



# European Public Sector Award EPSA 2015

## The Public Sector as Partner for a Better Society



European Institute of Public Administration  
Institut européen d'administration publique



## Table of Contents

- 5 What is the European Public Sector Award?
- 5 The European Public Sector Award:  
the European Network of Public Sector Excellence
- 6 General Context of EPSA 2015
- 7 The EPSA 2015 Theme
- 10 The EPSA 2015 Award Categories
- 12 Application Period
- 13 The EPSA 2015 Timeline at a Glance
- 13 Why Should You Participate in the EPSA 2015?
- 14 The EPSA Assessment and Evaluation Methodology:  
Impartial, Independent and Effective
- 16 The EPSA 2015 Official Partners
- 17 The EPSA 2015 Team
- 18 The European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)



## What is the European Public Sector Award?

The EPSA brings together the best, most innovative and efficient performers from the European public sector. The vision of EPSA and EIPA is to create an arena in which Europe's public sector institutions can excel and become exemplars for the rest of the world. Therefore, the objective of EPSA is to make this valuable experience transparent, available and usable.

### The European Public Sector Award: the European Network of Public Sector Excellence

The EPSA is the only Europe-wide public sector award, which is open to all public administrations from all levels across Europe. It is a biennial scheme started in 2007, which will be run and managed for the fourth time in 2015 by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA).

So far, EPSA has brought together over 800 cases of public excellence. All awarded cases contain inspirational and working solutions which are ready to be replicated by other countries in a new context and in new forms.

Consequently, EPSA is an important **European learning arena**.



**Target:** EPSA targets all sectors of public administration, with an emphasis on specific themes/categories;

**Scope:** EPSA awards projects which have proven their success by tangible results and impact;

**Focus:** EPSA focuses on recognition and dissemination of good practice.

The EPSA 2015 thus provides an excellent opportunity for innovative and efficient performers from the public sector to present their work and to become part of an extensive European network of public sector excellence, in which they can benchmark their achievements with their peers and at the same time learn from each other.

The EPSA 2015 will be presented on the occasion of a high-level event on leading-edge public administration solutions, which will be held on **17-18 November 2015** in Maastricht, the Netherlands, under the auspices of the Luxembourg EU Presidency. This event offers a significant opportunity for European administrations with innovative performance and outstanding achievements to reach an extensive audience and to be recognised for being at the leading edge of the European public sector.

## **General Context of EPSA 2015**

The public sector accounts for almost 50% of countries' GDP in the EU28 and has a crucial role to play in Europe's socio-economic development, progress and competitiveness.

However, most public administrations across Europe have experienced continued strains on their public finances, with the first signs of tentative recovery appearing only recently; meanwhile, they are being persistently confronted with rising welfare costs due to the effects of the financial crisis and societal changes. Limited resources have also coincided with a wider questioning of the legitimacy of public administrations at all levels to make decisions impacting on society. These challenges – coupled with the importance of the public sector's role in Europe's growth and recovery – call for stable and strong institutions, but which are at the same time flexible, agile, and open to change, and thus scale up capacities and boost innovation. Hence, there is a need for public administrations **to increase effectiveness and efficiency, and to strive towards best practices in order to maximise the likelihood that a degree of social protection can be maintained.**

As a result, there is a growing trend towards a greater use of alternative service delivery models, designed around the needs of service users and with a more strategic focus. The efforts to **build user-centric public services** require both new knowledge and skills, as well as innovative policy-making structures for **co-design and co-management of public services and for working in partnership for a better society**. It is necessary to develop a new digital public service architecture to facilitate open innovation across a range of actors and services. The opportunity to deliver more and better services together with society is a powerful way to reconnect citizens with policy-making and government.

Now is the unique moment to respond to the strong need **to 're-define'**, or in other words **to re-fresh and re-stress, the prominent role of the public sector in leading to a better society.**



## The EPSA 2015 Theme

Under the overarching theme '*The Public Sector as Partner for a Better Society*', the EPSA 2015 seeks to showcase and reward those cases from Europe's public sector that embrace public administrations as partners in integrated and participatory governance approaches to public service delivery, that show increased effectiveness and efficiency in the context of maintaining social cohesion, innovative public management and leadership approaches, as well as sound public finances or intelligent action by public administrations to promote economic growth.

Changes towards more collaborative ways of working, developing new approaches, from service design to delivery, considering sound public finances and new leadership models, can be found in many administrations and across all administrative levels. The EPSA 2015 thus aims to reward public excellence in administrations, and public innovators behind the cases that are reflecting this 'new' role in society and who are finding novel solutions by providing outstanding public services and by ensuring that consideration of social inclusion underpins their decisions.

This topic will therefore give public administrations across Europe the opportunity to be proud of their achievements, and to showcase how they are responding to these challenges and balancing these competing demands.

*“Cooperation with EIPA/EPISA and winning the EPISA Award have improved the effectiveness of our project at local, regional and national level, which is very important in terms of planning a process of national programmes. In addition, EPISA offers us opportunities for international cooperation with other EPISA applicants.”*

EPISA 2013 Award winner

#### The novelties of the EPISA 2015 are:

- There is a single theme for all applicants in the new EPISA 2015 edition, with **two different categories**: 1) European, national or regional administrative level and 2) supra-local or local level. Thus, each public administration competes against and compares itself with projects coming from a similar level! The best project in each category will be awarded.
- Additionally, a **third award** will be presented to a successful and outstanding project, drawn from both categories, with a significant **cross-cutting perspective**, e.g. cross-border, cross-administrative, cross-sector, etc.

Applications submitted should demonstrate changes leading to successful outcomes, such as, for instance:

#### **Effective engagement by government with stakeholders**

- Models of cooperation between the public sector and civil society or public-private partnership through co-design and co-management mechanisms;
- Participatory approaches for policy formulation, strategy development, evaluation and/or improved transparency in the policy cycle;
- Better policy coherence and new means of effective collaboration between departments and sectors, or between administrative levels (European, national, regional, local and supra-local);
- Efficient multilevel governance mechanisms ensuring stakeholder consultations leading to successful implementation of EU regulations;
- Improved systems and methods for evidence-based policy-making including diversity-sensitive analysis (e.g. relating to gender, age, disability etc.).



### **New service delivery approaches**

- New service delivery methods and ownership models, including public-private cooperation for modernisation of public services in areas such as education and training, social care, employment and labour market, health, business development, regional development, environment and customs, etc.;
- Reforms to reduce administrative burdens through integration of services;
- Innovative examples of client-centred one-stop solutions and self-help measures;
- Adaptation of e-Government and e-Participation for improved public service delivery, e.g. through e-Learning, e-Health, e-Procurement, e-Invoicing, e-Justice, etc.;
- Effective solutions ensuring equal access to public services.

### **Innovative knowledge management and new leadership approaches**

- Methods for overcoming innovation barriers and management of innovation processes and initiatives;
- New structures for public learning organisations, evaluation methodologies and establishment of a learning culture in the public sector;
- Innovative leadership and new management approaches, including co-leadership and network governance;
- Leadership training methodologies to build new critical leadership skills for success at different levels of management;
- Effective measures for career development and skills development methodologies of staff in the public sector, such as traineeship programmes, coaching and e-Learning networks.

### **Sound public finance**


- Optimisation of the management of public funds, e.g. through new public procurement practices and effective budgeting and financial management practices;
- Efficient methods and approaches for implementation of large public investment and development projects;
- Innovative partnerships in budget preparation between service managers and finance staff, including establishment of forward planning and policy coordination mechanisms;
- Innovative measures for developing ethical conduct and combatting corruption, including robust and effective arrangements for whistle-blowers.


These cases can demonstrate success in the context of different levels and **forms of cooperation**, such as, in particular:


- Between different levels of public administration within a Member State or between different Member States;
- Between different regions/municipalities in the same or different Member States;
- Public sector-to-business, or public sector-to-citizen interaction;
- By the public sector acting as a platform for business-to-business collaboration or citizen-to-citizen collaboration;
- By the empowerment of communities by a public administration.

### The EPSA 2015 Award Categories

All levels of public administration will be rewarded since the theme aims to be inclusive. Therefore, EPSA 2015 will present awards in two different categories based on the level of administration:

 **Category 1:** Projects/cases submitted by organisations from the **European, national or regional level**;

 **Category 2:** Projects/cases submitted by organisations from the **supra-local or local level**.

 In addition, a **third award** will be presented to a successful and outstanding project or case - drawn from both categories - with a significant, **cross-cutting perspective**, e.g. cross-border, cross-administrative, cross-sector, etc.

Besides the three above-mentioned awards, **Best Practice Certificates (BPC)** will be presented to a number of top-ranked projects in each category.

This means that good practice at all levels will be recognised, underlining the importance of coherent actions, coordination and monitoring of the actions, creative mechanisms of accountability, and/or models of decentralisation and partnership at the various levels of public administration.



Projects submitted by applicants are encouraged to consider relevant aspects of gender equality, the use of ICT-enabled solutions and/or environmental sustainability.

In addition, those projects benefiting from EU supportive actions, such as the European Social Fund (ESF) TO 11 ('Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration'), are especially invited to submit their achievements.

Finally, previous EPSA participants may re-submit projects from the previous EPSA editions on the basis that it includes an intelligent adaptation, update and extension of past projects.

## Application Period

The online application period is **open until 17 April 2015** (24.00 Brussels local time CET) 2015 at [www.epsa2015.eu](http://www.epsa2015.eu) in the Applicants' Area.



Watch the EPSA 2015 video on our YouTube channel *EPSA Awards*



Become a member of the *EPSA Community* group on LinkedIn



Follow us on Twitter  
*@EPSAawards*



Like our facebook page  
*European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)*

**EPSA Helpdesk at EIPA**  
Tel. +31 43 32 96 278 (NL)

[info@epsa2015.eu](mailto:info@epsa2015.eu)  
[www.epsa2015.eu](http://www.epsa2015.eu)

## The EPSA 2015 Timeline at a Glance



## Why Should You Participate in the EPSA 2015?

1. Your projects are offered the opportunity to be **showcased, rewarded and to benefit from an increased visibility at European level** – irrespective of the size or type of your administration or the cultural sphere in which you operate. Your administration will **improve its image** by having its results and achievements published on the [www.epsa2015.eu](http://www.epsa2015.eu) website and via other channels of dissemination;
2. The EPSA offers you maximum benefits and new **collaboration opportunities** as part of a **network of excellence**, promoting **efficient networking, practice exchange and knowledge transfer across Europe**;
3. The EPSA works with an independent, impartial and **internationally acknowledged pool of experts** throughout its evaluation process. They conduct an **external assessment (the Evaluation Summary Notes) of your project's potential** at the European level, whilst also indicating options for improvement and further development.

4. Participation in the EPSA is an **excellent opportunity** to show **appreciation to your employees and partners** and bring their work to the attention of a wider European audience;
5. The online application process is **simple and straightforward** and participation in the competition is **free of charge**;
6. The travel and hotel accommodation for the **EPSA 2015 nominees** participating in the final event will be **at the expense of EPSA/EIPA**. (1 person per delegation)

### The EPSA Assessment and Evaluation Methodology: Impartial, Independent and Effective

All submitted projects, which meet the eligibility criteria, are assessed against eight evaluation criteria: 1. Innovation; 2. Stakeholder involvement; 3. Relevance of actions taken; 4. Impact/Results; 5. Sustainability; 6. Transferability and Learning Capacity; 7. Social Inclusion; 8. Effect on Financial Sustainability and Economic Growth. Sufficient detail must be provided in the applications to demonstrate the quality of the achievements of the case and the lessons learnt.

The assessment is carried out in an independent and impartial multi-step evaluation process.

#### STEP 4: Jury meeting

To select and decide on the EPSA 2015 nominees and winners.

Date: *24 September 2015*

The EPSA / EIPA team will report on the outcome based on the 3 previous steps.

#### STEP 3: Onsite validation visits

To shortlisted projects for validation and verification purposes.

Period: *July to mid-September 2015*

#### STEP 2: Consensus meeting

To reach a commonly agreed list of ranked projects per category, including the best practice certificate recipients; and to agree on top-ranked shortlisted projects for onsite visits.

Date: *18-19 June 2015*

The EPSA 2015 team provides a provisional ranking list based on the **total** scores.

#### STEP 1: Individual online evaluation

By each evaluator, in isolation and remotely based. Each project will be evaluated by impartial evaluators.

Date: *11-16 May 2015*

*“The evaluation summary notes helped us to study the collaborative process that was behind the success of the project”.*

EPSA 2013 Best Practice Certificate Recipient

In the **first step**, a set number of projects within a concrete award category is allocated to each evaluator based on their professional background and sector (a mix of academia, the practice field and the private sector), nationality (evaluators may not assess projects from their country of origin or employment) and gender. Each project is assessed online, independently and exclusively, by different experts. The evaluators do not know each other, or how the other evaluator assessed the respective project.

During the **Consensus Meeting (Step 2)**, all evaluators come together to review and discuss the first available provisional ranking based on their individual scorings and possible discrepancies. Furthermore, they unanimously decide on the Best Practice Certificate Recipients and on the top short-listed projects in each award category for the onsite visits.

The **third step** - the onsite visits – serves to validate and verify the results and recommendations of the previous two evaluation steps, i.e. to spot-check whether the content of the application form of the project corresponds to the ‘reality; to find the answers to the un-answered questions raised by the evaluators, to detect possible inconsistencies and to gather additional or missing information and data. EIPA representatives do not re(assess) the projects!

The **fourth and final step** consists of the Jury Meeting, where five jurors (high-ranking stakeholders and/or political personalities, separate from the evaluators) decide on the nominees and the award winners in each category and the third award based on the short-listed projects of the on-site visits.

## The EPSA 2015 Official Partners

EPSA 2015 is supported by 12 official partners: the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Moreover, the Final Event and Award Ceremony will be hosted by the City of Maastricht and the Dutch Province of Limburg.



European Commission



Luxembourg



Austria



the Netherlands



Belgium



Norway



Denmark



Sweden



Italy



Switzerland



*Gemeente Maastricht*

provincie limburg





## The EPSA 2015 Team



**Susanne Møller Nielsen (DK)**  
EIPA Capacity Building Specialist and Manager EPSA



**Claude Rongione (IT)**  
EPSA Information Officer



**Michael Burnett (UK)**  
EIPA Expert and EPSA Category Leader



**Harry Scholtens (NL)**  
EIPA National Seconded Expert and EPSA Category Leader



**Julia Bosse (DE)**  
EPSA Research Assistant

## The European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)



Established in Maastricht in 1981 and having Centres in Luxembourg and Barcelona, the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) is ***Europe's leading centre of excellence on European integration and the new challenges for public management.***

It is EIPA's mission to support the European Union and its Member States and the countries associated with EIPA by providing relevant and high quality services to develop the capacities of public officials in dealing with EU affairs. We offer our services to officials from the EU institutions and related bodies, and to civil servants within the national, regional and local administrations of the Member States, applicant countries and other countries in the framework of their relationship with the EU.

EIPA is the leading centre of European learning and development for the public sector. With over 30 years of experience, EIPA is the place where people who deal with European affairs can learn in a multi-cultural environment benefiting from our unique combination of practical know-how and scientific excellence. We help you to meet the challenges of Europe and the complexities of modern public management.

[www.eipa.eu](http://www.eipa.eu)





# European Institute of Public Administration

## **Headquarters Maastricht**

European Institute  
of Public Administration  
Maastricht,  
The Netherlands  
Tel. +31 43 32 96 222  
E-mail: [info@eipa.eu](mailto:info@eipa.eu)

## **Centre Luxembourg**

European Centre  
for Judges and Lawyers  
Luxembourg  
Tel. +352 42 62 301  
E-mail: [info-lux@eipa.eu](mailto:info-lux@eipa.eu)

## **Centre Barcelona**

Barcelona, Spain  
Tel. +34 93 245 13 13  
E-mail: [info-bar@eipa.eu](mailto:info-bar@eipa.eu)

## **EIPA's Representative Office**

Brussels, Belgium  
Tel. +32 25 02 10 06  
E-mail: [info-bru@eipa.eu](mailto:info-bru@eipa.eu)

[www.eipa.eu](http://www.eipa.eu)