

Improvement of Information Flow at the Ministry of Justice

Situation analysis

Public information remains a crucial concern in Albania. Public bodies have an obligation to disclose information and every member of the public has a corresponding right to receive information. Even though prevalent cases have shown a growing concern by all media outlets in the country about the opportunity of receiving information by official sources, information released has been limited to political statements rather than public information. This almost missing dimension of public service has partially hindered the implementation of both “Law on Freedom of the Press” as well the “Law on Freedom of Information”. Both these Laws reflect essentially the level of implementation of a fundamental right likely the “Freedom of Expression”. Therefore World Bank together with the IPLS (Institute of Policies and Legal Studies) asked for Comport Shpk help in providing a communication strategy on improving the information flow in the MOJ, by making an approach on restructuring the whole communication process of the judicial system in Albania. We provided to the MOJ the necessary recommendations to further improve its internal and external flow of information in an effort to expand its cooperation with the stakeholders of this sector and to better meet the public demand and needs under the FOIA. Our approach was also based on a cutting- edge technology which guaranteed a multifunctional use of the information, best international practices and a solid platform of inter-communication. The client communication objectives were:

- **Increase of communication within MOJ:** Through a larger quantity of information shared between employees in the MOJ, the quality of the documentation produced for information purposes raised, thanks also to the enhancement of the analysis. The higher quality of the information that every employee was releasing/issuing in the local network was used to assist the MOJ to improve the human resources evaluation and to ameliorate the human resources management also through an intensive internal communication
- **Increase of communication between stakeholders:** Meaning a better structured and institutionalized communication between judiciary system’ stakeholders which improves the framework of service delivery to the public as well as coordinates political efforts of the MOJ to increment the impact and speed of reforms.
- **To improve the quality of the documentations :** that expands the amount of news-like information to share with the public at large, but also it affects the quality of the information that non-media, still interested parties- are about to receive from the MOJ. This enhances the observation of law by all agencies, since there is an increased transparency and greater public demand pressing on the MOJ.

- **Increase of public information:** Means launching in the MOJ a Proactive Freedom of Information Policy proposing to the Beneficiary/Client a new model of information dissemination. Albanian administration currently considers the information dissemination process a politically-driven one.

Strategy and implementation

In order to enable the implementation this Project, the MOJ and its authorities have to take the following regulatory steps:

Introduction of DIRD: Comport Shpk proposed a new structure to supply a framework solution to the needs of the MOJ in a new Department, which includes already existent sectors in the Ministry, but also ad-hoc created units. That means that the analysis and policy making units become compounded by members of different sectors, who exchange their information via intranet, serving in a virtually unified unit by adding value to the currently under discussion papers/drafts. This Department creates a three-dimensional environment where information is produced, processed and further delivered to all stakeholders. The Department consisted of 3 Units, respectively designed to complete Research, Documentation and Information functional duties.

MOJ Marketing approach implementation: In order to reach all target groups, but also to be capable of supplying continuously a higher volume of information and services, Comport Shpk thought the MOJ has to define its Marketing solutions. The best approaches derive first of all by a “needs for services assessment” research focused on the following tools of communication:

- a. Online communication– measure hits and nr. of pages visited, as well as sort of information transferred during web-visits. Identify best sectors where public interest is shown.
- b. Produce analytical data on the public requests for information of the last period (a quarterly period measurement would be fine)
- c. Define new ways to promote public interest for the Informative Outputs of the MOJ

Commercial Media outlets are invited to join a special members’ area in the web-site and Forum, by paying in advance a membership fee. They were offered to explore all the complaints arriving in the MOJ. Moreover another approach of Marketing was to host a weekly TV show dedicated to Justice, into the lobby of the Ministry during evening hours. All advertisement profit of the TV is shared with the MOJ. Normally such a show, if properly made, can produce only by the strategic sponsor an amount of about EUR 15,000 – 30.000 /month. We also thought that a range of Informative Booklets focusing judicial education for the public at large can be produced and sold as Gadget with daily newspapers. The MOJ is paid back by the paper through advertising space. The MOJ can use this space to public its announcements and to promote the new system of information in place.

Media Communication: A daily communication was established with the media to guarantee that the public is thoroughly informed on the new ways of information offered to it by the MOJ. Media was informed on the new opportunities created due to the new electronic environment in the MOJ and on a daily basis a synopsis of most interesting topics was offered to the media, in order to expand the level of exploitation of the new intranet/extranet system. On request all demands of the media were fulfilled in accordance with the Regulatory Order of the Minister following the implementation phase of the Project.

Online (web) and Viral (email) Communication: We also thought to create a daily communication with the Public at large and the stakeholders using the web site and the dedicated email-list. Also, every online applicant has to register so his email can be added, in accordance with his pre-selected fields of interest. The website would be updated on daily basis with most recent press-releases, commentaries and online surveys. A monthly e-newsletter would be prepared and distributed, while this Unit would have to develop also the Online marketing campaigns of the MOJ. Through the website and a username/password system (requiring only formal registration of the user) the public and interested parties get access to all documents “opened for public use” in accordance to the RDBMS architecture of the Archive, where only classified documents and folders can not be reached if not owning a special password. This architecture also reflects the appropriate decisions regarding Marketing aims of the MOJ.

Telephone Online Communication (green-line call-centre): Meaning a non-stop service of the MOJ to collect complains and questions, which later on could be replied in different ways. Name of the person calling can be asked and his/her telephone number should be registered automatically. Phone-calls should be registered at request the end of a selected options procedure, in accordance with the call-centre database of replies.

Communication Kiosks: we thought to create permanent video centres of information focused mainly on the competences and procedures that regulate the inter-action between judiciary system institutions. The touch screen computers should be situated in the entrance points of Courts and Prosecution Offices in order to address main concerns of the public facing judicial problems. Timelines, competences, procedures and other detailed explanations should be organized in accordance with a database similar to an Online Customer Care Service in order to possibly cover all eventual concerns of a typical citizen. If the user wants to apply online for a specific question, he can do so filling the form which is immediately sent online to the MOJ. The user is automatically informed that he can receive a formal reply from the PIO in the MOJ within 48 hours. Business hours of the PIO are also displayed in the screen. The user can be invited to propose an alternative route of information, if he expects to receive a faster response.

PIO- Human Based Communication of MOJ: This Office involves representative people from all three sectors of DIRD, depending to the public counterpart asking for the meeting. PIO serves first of all to the Judicial State Registry Unit’ clients. In the future, as soon as the MOJ has a full Archiving solution in place, this service can be fully

automated. Human contacts will be concentrated in the PIO where also a Communication Kiosk can be installed to avoid queues.

Mobile Communication This widely spread device can serve the interests of DIRD to announce service applicants when to appear in the MOJ for a meeting in case their request requires unspecified time to be completed. Analysts looking for comparative data or special reports incl. statistical analysis can be informed through mobile devices to pick up their required documents. Also Free Professionals can be announced by a mobile phone message- “msg”, to pick up physically the new Regulations and Laws affecting their work, signing in response a Declaration that they were informed on the respective changes/modifications. This technique has been implemented for a long time during the communist dictatorship within the administration on the occasion of every publication of the Official Gazette. Old and medium aged employees still consider it a very successful way to guarantee responsibility in work at every level. All msg-s can be sent from online applications at no cost.

Results

We put in place structures and mechanisms to address a new culture of civil service in the field of information, guaranteeing rights by fulfilling international and national legal obligation requirements, already ratified by Albanian authorities.

We offered a framework solution which allows every unit inside the MOJ to adopt its informational performance in reliance to the new functional requirements of the Project;

Configured an updateable system which do not hinder the future processes of e-governing (national e-archiving, Government-server installations, eventual interfaces required to communicate in a large scale, etc), whilst a framework project is run under the Patronage of the Prime Minister’s Office.

We promote Human Rights and Equal Access to Information, the Legal and Judicial Reform, the respective Policies in the Justice Sector, improve Image of Justice, by building public trust and confidence, enhance Public Involvement, initiate a Public Driven performance and support Legal Education.