



Digitalisation survey of municipalities



MINISTRY
OF FINANCE



WHAT? The digitalisation survey explored digitalisation in municipalities

The digitalisation survey of municipalities was conducted as part of the Programme for the Promotion of Digitalisation. The goal was to determine the scope of digital services provided by municipalities and the methods of service provision.

Service research is typically based on questionnaires. As the goal of the digitalisation survey was to examine services in greater detail and compare user experiences, it was conducted

by examining the websites of municipalities and the services found on them.

The initial data was collected online in December 2019 and January 2020, and the survey itself was conducted in early 2020. The survey resulted in an overall picture of the services provided by Finnish municipalities and the municipalities' digitalisation.



HOW? Services were examined from a user perspective on the municipalities' websites

The digitalisation survey was carried out by empirically studying the kinds of digital services that municipalities provide to their residents and companies doing business in the municipality. The way in which the services were organised was also examined.

The survey comprised two stages. The first one was conducted in the form of a case study in a region of Central Finland, focusing on 52 different digital services in 23 municipalities. This was used to specify the framework for a study encompassing all of Mainland Finland, dealing with 45 municipalities of different sizes and 15 different services or service systems.

The municipalities were selected randomly from all of Mainland Finland's 18 regions, ensuring that the selection included one municipality with fewer than 10,001 residents and one municipality with 10,001–100,000 residents

from each region. Cities with more than 100,000 residents were included irrespective of their region.

The sectors studied were those in which municipalities have statutory duties, such as education, culture and urban planning. Health and social services and rescue services, which will be handled by the new wellbeing services counties, were excluded from the study.

In addition to focusing on digital services as such, the survey also examined the support offered, including chat services and electronic user manuals. The survey also sought to determine whether the websites studied contained an accessibility statement describing how the digital services met the accessibility requirement in the Digital Services Act.

Survey of municipalities' digital services

- Services were examined on 68 municipalities' websites.
- The survey focused on 15 services or service systems related to the statutory duties of municipalities.
- The service sectors examined included education and early childhood centres, culture, young people and libraries, urban planning, land use, water and energy production, waste management, and environmental services.
- Other aspects studied included support for the use of digital services, such as electronic guidelines, contact information for user support or a support chat, and the availability of accessibility statements.

Size category	Number of municipalities selected	Share of municipalities in the same size category	Share of municipalities in Mainland Finland	Total number of municipalities selected	Share of population in the size category	Share of population in Mainland Finland
More than 100.000	9	100 %	3.05 %	2.169.897	100 %	39.54 %
10.001-100.000	18	20.5 %	6.10 %	616.898	25.40 %	11.24 %
Less than 10.001	18	9.10 %	6.10 %	75.113	8.50 %	1.37 %
Total	45		15.25 %	2.861.908		52.15 %

The number of municipalities sampled from Mainland Finland and the number of inhabitants by size category.



FOR WHOM? The survey benefits digital service developers

The digitalisation survey of municipalities, conducted in connection with the Programme for the Promotion of Digitalisation, was a one-time project, but its data and research methods can be used in other similar studies.

digital channels. Overall, the survey provides information about the scope of digitalisation in Finland, helping to better target development efforts on digital support, for example.

The survey results indicate how digital services have been organised in different municipalities and the scope of services provided through

Using the survey

- The survey enables comparisons of digital services provided by municipalities.
- Municipalities can use the results to guide their digital development.
- Digital service developers can offer their service applications to interested parties.
- The survey sheds light on the level of digital services nationwide.
- The data, results and implementation method can be freely used for further research.



BENEFITS? The digitalisation survey pinpoints the type of municipalities in which digital services require further development

Municipalities can independently decide on the provision of certain statutory services. Where possible, digital channels are nowadays recommended for the provision of such services.

The digitalisation survey indicated that larger municipalities offered a wider range and a higher quality of digital services. What this means in practice is an easier or more extensive use of electronic forms and better support for their use.

Another finding was that the greater the number of municipalities using a digital service, the more developed the service. The third observation concerned quality: municipalities that offered fewer digital services had a higher quality of

services than municipalities offering a greater number of services. In large municipalities with a wide range of services, the services were very similar.

The research data can be used to help disseminate information about the best digital services and broader digital support. In addition, the data enable digital service developers to compare the service provision of their own municipality and identify any areas of development.



RESULTS? Increasing number of municipal digital services

The survey helped determine the scope of digital services and highlight good examples and functioning applications that can also be introduced in less digitalised municipalities. Seeing as standardised digital services are usually more developed than solutions implemented by municipalities themselves, the use of such services would reduce development and deployment expenses. The level of support services varies, but as a rule, it is higher in larger municipalities.

Service developers can also use the research data to identify necessary services. Especially larger municipalities offer numerous examples of various digital services. Overall, the data collected provides a firm foundation for the further development of digital services, as they are freely available to everyone.

Results of the digitalisation survey

- Statutory services can be implemented in various ways; municipalities favour digital service channels, but their degree of digitalisation varies.
- Large municipalities offer more digital services and user support.
- If few services are offered, they are usually more highly developed.
- The greater the number of municipalities using a service, the more developed the service.
- The data and results can be freely used for further research.