietary alternatives.

OSS tends to use and help defined open standards and publicly available specifications and OSS based products are, by their nature, publicly available, and the availability of their source code promotes open, democratic debate around the specifications, making them both more robust and interoperable.

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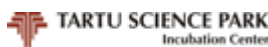
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