



# European Public Sector Award EPISA 2013

## Weathering the Storm: Creative Solutions in a Time of Crisis



European  
and National  
Level

Regional  
Level

Supra-local  
and Local  
Level



European Institute of Public Administration  
Institut européen d'administration publique



## Table of Contents

- 5 What is the European Public Sector Award?
- 5 The European Public Sector Award: the European learning platform for performance improvement of the public sector
- 5 The European Public Sector Award 2013
- 8 The EPSA 2013 Theme
- 10 The EPSA 2013 Award Categories
- 11 The EPSA 2013 Timeline at a glance
- 12 Why should you participate in the EPSA 2013?
- 12 The EPSA Assessment and Evaluation Methodology: impartial, independent and effective
- 14 The EPSA 2013 Official Partners
- 15 The EPSA 2013 Team
- 16 The European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)



## 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 – as the first European learning platform for public administrations – is to make this valuable experience transparent, available and usable.*

### **The European Public Sector Award: the European learning platform for performance improvement of the public sector**

For all European public administrations, EPSA has generated highly valuable know-how and vital results that can be used for the benefit of providing innovative solutions and learning opportunities.



Artist: B.J. Leyendeckers

- Target:** EPSA targets all sectors of public administration, with an emphasis on specific themes;
- 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 eKnowledge Platform**

Based on the EPSA 2009 and 2011 editions, EIPA now wants to provide access to the nearly **600 fully structured and thoroughly assessed public cases from 36 different European countries**. These best practices will be fully accessible via the **interactive EPSA eKnowledge Platform**, which is foreseen to be up and running by autumn 2013. The EPSA eKnowledge Platform intends to make this valuable source of exemplars available in order to support emulation of good practices and avoid re-inventing the wheel in the public sector.

### **The European Public Sector Award 2013**

The year 2013 will mark the fourth edition of EPSA, following the previous successful editions in 2007, 2009 and 2011; this award scheme will be run and managed for the third time by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA).

By addressing Europe's most pressing concerns, EPSA contributes to the progress in public performance by highlighting exemplary models of proactive public practice, whilst providing a platform for the public sector innovators behind these cases to exhibit their achievements.

Europe – and in fact the entire world – is currently facing perhaps the deepest and most multiple-faceted financial and economic threat in recent history. Europe has a sovereign debt problem which, in combination with the global recession, has created a crisis in many EU countries. This crisis has to be resolved with the necessary and respective measures. However, how can these urgent problems linked to public financial pressure be resolved?

Traditionally, it would be by economic growth and increased public income through taxes, in combination with budget cuts and austerity measures! (Strong economic growth seems quite distant, but the pressure on public spending is still there due to demographic factors (cost of elderly care, decreasing workforce), unemployment, and expenses related to pensions, education and health. This poses a true challenge, not only to private enterprises, but in particular to the public sector. Governments and their public administrations, not only as in recent years, but certainly also for the coming three to five years, will thus be under severe pressure with regard to their public finances and spending.

In other words, the only solution in this scenario seems to be to **increase effectiveness and efficiency, to innovate, and to strive towards better and best practices.**



#### The **novelties of the EPSA 2013** are:

- There is **one theme for all applicants** in the new EPSA 2013 edition, with different categories for the European and national, the regional and the supra-local and the local levels. Thus, **each public administration is benchmarked against, and will compare itself with projects from an equal level!**
- Additionally, **two special recognitions will be awarded:**
  - Honorary mention for cross-administrative cooperation.
  - Honorary mention for cross-border cooperation.

*“Schemes like EPSA are important instruments for encouraging good practices in public administrations across Europe and helping countries learn from each other – a synergy that we must maximise! Since its creation in 2007, EPSA has acted as a driver for change in the way public services function in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, encouraging them to implement innovations and deliver quality.”*

*Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-president of the European Commission,  
Responsible for Inter-institutional Relations and Administration  
László Andor, Member of the European Commission,  
Responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion*



*The EPSA 2011 Launch Event in Brussels: Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-president of the European Commission, Responsible for Inter-institutional Relations and Administration; Prof. Dr Marga Pröhl, Director-General of EIPA.*

## The EPSA 2013 Theme

### **Weathering the Storm: Creative Solutions in a Time of Crisis**

In the past five years, public administrations across Europe have been facing mounting strain on their public finances. In turn, this has led to pressure for changes in the way public services are delivered, as well as a re-assessment of the scope and nature of services to be provided by public authorities, independently of how they are delivered. Yet, it is precisely in times of economic crisis that citizens have a greater need for public services.

In response to these pressures, public administrations are trying out innovative means of problem-solving in service provision, by designing better processes, as well as through new structural solutions in cooperation with partners.

Some public authorities are responding well to the challenges of the crisis with measures targeting effectiveness, efficiency and productivity gains, whilst trying to maintain the high level and quality of their operations. This theme will give them the chance to take pride in their achievements and to showcase how they are dealing with these tough challenges.





Projects submitted should demonstrate and contain elements of proven evidence of one of the following:

Successful cases could, for example, demonstrate one or more of the following outcomes:

- improved quality or volume of service delivery at the same or lower cost;
- maintained service delivery at a lower cost;
- delivery of higher levels of service standards at a proportionately lower level of cost increase;
- achievement of sustainable debt/deficit levels;
- achievement of wider citizen involvement in decisions;
- high economic and/or financial returns from public investment or high levels of private investment levered by well-directed public investment.

Equally, cases could demonstrate structural or process changes, leading to successful outcomes such as:

- re-organisation or relocation of services (e.g. mergers, centralisation or decentralisation);
- changes to service methods (e.g. from internal to external service delivery, between different types of external service delivery, public-public cooperation (including shared services), cooperation between the public sector and civil society or public-private partnership for new or upgraded infrastructure);
- different ownership models (e.g. use of mixed capital entities or privatisation);
- better external or internal communication;
- blending use of new technologies;
- using social media more effectively;
- more effective procurement.

These cases can demonstrate success in the context of different levels and forms of cooperation, such as, in particular:

- between different levels of public administration within a Member State or between different Member States;
- between different regions/municipalities in the same or different Member States;
- public sector-to-business, or public sector-to-citizen interaction;
- the public sector acting as a platform for business-to-business collaboration or citizen-to-citizen collaboration;
- empowerment of communities by a public administration.

The above is merely indicative and allows for many different ways for public administrations to celebrate their achievements.

## The EPSA 2013 Award Categories

All levels of public administration will be rewarded since the theme aims to be inclusive. Therefore, EPSA 2013 will present awards in three categories – European/national, regional, and local – so good practice at all levels will be recognised, underlining the importance of coherent actions at all levels of public administration in this overarching thematic area. In addition, successful projects resulting from cross-border or cross-administrative cooperation will also be identified and receive special recognition.



### Application period

The call for applications will be opened on **25 January 2013** and will run until **12 April 2013**.

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## The EPSA 2013 Timeline at a glance



*“Our experience with the EPSA has been very positive: we have received permanent information regarding the development of the award, and the organisation has always given fast and exact answers to the questions that arose during the whole EPSA process.”*

*EPSA 2011 winner*

### **Why should you participate in the EPSA 2013?**

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 or the cultural sphere in which you operate. Your administration will improve its image by having its results and achievements published on the [www.epsa2013.eu](http://www.epsa2013.eu) website 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;
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 2013 nominees participating in the final event will be at the expense of EPSA/EIPA.

According to the recent flash survey carried out by EIPA among previous EPSA participants, the most frequently cited motivation to participate in the award scheme was the opportunity to disseminate their project at a European level, to benefit from international networking, and to receive an external assessment of their project.

### **The EPSA Assessment and Evaluation Methodology: impartial, independent and effective**

All submitted projects which meet the eligibility criteria are assessed against eight evaluation criteria: 1. Innovation; 2. Appropriateness of Actions Taken; 3. Impact/Results; 4. Sustainability; 5. Transferability and Learning Capacity; 6. Stakeholder Support; 7. Social Equity; 8. Effect on Economic Growth. Sufficient detail must be provided in the applications to demonstrate the quality of the achievements of the case and the lessons learnt.

*“We found the evaluation procedure excellent, especially the criteria and the staggered procedure of the evaluation.”*

*EPSA 2011 nominee*

**STEP 4: Jury meeting**

to select and decide on the group of nominees, EPSA winners (one per category) and honorary mentions.

**STEP 3: Onsite validation visits**

to shortlisted projects for validation and verification purposes.

**STEP 2: Consensus meeting**

to reach a commonly agreed list of ranked projects per category; to define the best practice certificate recipients; and to agree on top-ranked shortlisted projects for onsite visits.

The EPSA 2013 Team provides a provisional ranking list based on the **total** scores.

**STEP 1: Individual online evaluation**

by each evaluator, in isolation and remotely based. Each project is evaluated by three evaluators (triple evaluation).

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

In the **first step**, each project is assessed online, independently and exclusively by three different experts (the so-called assessment in 'triplets'). The evaluators do not know who is part of their evaluation triplet, or how the other two evaluators assessed the respective project.

During the **Consensus Meeting (Step 2)**, all evaluators come together to review and discuss the first available provisional ranking based on the individual scorings and to iron out possible discrepancies. Furthermore, they unanimously propose the Best Practice Certificate Recipients and the top shortlisted projects in each award category for the onsite visits.

The **third step – the onsite visits** – serves 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'. EIPA representatives do not (re)assess the projects!

The **fourth and final step** consists of the **Jury Meeting**, where high-ranking stakeholders and/or political personalities, separate from the evaluators, decide on the nominees and the award winners in each category and on the honorary mentions based on the previous evaluation steps.

## The EPSA 2013 Official Partners

EPSA 2013 is supported by 13 official partners: the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, and DG Human Resources and Security), Austria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Switzerland. Moreover, the Final Event and Award Ceremony will be hosted by the City of Maastricht and the Dutch Province of Limburg.



European Commission



Austria



Luxembourg



Denmark



the Netherlands



Germany



Norway



Hungary



Poland



Italy



Switzerland



Gemeente Maastricht

provincie limburg



## The EPSA 2013 Team



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## **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 30 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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