



New level of consultation in Finland – experiences on online consultation services

Directors and Experts of Better Regulation 18th September, Rome

Outi Slant

Coordinator

Ministry of Justice, Finland



Background

- Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy (SADe)
- Citizens increasingly want participation through direct democracy
- “a package” of eDemocracy services
 - Initiative service for inhabitant of municipalities (kuntalaisaloite.fi)
 - Initiative service for citizen (kansalaisaloite.fi)
 - “Have your say” – consultation service (otakantaa.fi)
 - Formal consultation service (lausuntopalvelu.fi)



Otakantaa – “Have your say”

- Ministries, municipalities, institutes, NGOs and citizens can open discussions on certain topics
- Drafting of laws, strategies and programs, evaluation of services and policies, mapping needs and ideas etc.
 - Tool for more informal consultation
- Several participation tools (discussion forums, chat, questionnaires, polls)
- 235 projects or initiatives so far
- Marketing is essential on successful consultation



Lausuntopalvelu.fi – consultation service

- For formal and mandatory consultation process
- Launched in 2014 and is currently being piloted
- Consultation can be requested by public administration
- Everyone has the possibility to give their statement
- Goals:
 - Standardize consultation procedure
 - Increase openness and quality of consultation
 - Upgrade possibilities to influence decision making
 - Decrease the burden of consultation process



What's new for public administration?

- New electronic system that has all statements collected together
- More active role for law drafters
- Helps to focus the consultation
 - Possibility to ask more detailed questions
 - Different method (polls, open questions, attachment)
- Makes the analyzing more efficient
 - Analyzing is faster with different tools
 - Summaries, charts, answers are “themed” for each question, filters
 - Helps to see the essential in statements
 - Decreases the number of statements with same content -> “like - button”



What's new for stakeholders?

- More open to all interested parties
- Statements of others can be seen in real time
 - Possibility to comment other statements
 - Possibility to agree with other statements with “like-button”
 - Decreases work
- Hopefully lowers the threshold to participate the process



Recent experiences

- Service has been piloted with few projects
- So far it seems that statements are shorter, more focused and therefore easier to analyze
- Still some practical issues that being developed during pilots
- Experiences are still positive so far
- The use and full invocation of service requires a cultural change in stakeholder consultation – more active role for drafting officials



Thank you for your attention!