

Interview Service for Administrative Simplification

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Mission of the ASA

The ASA has a coordination role but only contact the administrations if the regulations apply to them (for example : the « Only Once » law is a good entry door to talk with administrations).

They are under the supervision of a “Orientation comity” (composed of members of the various minister’s cabinets + private sector operators and “social partners”) who come to them with very concrete projects. At the end of this committee, the objectives for the following year are given the ASA.

Open Data: Belgium

The federal Open Data Portal contains all information from other portals but, as a result, faces languages problems and interoperability problems. This difference between Open Data portals comes from the development stage because Open Source software are hard to use (lack of resources to read the documentation).

Depending on the data they reference, the federal portal Data.gov.be references (manually) an URL to the appropriate FPS or they create an API.

They have a platform where they can discuss Open Data Portals with regions, local communities, Open Knowledge foundation (iMinds) and start-ups. For example, they have a project to add “gender” in databases or Metadata DCAT-AP.

They also talk about differences between Open Data portals (some build them on Github, other with proprietary software) and interoperability problems that could be solved by Metadata DCAT-AP.

Contacts

- G-Cloud

A potential collaboration with the G-Cloud would be that the G-Cloud stores the data whereas the portals stores the metadata. This would maybe lead to data visualization and linked Open Data.

Idea: Administrations have their own infrastructure -> G-cloud hosts the data -> Portals store the metadata.

- Digital Transformation Office/FEDICT

FEDICT handles the technical part (service bus, API) and the ASA the coordination (between social partners, administrations, companies,...) and ensures the implementation of the regulation. However, the ASA also handles the technical part with two consulting firms working with them : the CSC and KPMG.

Respondent fears that the transformation into the “Digital Transformation Office” will have no impact and even be worse because it will transform an administration (FEDICT) into a DG that will lack of political support. This lack of support is also a reason why FEDICT was not able to submit common visions, standards (of interoperability for example) at federal level. FEDICT never had the strength to impose solutions to the other FPS.

Future structure: FPS Strategy and Support -> DG Digital Transformation Office (FEDICT + P&O + Budget....no Social Security and no ASA (although this had been discussed at some point, but respondent thinks that it’s not such a bad thing as they can keep their independence in this way)).

Open Data

There are three main challenges regarding Open Data in Belgium :

- 1) The data infrastructure of organization (no URI’s, no vision, no common data format, no links with other databases, proprietary software not supported anymore. Ex: Moniteur Belge)

- 2) Interoperability (There is a real need for this + coherent metadata. Potential solution: metadata DCAT-AP => European standard, which allows to search through documents directly from the open data portal)
- 3) Quality of Data due to typing errors (Potential Solution : opening up the data makes the consumers correct the data themselves) or update of data (Potential Solution : private sectors thinks that low quality is better than nothing). This is mainly due to a fear of the administrations to be held liable in case of an issue with data that they would have shared.
- 4) Administrations do not want to open their data because it is not politically interesting although it is technically possible. Sometimes, the FPS and political partners do not care about administrative simplification because it is not interesting from a political/financial point of view, even if it is technically feasible (ex: handicapped people have the right to obtain specific indemnities. As of now, they still have to take a lot of time to fill in all the forms and this takes a lot of time and can be discouraging. This should be automatic (e.g as straight as a national register number is flagged as corresponding to a handicapped people, he should receive all the relevant indemnities) but this would then also be more costly for the State).

Motivation to Open the data: it depends very much on the people. Some are very happy to share their work, others despise this idea.

Money issues: some organizations (such as the NGI) has suffered a decrease in budgets and had to compensate with revenues. → Possible solution for these organizations: if we do a benchmark of the cost of data acquisition in Belgium, we realize that it does not generate much money. If the federal level compensates with 500 000 euros more or less, then it could be sufficient to open the data without issue. However, this is impossible politically as there is a silo culture between ministers. Moreover, the question of sustained funding is important, for example because the expectations of the re-users regarding updates and quality would be higher than those of the administration, which would compel these administrations to spend more money in order to comply with these new expected standards.

Principe « Only Once »

Federal Law (no similar legislation at regional level): the FPSs should make sure that they respect this principle when they draft laws or Royal decrees, but they fail to do it and it is the ASA that takes care of it now.

In theory, any citizens or company could complain (for example: that they have to provide their national register and birth date) but the problem is that this law is not well-known so nobody ever complained. Thus the FPS don't really feel the need to comply.

Location-based data

No many examples related to Location-Based data. They simply work with the transformation of addresses into 'Unified Resource Identifiers' (URI) to enable Linked Open Data. They still have contacts with the NGI via the « Open Data Workgroup » with Ingrid [Vanden Berghe](#).

Activities

- Measure

They analyse the usage rate of e-government applications. They will forward us with these rates.

- Impact Analysis

It is an obligatory document for drafts of laws/decrees to be discussed in the Ministries' Council (with other documents such as finance inspection). ASA offers a helpdesk to fill in this form and also has an "analysis committee" of these documents.

However, Impact Analysis does not work because it is not the culture in Belgium (we don't take the best decisions but the only decisions possible due to compromises and coalition systems). Moreover, the negative impacts are very often overlooked. These Impact Analysis are supposed to bring objectivity to policy making but given that every law is a perpetual negotiation between parties with

different political views, they pretty much limit themselves to what has been said in the general policy notes and the government agreement.

In France, it works way better with the majority system.

- **Facilitate co-creation**

Another of the interviewees' colleague is responsible (we will contact him by phone)

He only stated that co-creation, at the ASA, consists in sitting down with all stakeholders (FEDICT, Administrations, consultants...).