

HOW TO BUILD UP SIMPLIFICATION MEASURES

Guidelines

I WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF SIMPLIFICATION?

Simplification is aimed at improving the exchanges between citizens and public services, reducing businesses' contextual costs in their interactions with such services, making Public Administration more efficient and turning Portugal into a more competitive country.

The strategy aimed at simplification includes some generic goals such as:

- Reducing the number of face-to-face interactions
- Reducing waiting times
- Minimizing the number of interactions required between users and public services for a single procedure
- Providing on-the-spot services
- Providing more and better information

II WHAT ARE SIMPLEX MEASURES?

A **simplification measure** must be based on a **review** of the various activities that make up a **process** and must be aimed at **changing those activities**, so as to **reduce the contextual costs** for businesses and/or the **administrative costs** for citizens.

III WHAT KIND OF SOLUTIONS CAN BE ADOPTED?

Below are a few examples of approaches that can bring about simplification:

- Elimination or merger of different types of forms
- Provision of services over a single counter (one-stop-shop), thus ensuring the integration of services

- Establishment of alternative communication channels for certain stages of administrative procedures (e.g. obtaining information, submitting documents, checking the status of an application, payments ...)
- Provision of handbooks and guidelines on procedures online
- Establishment of single contact points
- Segmenting procedures according to the risk or complexity of its various stages
- Better regulation
- Processing specific stages of or a whole process electronically
- Eliminating duplication of information requests and checks

IV WHICH SITUATIONS MAY BECOME OPPORTUNITIES FOR SIMPLIFICATION?

SITUATION	OPPORTUNITY
Several forms whose completion is mandatory require the provision of information that has already been requested elsewhere.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To eliminate or merge forms. • To obtain the required information from other forms or files.
Information is required that has already been submitted to other departments. Or such information has to be ascertained by producing the necessary certificates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To obtain the available information from other departments within Public Administration rather than requesting it again from the individual citizen. • To create online certificates or facilitate the sharing of information between departments (while respecting and protecting personal data).
It is mandatory to submit several copies of the same documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To eliminate the request for several copies, which may be produced at the service collecting the documents.
The sharing of information between departments and the coordination of their procedures proves difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish electronic interfaces between departments for the exchange of information. • To make the existing software available to other departments. • To set up shared knowledge databases.
Inadequate information is provided to users or potential users about a specific administrative procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consolidate and clarify information • To make information available over the web
Citizens and businesses are forced to go to different services or to go several times to the same service to complete a specific process (e.g. obtaining a licence or permit or renewing one's driving licence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deal with the whole process over a single counter (one-stop-shop) or to establish single focal points to deal with such matters • To define procedures for the transmission of information between services • To set up an alternative channel for certain steps in the process (i.e. phone line for provision of information, the web for downloading forms)

SITUATION	OPPORTUNITY
At different moments in time throughout a single process, charges have to be paid and this implies going to the relevant services repeatedly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To abolish payment slips • To allow payments by bank transfers • To allow several payments in a single procedure
There is a large number of wrongly filled forms or poorly prepared applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To publicize duly filled applications to help users fill the relevant forms • To design handbooks to assist users step by step
The time required to complete a procedure is too long in view of its relevance or the pace at which activities should be undertaken in the business area concerned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To break down the procedures into elements of greater and lower risk or complexity • To abolish licences/permits that are deemed unnecessary in situations presenting a lower level of risk or complexity • To replace licences/permits and prior authorizations by mandatory notices and certification systems • To enable the follow-up of specific processes and to create alternative channels for exchanging information
No deadlines are defined for getting a reply from public services or pre-set deadlines are not met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish deadlines for providing replies to questions, requests, etc. • To prioritize replies whenever it becomes impossible to meet all the deadlines • To define standard minimal replies whenever deadlines cannot be met. • To publicize priorities and standard minimal replies
There is a significant albeit circumstantial increase in proceedings related to a particular administrative activity (e.g. to obtain a licence/permit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish agreements with other public services to obtain additional resources or to outsource part of the work