Unified subsystem for electronic application and assignment of targeted state social aid (VEMTAS)
A case of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Certificate of Merit with Special Mention, ISSA Good Practice Award – Europe competition 2019

State Social Protection Fund under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Azerbaijan

Summary

The main purpose of establishing an information system is to facilitate citizen access to state targeted social assistance (STSA) and eliminate possible negative cases.

The issue or challenge

What was the issue or challenge addressed by your good practice? Please provide a short description.

Until recently, the process of assigning state social aid to people in need in Azerbaijan was carried out with the involvement of special local commissions that consisted of up to seven people, causing a lot of complaints from citizens about corruption and non-transparency.

In February 2015, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued a decree aimed at improving the system of targeted state social aid. The decree provided that the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population should develop and introduce a Unified subsystem for electronic application and assignment of targeted state social aid (VEMTAS) in its centralized information system.

Now, the low-income families are able to access VEMTAS electronically through individual communication devices (computers, mobile telephones etc.), special e-government info-kiosks or through post offices. To provide technical assistance to applicants, post office employees were provided with relevant training.

Addressing the challenge

What were the main objectives of the plan or strategy to resolve the issue or challenge? List and briefly describe the main elements of the plan or strategy, focusing especially on their innovative feature(s) and expected or intended effects.

VEMTAS provides automated handling processes for applications for targeted state social aid and for the consideration of life conditions of families which are estimated online by a special software.

The decision on benefits is also made by the system, thus avoiding contacts between applicants and officials. The targeted social aid is paid in non-cash form, to ensure transparency and as an anti-corruption measure.

Since February 2016, the solution has been implemented nationwide.

Targets to be achieved

What were the quantitative and/or qualitative targets or key performance indicators that were set for the plan or strategy? Please describe briefly.

The implementation of the solution has led to the following positive changes:

- Applicants no longer need to collect documents from different organizations to submit these to the Ministry, and the use of paper has been completely eliminated. The Ministry collects the necessary documentation on its own through access to the databases of relevant government institutions in the unified E-Government portal.

- After approval of the application, information on family is automatically provided, without the intervention of any person from the information systems and resources of the following organizations:

  – The Ministry of Internal Affairs

  – The Ministry of Defence

  – The Ministry of Justice

  – The Ministry of Taxes

  – The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

  – The Ministry of Agriculture

  – The Ministry of Education

  – The Ministry of Health

  – The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technologies

  – The State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

  – The State Statistical Committee

  – The State Committee for Property Affairs

  – The State Migration Service

  – The State Border Service

  – Azerbaijan's State Service for Mobilization and Conscription

  – The Central Bank of the Republic of Azerbaijan;

  – The State Commission for Student Admission

  – "*Azərisıq*" Open Joint Stock Company

  – "*Azersu*" Open Joint Stock Company

  – The State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic "*Azerigaz*" Production Union

  – Executive bodies

- Accepted electronic applications are considered within 15 working days.

- Citizens receive an SMS informing them whether the targeted social assistance is awarded to them and if yes, the amount.

- The system makes it impossible for officials to intervene in the process so as to benefit from assigning the aid, thus ensuring a transparent and corruption-free process.

- The system uses bank plastic cards to receive the state targeted social aid which is assigned for a period of two years.

- The system sends an SMS to inform the applicant the address of the bank office where the plastic card may be obtained and the date when the card can be collected.

Evaluating the results

Has there been an evaluation of the good practice? Please provide data on the impact and outcomes of the good practice by comparing targets vs actual performance, before-and-after indicators, and/or other types of statistics or measurements.

Data collection by the system plays an exceptional role in identifying the relevant policy related to low-income families and improving their living conditions. For instance, collection of data on education levels is used to provide employment for citizens. The collected data is also used for the organization of social services for the handicapped and elderly people. Analyses are made to provide appropriate services to persons with the above-stated status and services are rendered accordingly. As a result, the quality and effectiveness of the services provided to the persons involved in the system are improving. Moreover, it is a good predictor of the situation in this area for the following years.

Lessons learned

Based on the organization's experience, name up to three factors which you consider as indispensable to replicate this good practice. Name up to three risks that arose/could arise in implementing this good practice. Please explain these factors and/or risks briefly.

Introduction of the system has provided conditions for ensuring transparency in the state targeted social assistance program, eliminating time loss, improving citizen satisfaction, and increasing the control over financial resources.

After implementation of the system, the model attracted the high interest of numerous countries which sent inquiries to study and apply the system.

Respectable international organizations view the transparent management and service systems built upon electronic data bases in the field of labour and social protection in Azerbaijan as a global best practice.

The number of organizations interested in the system is promoted by publications on the United Nations portal and the interest of South-South Cooperation Mechanisms and Solutions in the Arab States, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is also increasing. Given the interest of the World Bank's expert group, a comprehensive presentation on VEMTAS was given at the central office of the organization in Washington, DC.