

eEnviPer Project Summary

Environmental Permits for the 21st Century



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Summary description and project objectives

Environmental permits are a requirement for many economic activities in Europe, including intensive farming, power stations, waste treatment and manufacturing. However, the permitting process can often be complicated or seem inaccessible to those implementing the process as well as those applying for permits.

Furthermore, when in 1998 the Aarhus Convention established that sustainable development can only be achieved through the involvement of all stakeholders, it linked government accountability with environmental protection and focused on interactions between the public and public authorities in a democratic context. This has led to a clear need for public participation and consultation during the environmental permitting procedures.

eEnviPer is a cloud-based e-Government solution for the application, administration and consultation of environmental permits across Europe. As a specialised e-Government tool for environmental permits, it benefits all relevant stakeholders:

- 1) Public authorities benefit from streamlined workflows and a reduced bureaucratic burden;
- 2) Investors benefit from increased transparency and faster processing of their applications, ultimately leading to more economic development; and
- 3) Citizens benefit from easier access to information about developments in their area and more convenient participation.

eEnviPer incorporates proven technology for a cloud-based e-Government solution: it includes workflow management systems, geographic information systems, participation technology and knowledge management functions also used in other commercial and public sector applications.

With the support of the European Union's ICT Policy Support Programme, the eEnviPer consortium **pilot-tested the existing single multi-purpose cloud platform** for providing software as a service in five different European countries exhibiting different institutional settings and e-government contexts between April 2012 and March 2014. **eEnviPer demonstrated the benefits of service oriented architecture and cloud architecture** by integrating complimentary existing systems that support environmental-related permits procedures and provide digital services for permitting authorities at different level (local, regional and central), enterprises, consulting services providers (i.e. environmental engineers) and civil society (either individual citizens or special interest groups such as NGOs).

The pilots in Puglia (Italy), Crete (Greece), Niğde (Turkey), Indjija (Serbia) and Krapina-Zagorje (Croatia) integrated existing governmental data sources and geographical information systems with Web 2.0 participation platforms and workflow solutions. The resulting single multi-purpose cloud platform, based on service-oriented architecture, is now available to authorities across Europe as a so-called *software as a service* (SaaS).

Activities 2012-2014

Preparation

In 2012, eEnviPer prepared the ground for the start of the pilot tests in the five pilots. The integration and customisation began with a thorough evaluation of the current situation in each pilot project.

On this basis, the project defined a set of thirteen use cases and/or common procedures that the integrated software platform would need to deliver on. Pilots also modelled the workflows for their own customised installation. At the same time, a detailed Pilot Implementation Plan was drawn up to determine the timelines, tasks and responsibilities for the test phase.

In February 2013, eEnviPer's technical team presented the customised platforms for each pilot. Subsequently, pilot partners localised and translated the software and started to train internal stakeholders in its use.



Pilot tests

In April 2013, pilot partners began to test the platform using real-life cases with all stakeholders concerned.

Through a number of user engagement events - including training sessions, workshops, media relations and one-on-one meetings - the project partners encouraged public authority staff, environmental engineers, investors and citizens to test the eEnviPer platform and provide feedback on its performance.

In general, users praised the user-friendliness, the integration of paperless workflows and the immediate availability of geographic information in the system.

Business development

Throughout the project, eEnviPer followed a thorough business development process, from market analysis and pricing strategy to localised business plans for each pilot. As of April 2014, the eEnviPer software solution is commercially available in Croatia, Italy, Greece, Serbia and Turkey and the identification of future opportunities is underway.

Results and expected impacts

eEnviPer provides local, regional and national environmental permitting authorities with a service architecture to organise and assess environmental impact studies; share environmental information among authorities, enterprises and civil society; facilitate permitting and auditing procedures; handle large number of users / stakeholders; and reduce bureaucratic procedures and delays in the environmental permitting procedure.

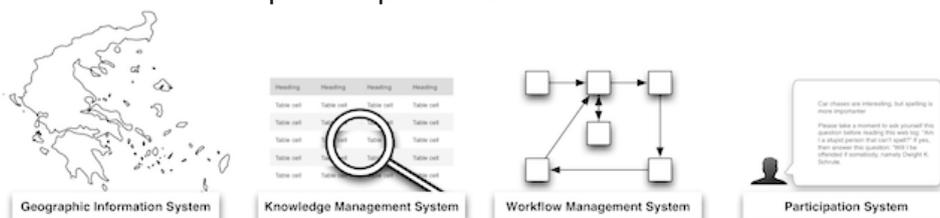
eEnviPer's interoperable architecture can be adapted to any other licensing procedure such as registration in regional, national or European registries and chambers that include assessments, audits and public information, thus delivering similar advantages in other areas of public life.

The eEnviPer platform ultimately lowers the effort involved in the environmental permits process for both public authorities and for operators: information is more easily accessible, and defined workflows increase the speed of the process. After the initial investment to install and customise eEnviPer, the regular cost of the system is low as a result of the cloud-based architecture.

eEnviPer's cloud services increase public officials' productivity by organising and facilitating the environmental impact assessment procedure. Increased productivity results in saving public administrations' time as well as their operational costs.

The eEnviPer platform increases transparency by sharing environmental information, thus encouraging compliance with environmental legislation. Citizens also benefit through easier means to find information about current permits and to submit comments and contributions. Consultants and engineers can more easily find available environmental information both in environmental studies as well as in other thematic areas such as spatial planning, financial and statistical analysis, etc.

eEnviPer ultimately helps to reduce the environmental impact of economic activities through the environmental permits process in a cost-effective manner.



eEnviPer combines geographic information with workflows, knowledge management and participation.