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**EAGLE**  
**EnhAnced Government LEarning**

[www.fp7-eagle.eu](http://www.fp7-eagle.eu)

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and engaging learners in the public administrations

Deliverable 9.5

**Policy Recommendations**


WP 9 – Outreach

Lead Participant: Fraunhofer

Approval Panel	Name / Partner short name	Department / Function	Date
Author	Peter Schilling	Fraunhofer	29/01/2017
Reviewer	Eric Ras Thomas Gantenbein Celina Raffl	LIST ACCEL DHBW	20/02/2017
Quality Check	Sabine Moebs	DHBW	02/03/17




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## Glossary

<b>EAGLE</b>	EnhAnced Government LEarning
<b>GUI</b>	Graphical User Interface (e.g. Windows screen features)
<b>OER</b>	Open Educational Resources
<b>PA</b>	Public Administration
<b>PR</b>	Policy Recommendation

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## 1 Executive Summary

This document contains a set of policy recommendations (PR) for the introduction of the EAGLE platform and associated changings of learning on the job. The recommendations concentrate on the needs of small municipalities. They are tailored to make the adoption of EAGLE as easy and gentle as possible. The recommendations address the management level of small municipalities. Technical questions are addressed only if they affect management decisions directly.

The EAGLE platform and the accompanying concept help Public administrations (PA) to cope with various challenges: new regulations, flexible learning and knowledge exchange opportunities and saving the experience of staff members approaching retirement in a structured way.

## 2 Basic Remarks

These policy recommendations (PRs) are conceived as a guideline for the easy and gentle adoption of the EAGLE solution. The PRs outlined in this document shall provide a set of advices as guidance for decision-makers in (local) Public Administrations (PA) or heads of departments, introducing a learning solution such as EAGLE. EAGLE allows informal learning at the workplace, knowledge sharing and provides employees in PA with tools to easily identify experts in the area of proficiency required.

These recommendations will help achieve the positive impact of this approach with a minimum of overhead. They are tailored specifically to the management of small (rural) municipalities and focus on a quick and easy introduction within organisations of this type. The PRs outlined here aim to introduce EAGLE successfully with a minimum of changes. Larger and more complex organisations will require more profound change management processes; a detailed description of change management can be found in [1].

In the following statements the term “learning” is used in a very general context. It denotes learning on the job to solve short range ad hoc problems and up to long term advanced professional education in PA. Within the specific context of EAGLE, learning always refers to informal learning at the workplace, i.e. knowledge and information sharing or exchange of experience and practices.

The document contains key recommendations that address possible concerns and helps overcoming them by using the different capabilities of the EAGLE learning solution and its accompanying non-technical concepts, such as guidelines for managing change and the engagement strategy. These PRs provide an overview of the key steps of the introduction process in small municipalities. For further details of some of the steps, references are given to the respective detailed EAGLE project documents. For instance, the document does not contain further information regarding (technical) implementation and costs of implementation and usage. This information can be found in other more detailed documents of the project [2] [9].

To introduce the concept of informal workplace learning and knowledge exchange following these PRs, access to the EAGLE platform or an equivalent platform is a precondition.

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### 3 Policy Recommendations

The recommendations as discussed below have been developed in order to fully exploit the potential of EAGLE and to provide a positive experience for informal workplace learning, knowledge sharing and exchange in small municipalities. These PRs at hand focus on the demands and needs of small (rural) municipalities. The document does not repeat all the features and advantages of the EAGLE platform. This general information is found in document [3].

The PRs are structured encompassing the following areas:

1. Key Challenges
2. Organization and Culture
3. Legal/Regulatory/Ethical Issues
4. Technical
5. Financial
6. Political Aspects
7. Other Policy Recommendations

#### 3.1 Key challenges

To overcome known barriers is an important step for the introduction of the EAGLE learning solution. Three common and important barriers [4], which have been identified in the EAGLE project, are described in some detail in the following.

##### **Make sure users have basic IT skills.**

Users need to be familiar with IT in daily use. Especially the handling of a GUI (Graphical user interface, such as that found in the windows Operating System) and a browser are minimum requirements.

Knowledge of using a word processor and discussion forums are as well needed for successful use. If these skills are not present at the beginning of the implementation, they can be acquired by using learning modules of the platform. To become an author of learning content of the platform (OER), additional skills are required. These skills can be acquired through learning-by-doing and appropriate learning modules. Tutorials for key features of the EAGLE learning solution are available on the portal.

##### **Provide time for personal learning at the workplace.**

Offer time slots for your staff to become familiar with the platform. Employees in PA face many different tasks and issues in their everyday work. In order to deal with them effectively and efficiently, it is crucial for them to a) exchange with others in a similar position to decrease problem-solving time and to b) constantly learn something new. EAGLE addresses these demands by allowing employees in PA to establish their own network of colleagues and to exchange with experienced colleagues beyond regulatory and agency borders.

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### **Reduce prejudices.**

Previous e-Learning projects, which have proven not to be sustainable or to have withstood the test of time, may have caused reservation against IT-supported learning. These prejudices can be relieved by early and readily understandable information. Make clear that EAGLE is not “just another” e-learning platform, but a highly efficient tool for informal and social learning through connection with colleagues and experts. In addition, test accounts on the intended platform, with content covering the user’s own topics, are the best way to create high acceptance. Make clear that IT-supported learning cannot be a complete substitute for face-to-face contacts.

## **3.2 Organisation and Culture**

### **Motivate by good example.**

The participation of heads of the municipal administration and middle management on the platform is a good way to enhance the overall motivation to use the platform by all staff.

### **Create incentives for learning.**

In general, employees in PA are interested in advanced education and personal development. However, they should be encouraged to use new forms of learning (e.g.: [5][6]). In the administration environment some incentive measures could help to promote this:

- Allow every staff member access to the platform in an easy way.
- Offer user, author and multiplier<sup>1</sup> training during the introduction phase and beyond.
- Encourage interested people to be a multiplier after the introduction phase. Make clear that this engagement is appreciated by the management.
- Allow (local/regional) face-to-face meetings or workshops of groups of authors and topic specific communities respectively at least once a year.

### **Provide individual feedback on learning progress.**

Employees are eager to learn. But they request and need feedback on their progress. From a technical point of view, EAGLE can do that with the so called “Automatic Item Generator” [7] or the possibility to manually author a test<sup>2</sup>. The results of each test are shown on the personal (confidential) dashboard. Make sure to provide personal feedback to your staff in addition and show them that their efforts are valued and appreciated.

### **Establish a sustainable learning environment.**

Very often, initiatives on IT-supported learning are not planned for a long enough time span or available learning content is insufficient to fully exploit its potential. Future projects thus should be embedded in a long term strategy. This means that the aims are defined not only as a short range introduction of a technical platform. At medium-term the change of the culture of learning on the job and advanced education in the municipality should be the result. This implies the transition from conventional learning forms to IT supported multimedia learning content. It further implies also the introduction of concepts

<sup>1</sup> A multiplier is a person which some advanced experience with the platform, helping newcomers with their first steps.

<sup>2</sup> The platform used in EAGLE is TAO®.

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that have not been used in the work environment in PA; e.g. knowledge community building, discussion forums, argumentation tool or Wiki alike knowledge bases.

The progress of this change should be evaluated in longer periods (one year or longer), using evaluation criteria which are clearly defined at the beginning.

### **Encourage community building.**

Support the development of discussion boards, specializing in specific topics, but reaching across many municipalities on the platform. Examples for best practises are given in [8].

An important aspect is to retain the professional experience of staff members going into retirement. Inform them about the tools for preserving their experience with the platform and motivate them using it. Encourage the building of multi-agency communities for this purpose. Grant some time contingents as an appreciation for the successful generation of experience based OER. If retired persons are willing to prepare experience OER, grant them access to the platform.

### **3.3 Legal/Regulatory/Ethical**

#### **Observe copyright of third parties.**

It is important to point out that the respective licences have to be observed, if third party content is included (not only cited) in a contribution. The Creative Commons (CC) licence models can be helpful.

#### **Inform staff about the meaning and handling of Freedom of Information requests.**

Two legal fields of information access potentially touch the EAGLE platform:

1. DIRECTIVE 2003/98/EC on the re-use of public sector information<sup>3</sup>:

The simplest way to handle (and overcome) potential difficulties with this topic could be as follows: Leave the rights for each contribution with the author. Author decides at which level the contribution is accessible (within the municipality, for all registered platform users, public). The authors should grant an unlimited use on the chosen level. As the contributions are voluntary, the rights are not with the authority; so it could not decide to give it away for reuse.

2. National Freedom of Information laws:

These laws consider only official information of public institutions and not educational content. The exception described below has to be pointed out.

#### **Auditability of decisions/duty to preserve records**

If any real case decision is directly influenced by content of the platform (e.g. the argumentation tool) this must be documented in the local case files as usual and not on the EAGLE platform.

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<sup>3</sup> DIRECTIVE 2003/98/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 November 2003 on the re-use of public sector information - <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:345:0090:0096:EN:PDF>.

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### **Raise awareness among your staff to strongly consider trust and privacy.**

The EAGLE portal is provided with a scoping mechanism, which enables EAGLE platform providers to control access to personal data so that only authorized users have access to this information. Employees need to consider the scope of their action when creating content on the EAGLE learning platform.

Ensure that the chosen platform provider fulfils the national regulations for privacy and data security for the user data and make sure it is part of the service contract.

All user data storage is voluntary, so generally allowed by privacy laws. It has to be restricted on a minimal level to fulfill the platform purposes. Regarding the contribution of content, the basic author information is open to the users. The author determines the level of the publicity according to the platform categories:

1. *Organization*: Only accessible in the organization to which the author is a member.
2. *Portal*: Accessible to all registered users of a certain platform implementation.
3. *Global*: Accessible to other EAGLE platforms and beyond.

The author defines the distribution scope, restricted to the chosen level. This delimits also the re-use of public sector information as mentioned above.

Superiors must not ask for data about the individual learning progress or similar performance data. The use of data should be forbidden, even if access is granted voluntarily. This data is strictly reserved to the users themselves. A declaration for staff council or an agreement on this topic with the staff council may raise the acceptance of the platform use.

Make clear that all content created by platform users has to adhere to anonymity, e.g. in descriptions of sample cases.

## **3.4 Technical**

### **Choose an appropriate model to operate the EAGLE platform.**

The availability of an appropriate technical platform is a precondition for the introduction of the EAGLE solution. This can be achieved in several ways:

1. Join an EAGLE platform offered by a superior authority<sup>4</sup>
2. Join an EAGLE platform offered by a regional PA service provider or a PA skill center<sup>5</sup>
3. If option 1 or 2 is not available<sup>6</sup>:
  - 3.1. Establish a community with similar municipalities, including a sufficient number of users, making it attractive to a service provider (PA or commercial) to establish the EAGLE platform service as a new product in its portfolio.
  - 3.2. Alternatively one public authority hosts the platform for other members or municipalities. In this case a technically proficient IT team is required.

<sup>4</sup> Likely an option in Luxembourg and Montenegro.

<sup>5</sup> An appropriate solution in Germany.

<sup>6</sup> Likely an option in Ireland; a possibility in all other countries too.



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Have skilled/trained staff/IT-administrators available to coach you in respect to technical aspects of an EAGLE platform deployment.

Detailed information on technical prerequisites is given in [9]. This normally concerns only the platform provider.

### **Ensure adequate IT infrastructure.**


Depending on the service level agreement with a platform provider, no specialised technical skills are necessary in the municipality. In the municipality itself only user administration with editorial rights is required.

Every user should have permanent access to the platform. The minimum user requirements are a dedicated IT workplace with internet or other platform access, a modern operating system and a browser. Sufficient bandwidth for all users is important. Bandwidth sufficient for video learning modules and video conferences is not mandatory, but strongly recommended. The platform access of registered users is technically possible from their own devices (at home) with no additional risks. The use of own devices can follow every general regulation which is given by the respective municipality.

## **3.5 Resources**

When deciding on using EAGLE, make sure that there are enough resources available. While the portal itself is open-source some further costs may occur: Check costs of technical provision and operation of the platform, licences fees (if applicable for additional relevant “not-OER” content), external trainers in the introduction phase. Last but not least, give voluntary users some time to become familiar with the platform. If they act as multipliers or content authors, grant them an appropriate amount of time for these activities or invest in some train-the-trainer course.

An evaluation of the concept 12 to 18 months after the introduction of EAGLE within your organisation is recommended. This evaluation should also include financial and qualitative aspects. It is an appropriate measure to validate the benefits of the concept – monetary and non-monetary.

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### 3.6 Political

#### **Early involvement of the local council.**


As a decision-maker in a PA, inform the council, mayor or other relevant bodies early enough about the planned introduction of the EAGLE concept. Inform about key issues and the advantages. Check your local, regional or national regulations; normally there should be no obstacles. Induce a formal resolution, if necessary<sup>7</sup>. Give interested council members the opportunity for a guided personal experience with the platform.

#### **Early involvement of the staff council.**

Involve the staff council as early as possible. Share all information about the planned steps – especially the information concerning privacy and data about learning engagement and success. Give staff council members the opportunity for a guided personal experience with the platform.

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<sup>7</sup> In detail depending on local or national regulations.

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## Supplementary Readings

References below are relevant to readers with an interested in an in-depth discussion of technical and/or methodological details.

Reading is not mandatory to understand and follow the above outlined PR.

[1]	Change management: D3.3 Local Government Change Management Model Guide
[2]	Costs of implementation and usage: D8.4 Economic analysis of the EAGLE OER/OS learning platform and services
[3]	Features and advantages: D5.6 EAGLE OER Learning Platform
[4]	Overcome known barriers: D2.2 Requirements documentation and recommendations with Accessibility Guidelines
[5]	D6.9 Process Map (final version)
[6]	D6.10 Argumentation Tool (final version)
[7]	D6.11 Automatic Item Generator (final version)
[8]	Examples for best practices: D7.3 Cross-European Collaboration Best Practices and Guidelines
[9]	Technical descriptions: D5.5 OER-LP Architecture Release; also D5.1 to D5.4