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Stakeholder Communication between Finnish Municipalities and the New Government Service Public Service Info

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Bachelor's Thesis
Degree Programme for Multilingual Management Assistants
2013

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Abstract

9 December 2013

Degree Programme for Multilingual Management Assistants

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The title of thesis Stakeholder Communication between Finnish Municipalities and the New Government Service Public Service Info	**Number of report pages and attachment pages** 74 + 13
Advisor Mark Badham	

This bachelor's thesis examines stakeholder communication between a new government service and one of its internal stakeholder groups. The commissioning party of this thesis consists of the representatives of the new government service, Public Service Info; the internal stakeholder group consists of all 320 municipalities in Finland. The main objective of the study was to determine these municipal representatives' points of view on the current stakeholder communication between these municipalities and Public Service Info.

The study consists of theoretical and empirical sections. The former discusses public sector public relations, stakeholder communication and stakeholder management, based on the relevant literature. The latter focuses on stakeholder communication between municipalities and Public Service Info by measuring the level of communication efficiency and by examining ways to improve communication and co-operation between these parties.

The study is based mainly on quantitative research methods, but qualitative methods are also utilized. The quantitative research was conducted as a survey, in the form of a semi-structured questionnaire. The qualitative research was carried out with the help of two structured interviews.

The results of the questionnaire showed that the majority of the respondents had heard of Public Service Info and had received a satisfactory amount of information about it. However, it is important for the functioning of Public Service Info that all municipalities of Finland become aware of it. Therefore in this thesis both parties are given recommendations on how to improve their communication and co-operation. This can be done with the help of web pages, contact persons, training material, meetings and the exchange of information among colleagues.

Key words
stakeholder communication, government, municipality, public service

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1 Introduction of the thesis

In corporate communication the field of public relations in the public sector is a highly complex area including hierarchical organization structures and various stakeholders with different interests. The commissioning party being an organization in the public sector, this thesis examines public relations from the government communication and government public relations perspective. This thesis also concentrates on analyzing communication between the organization's new service and a specific internal stakeholder group. Therefore an overview of public sector public relations, as well as the theories of stakeholder communication and stakeholder management are used for the theoretical basis. The launch of a new government service is the main concept that the theories and empirical part of the thesis revolve around.

The empirical part of this thesis is mostly a quantitative research implemented in collaboration with the commissioning party, the Ministry of Finance. More precisely, the thesis deals with the launch of the new government service Public Service Info, carried out by the Administration Unit of the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration, in co-operation with the State Treasury. The quantitative research is conducted with the help of a semi-structured questionnaire sent to the stakeholders, in this case the municipalities of Finland, in September 2013. The results are analyzed with the help of survey program Webropol and Microsoft Excel. Also qualitative research is utilized with the help of two structured interviews carried out with the personnel working at the Ministry of Finance to obtain information on the common communication guidelines at the Ministry of Finance and the stakeholder communication strategy of Public Service Info.

1.1 Objectives of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to find out how the representatives of the new government service Public Service Info have communicated with municipalities of Finland, whether this communication has been sufficient or not in the municipalities' point of view and how the co-operation and communication between municipalities and the service could be improved.

The research is important for Public Service Info because being a new service at its launching period, its communication to a certain stakeholder group has not been researched before. In order to know how to further develop communication practices and communication channels of a new service, it is important to know how the current communication plans have worked for a certain stakeholder group and whether the initial stakeholder communication goals of Public Service Info have been reached.

With the help of a questionnaire, this thesis measures the level of municipalities' awareness of the service and determines the communication channels that the municipality representatives favor when communicating with the service. As the current stakeholder communication strategy of Public Service Info is also discussed in the thesis, the purpose of the research is to find out if there is a gap between the intended communication about Public Service Info and the municipality representatives' view on this communication.

Because the thesis deals with a service that is at its launching period, the examined communication goals that Public Service Info's stakeholder communication to municipalities has are initial objectives of stakeholder communication. These objectives concentrate on awareness and understanding of the service. (Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hanke 2013a, 2.) Based on the outcome of the research, the representatives of Public Service Info are given several useful recommendations on how to improve communication and co-operation with the municipalities. The recommendations cover how to move from municipalities' awareness and understanding of the service to further involvement and commitment in co-operating with the service. (Cornelissen 2008, 54.)

1.2 Research questions

So that the aim of the thesis could be reached, the following primary research question should be answered:

- What is the municipality representatives' view on the current communication situation between municipalities and Public Service Info?

To find out more specific reasons for the municipality representatives seeing the current communication situation in a certain way and to discover which communication practices are favored, the following secondary research questions should also be answered:

- Have the representatives of municipalities heard of Public Service Info before and if so, through which communication channels?
- Has the communication between Public Service Info and municipalities been sufficient?
- Which communication practices would be the best for current information about Public Service Info to reach municipalities?
- Which communication practices would be the best for current information about municipalities to reach Public Service Info?
- How could the communication between the service and municipalities be improved?

1.3 Scope of the thesis

The thesis covers theories related to the launch of a new government service from sorting out the most important stakeholder groups to setting communication goals, structuring a communication campaign, executing the campaign and taking a look at its results. In addition further plans for proceeding with communication should be made according to the results. (Caywood 2012, 31 – 34.) Therefore an overview of the concept of public sector public relations as well as the theories of stakeholder communication and stakeholder management are covered in this thesis.

Even though stakeholder communication is closely related to the themes of reputation management, corporate identity and corporate image, the aforementioned are not included in this thesis. In addition, this thesis covers stakeholder communication with one internal stakeholder group, the municipalities of Finland. Communication with external stakeholders such as the citizens of Finland and other internal parties developing the service are not covered in this thesis. Municipalities of Finland were chosen as the specific internal stakeholder group to be examined, so communication with other internal stakeholders co-operating with the service, such as personnel of different public authorities and personnel and management of the government and different ministries, is mentioned but not further dealt with throughout the thesis. (Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hanke 2013a, 4 – 5.)

2 Public relations and stakeholder communication

When launching a new service, several steps need to be taken in order to effectively communicate with all stakeholder groups about the progress of the launch, the different objectives that the service has and how these objectives are related to each stakeholder group. Through careful planning and gradually proceeding, consistent communication designed to suit the needs of each stakeholder group, it is possible to reach stakeholders in an effective way that is a great basis for further co-operation. These steps are taken and communication objectives fulfilled in corporate communication functions public relations and stakeholder communication.

The commissioning party's more specific communication guidelines and strategies are explained in the coming chapters of the thesis. Before going into those details more general perspectives of public sector public relations, stakeholder communication and stakeholder management are examined.

2.1 Public sector public relations

As this thesis deals with communication related to the launch of a new government service, it is useful to familiarize oneself with the topic of public sector public relations. Firstly, public sector public relations has a complicated starting position because members of parliament and ministers formulate different policies and projects which come down to tasks that civil servants need to perform. The complication comes from the members of parliament and ministers being political actors and civil servants being, in certain occasions, by law restricted from showing their political opinion. Public sector public relations is also going through a change, because nowadays public officials are more and more expected to take all their stakeholders into consideration. It is not enough to produce a service issued by a higher authority, but the services should be created and developed in co-operation with various stakeholders, such as other public authorities and citizens. It is also pointed out that it can be difficult for stakeholders to comprehend which part of the government or which public authority provides each service that the stakeholders co-operate with. In Finland this means that the roles of different authorities and multiple, by topic overlapping services of the state and municipalities can be confusing to citizens and even other authorities. (Theaker 2004, 218 – 219.)

The type of products or services an organization offers is one of the strongest messages the organization can convey to its stakeholders. (Caywood 2012, 30.) This thesis concentrates on the launch of a new government service and communication to a certain stakeholder group which co-operates with the service. The stakeholder group in question is municipalities of Finland, which have a great impact on the success of Public Service Info because their co-operation as well as efficient two-way communication between municipalities and the service is needed in order to create a service that best attends to the citizens of Finland.

The first steps for public relations related to the launch of a new service are planning communication and setting goals for it. (Caywood 2012, 31 – 34.) Public Service Info's overall plan for the communication between Public Service Info and municipalities has been making the municipalities aware of the new service, providing them with information on the service to increase their knowledge and understanding of the subject, letting the municipalities participate in co-operative planning between them and Public Service Info and last make the municipalities committed to the co-operation needed for the service to function. This plan helps Public Service Info reach its communication goals, which are discussed in the following chapter about stakeholder communication based on Cornelissen's theory of "stakeholder communication from awareness to commitment". (Cornelissen 2008, 55 – 56.)

2.2 Stakeholder communication and stakeholder management

The previous chapter discussed public sector public relations and one of the topics left unraveled was the concept of determining an organization's most important stakeholders. After coming to a conclusion about the most crucial stakeholder groups to which communication about an organization or a product or service is aimed at, proper management of and communication with these stakeholders should be planned.

2.2.1 Stakeholder communication

Cornelissen (2008, 10) defines a stakeholder as a group or individual who is influenced by an organization's strive towards its goals or who can be influential in accomplishing the organization's objectives. Caywood (2012, 121) has a rather similar explanation for the term, only adding the stakeholders' interest towards the downsides of an organization as well. Cornelissen (2008, 10) defines communication from the corporate communication point of view as the strategy and communication channels used in communicating with stakeholders.

With the help of communication strategies, an organization conveys its messages to various stakeholder groups and gets valuable information from those stakeholder groups for developing its operations. The organization does not just have the responsibility to keep these stakeholder groups informed, but the organization should see stakeholders as a valuable resource. Current contact persons should be named inside each stakeholder group because otherwise the messages the organization is trying to convey will not be heard by the right people. When stakeholder groups are large it is even more important to plan the most effective communication channels and practices in order to keep the stakeholder groups informed and in touch with the organization. (Ikävalko 1999, 195.)

At its launching period Public Service Info's goals are that municipalities as one of the service's internal stakeholder groups would be aware of the new service and understand the role and purpose of the service. In addition one of the communication goals is that municipalities understand their own role in relation to the new service. By implementing well the first two steps of stakeholder communication, creating awareness and understanding, Public Service Info's stakeholder communication can later on move towards creating involvement and commitment among its stakeholders. This kind of evolvement of communication strategies and communication outcomes is well described by Cornelissen in his "conceptual foundation for stakeholder communication from awareness to commitment". (Cornelissen 2008, 54.)

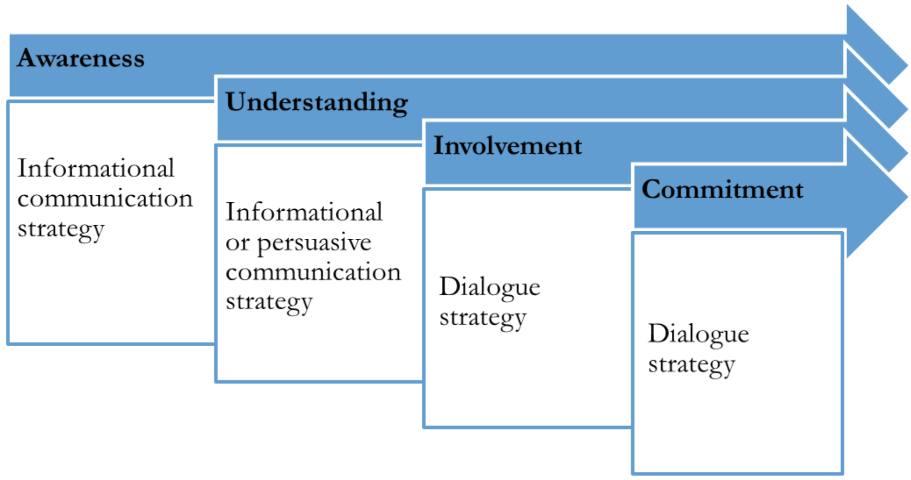

Figure 1. Stakeholder communication from awareness to commitment

The municipalities' commitment to co-operation with Public Service Info greatly depends on the quality of communication; whether the municipalities feel that they are timely informed of current issues and appreciated as a co-operation party. That is why in order to develop municipalities' commitment to Public Service Info the communication about the new service should first make a solid base on the first steps of stakeholder communication: awareness and understanding.

Furthermore, Cornelissen points out that different communication strategies have matching models of organization-stakeholder communication. Informational communication strategy that creates awareness is linked to one-way symmetrical model of communication, which means that an organization informs its stakeholder group about a topic and nothing further but the stakeholder group's awareness of the issue is reached. Cornelissen also describes this as quite neutral communication. (Cornelissen 2008, 55 – 56.)

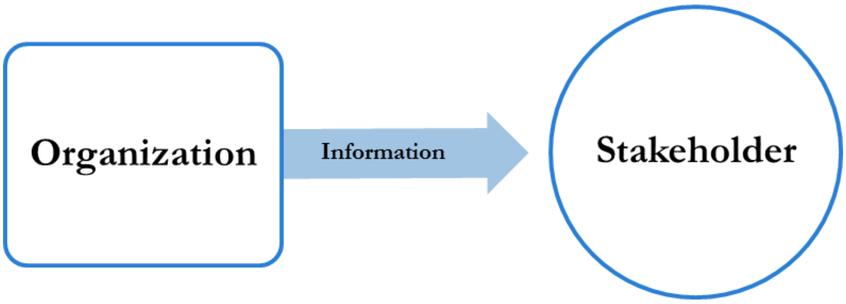

Figure 2. One-way symmetrical model of communication

Persuasive strategy that creates understanding is related to the two-way asymmetrical model of communication. The model is called asymmetrical because in spite of it going two ways, first as information to a stakeholder group and second as possible feedback from the stakeholder group to the organization, at this point the emphasis is solely on the organization's attempt to persuade the stakeholder into changing their ways of thinking or behaving to something more favorable to the organization. There may be a chance for stakeholders to give feedback to the organization but in this model the organization does not react to the feedback by changing any of its own operations. (Cornelissen 2008, 55 – 56.)

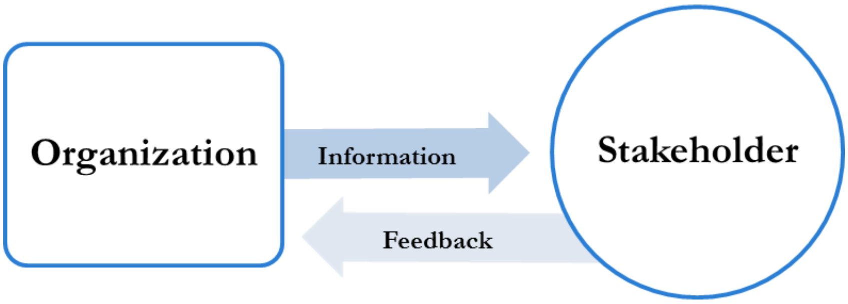

Figure 3. Two-way asymmetrical model of communication

For Public Service Info's stakeholder communication with municipalities to be fully successful, it should aim at two-way symmetrical model of communication. Two-way symmetrical model is linked with dialogue strategy which can improve involvement and commitment of stakeholders. In this model Public Service Info and municipalities are in contact with each other informing the other party about current situations and issues, communication successes and challenges, to develop a deeper understanding of the service, its influence on municipalities and the municipalities' influence on the service. (Cornelissen 2008, 55 – 56.)

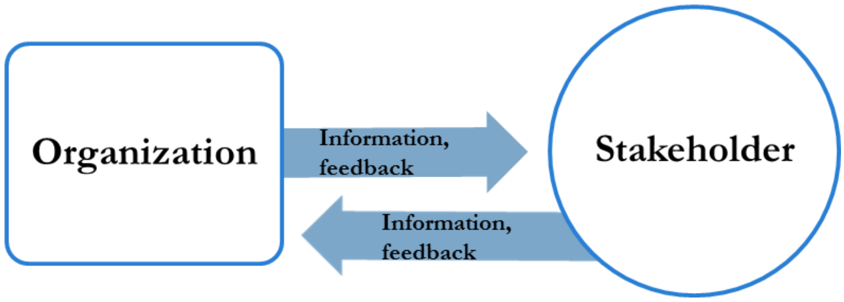

Figure 4. Two-way symmetrical model of communication

Cornelissen (2008, 38 – 41) states that stakeholder management was originally based on "the input-output model of strategic management" which means that different stakeholder groups such as suppliers, investors and employees co-operated with the organization in order to produce products or services for the benefit of another stakeholder group, customers. In this model the power lies within the organization and none of the stakeholder groups give feedback or development ideas to the organization. Organizations have widely moved towards "stakeholder model of strategic management" in which all stakeholder groups and the organization influence each other's operations. This framework also concentrates on truly listening to all stakeholders' wants and needs and reacting to them in the best way possible, instead of, according to the input-output model, simply monitoring stakeholders' opinions and trying to stop them from interfering with the organizations' actions.

Furthermore, Cornelissen (2008, 57 – 58) discusses stakeholder management undergoing changes. Previously the emphasis has been on stakeholder management, concentrating on organizations managing their stakeholders by a quite strict top-down approach, leaving no room for deeper understanding and relationships. Recently the move from even the term "stakeholder management" has been towards organizations' co-operation with stakeholders, aiming at relationships that are beneficial for both parties.

2.2.2 Stakeholder management

Even though this thesis concentrates on the new approach of organizations treating stakeholders as co-operation partners and the two parties building relationships, it is still important for organizations to, in a way, manage different stakeholders. Stakeholder management can be done by examining stakeholder groups in order to find out what kind of interests they may have towards the organization and how the organization can best attend to these interests. These thoughts can be put to a more concrete level by using two stakeholder categorizing tools; stakeholder salience model and power-interest matrix. (Cornelissen 2008, 50 – 54.)

Power-interest matrix (Cornelissen 2008, 53 – 54) is a stakeholder management tool based on four categorizations done on the basis of two variables: power and interest. A stakeholder that has low power and low level of interest is categorized in the group ”Minimal Effort”, which means that the organization does not need to pay much attention to such stakeholders that are not interested in the organization nor have the power to be influential. It is not defined what minimal effort exactly is, but it is good to keep in mind that this ”minimal” communication effort should anyhow be sufficient, because the stakeholders in the group may switch to a group of high interest if they receive information that grabs their attention. The next group also possesses low power but high level of interest. The action suggested to be aimed at this group is ”Keep Informed” as it is important to keep a group that is highly interested in the organization's actions well informed about the organization's operations in order for the group to maintain the positive image it has formed of the organization. The people in this group can be good advocates for the organization and its operations.

The next group in the power-interest matrix has a low level of interest but a high level of power. The stakeholders in the group may seem quite indifferent to the organization's actions in general but their role as a highly powerful stakeholder should be kept in mind, as stakeholders in this group may still address to some issues of the organization and therefore influence the organization. The last group in the power-interest matrix is the most important one: stakeholders that have high power and a high level of interest. Self-evidently an organization should place most of its communication efforts in informing and co-operating with this stakeholder group. The stakeholders in this last group are called ''Key Players'' which well indicates the role of the group as stakeholders that are the most visible to the organization due to actions based on high power and high interest in the organization's operations. These actions may often be positive but communication with Key Players should also be considered from the point of view in which the group is highly interested in the organization's operations in a negative sense, going through an issue they have found within the organization and exercising high level of power against the organization. Especially in situations like these, advanced public relations skills are needed for the organization to communicate with these stakeholders in a constructive manner and possibly build new ground for co-operation. (Cornelissen 2008, 53 – 54.)

Another great stakeholder management tool is stakeholder salience model. (Cornelissen 2008, 50 – 52.) Stakeholder salience model is a tool that categorizes stakeholders into seven different categories based on their level of three variables: power, legitimacy and urgency. Three of these categories are on the outer level, indicating the possession of only one of the variables and thus low influence on an organization. The stakeholder categories on the inner level are groups that possess a combination of two of the variables and they are evaluated based on this combination and its impact on an organization. The stakeholder group pictured in the middle in a figure of stakeholder salience model is the group that possesses a combination of all the three variables and is thus the most salient key player that an organization needs to specifically consider when planning its operations and communication.

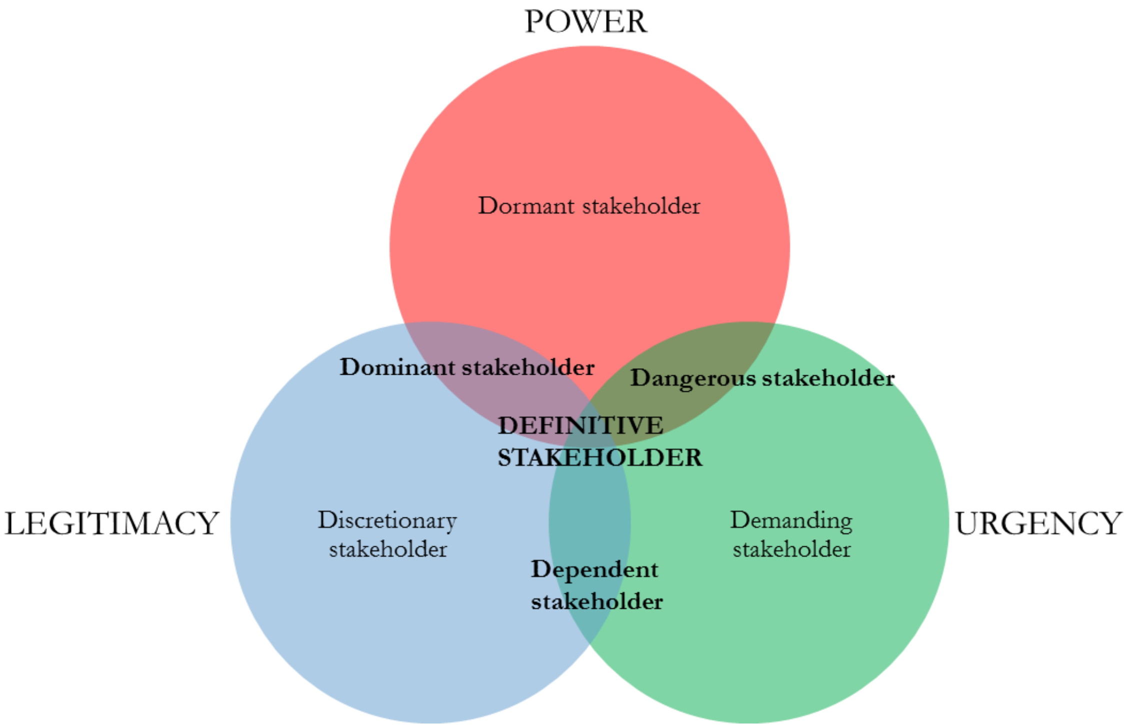

Figure 5. Stakeholder salience model

In stakeholder salience model dormant stakeholders possess power but they lack other attributes and are hardly in contact with an organization and thus not in need of active communication. Discretionary stakeholders have legitimacy in a sense of legitimate reasons for demanding interaction with an organization, but this group's lack of power and urgency make the group one of those that an organization does not put most of its communication efforts in. Demanding stakeholders have urgent issues they want to address, but these issues considered urgent by stakeholders do not seem legitimate for the organization and as the stakeholder group also lacks power, an organization can let these demands be. (Cornelissen 2008, 50 – 52.)

Dominant stakeholders possess both power and legitimacy, giving them an important role in an organization's operations by having legitimate reasons for interaction with the organization and also the power for doing so. Dangerous stakeholders are those who are powerful and have urgent claims for the organization, but as these issues are not legitimate from the organization's point of view, it is likely that this stakeholder group will be unsatisfied with the organization's negligence of the claims and protest in an erratic way. Thus dangerous stakeholders should be kept an eye on. Dependent stakeholders want to be in contact with an organization with their legitimate and urgent demands, but lacking power, they are dependent on some other stakeholder groups to help get their message through. According to the categorization by stakeholder salience model the most important stakeholder group is definitive stakeholders who possess all attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency. If a powerful stakeholder has legitimate claims that are urgent, an organization has to definitively take action. (Cornelissen 2008, 50 – 52.)

Stakeholder salience model can be applied to Public Service Info. The parties creating the service's communication strategies can clarify the roles of different stakeholders and the urgency to communicate with them with the help of the model.

3 The Ministry of Finance

The commissioning party for this thesis is the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration's Administration Unit at the Ministry of Finance. The Department for Local Government and Regional Administration's Administration Unit deals with developing and launching the new service Public Service Info in co-operation with the State Treasury.

In the following chapters the Ministry of Finance's structure and responsibilities will be introduced, as well as the tasks of the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration and the Administration Unit. Also general communication guidelines at the Ministry of Finance as well as the features of communication at the Administration unit are discussed. Furthermore the structure, communication channels, operations and stakeholder communication strategies of Public Service Info are also narrated.

3.1 Organization and tasks of the Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance is part of the Finnish Government that includes 12 ministries. (Finnish Government 2013a.) The Ministry of Finance is led by the Minister of Finance. Other ministers who work for the Ministry of Finance are the Minister of Public Administration and Local Government, the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade. (Finnish Government 2013b.) The Minister of Public Administration and Local Government works with the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration. The Minister of Economic Affairs is responsible for issues related to the financial markets. The Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade is responsible for the issues related to Budget Council of the EU. The highest civil servant at the Ministry of Finance is the Permanent Secretary of State. (Ministry of Finance 2013b.)

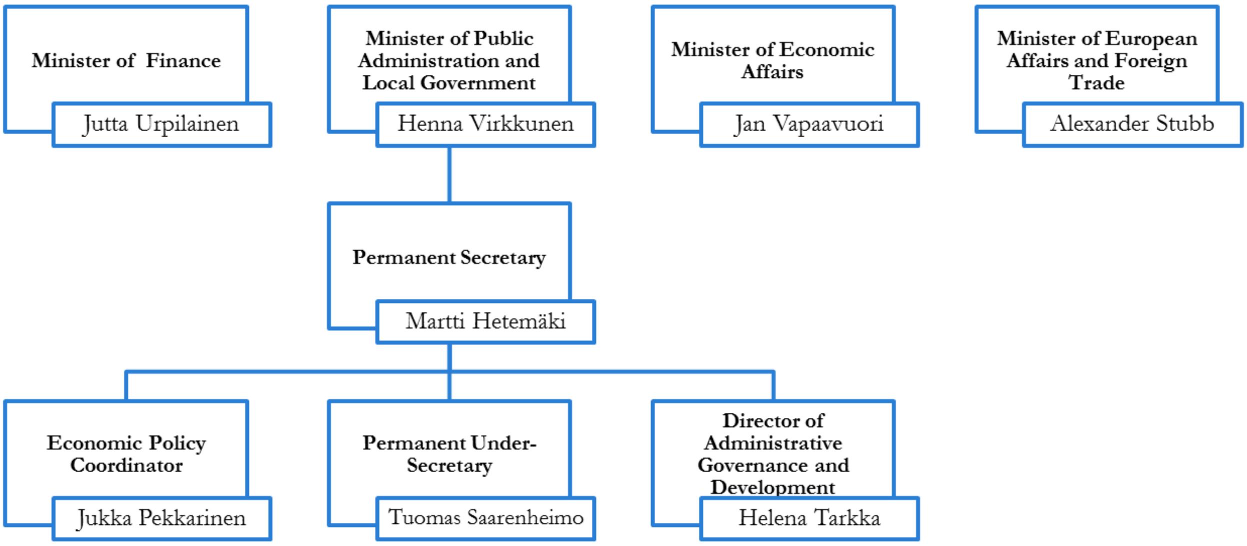

Figure 6. Organization diagram of the ministers and highest civil servants of the Ministry of Finance and the current ministers and highest civil servants named (Ministry of Finance 2013b.)

The Ministry of Finance is divided into seven departments: the Economics Department, the Budget Department, the Tax Department, the Financial Markets Department, the Personnel and Governance Policy Department, the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration and the Public Sector ICT. In addition the Ministry has other functions. The Administrative Governance and Development Unit is responsible for internal management and it includes also the Media and Communication Unit. The Ministry also includes the Secretariat for International Affairs and the Government financial controller's function. (Ministry of Finance 2013a.)

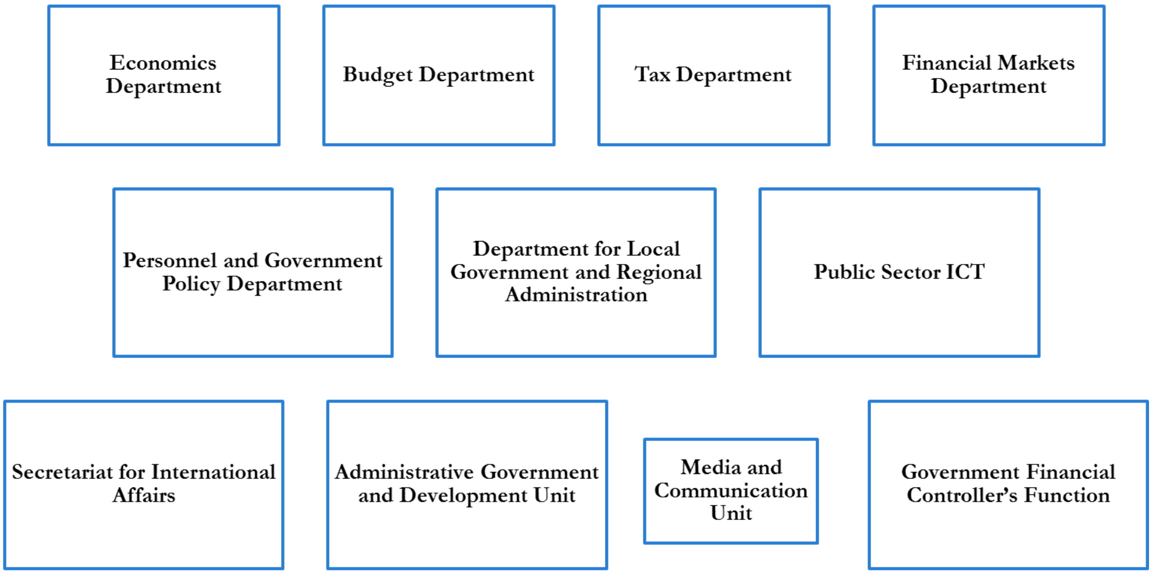

Figure 7. The departments of the Ministry of Finance (Ministry of Finance 2013b.)

The ministry's tasks include providing macroeconomic and fiscal policy framework for the Government, drafting the annual budget and offering the ministry's knowledge concerning tax policies. The Ministry of Finance accounts for strategic policy on the financial markets, State employer and personnel policy and for overall development of the Government. In addition, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for developing legislative and financial requirements of local government functions. The Ministry also participates in the work of the European Union and several international organizations and financial institutions. (Ministry of Finance 2013c.)

The objectives of the Ministry of Finance's actions are safeguarding stability and secure opportunities for growth, ensuring a competitive tax system and the competitiveness and service provision of Finland's public administration. The Ministry values the importance of stable economic development which ensures good opportunities for future generations. (Ministry of Finance 2013d.)

3.1.1 Communication guidelines at the Ministry of Finance

It is common for large organizations to have different communication recommendations to guide the employees in various communication situations ranging from internal communication within the unit, department or whole organization, to external communication with different external stakeholders. It is also possible that the organization has its own separate communication unit which is responsible for dealing with all communication tasks and guidance in different communication situations.

The Ministry of Finance as a whole follows the communication recommendations of the Prime Minister's office. (Valtioneuvoston kanslia 2010.) In the preface of the communication recommendations it is stated that stakeholder communication needs to be improved and that taking stakeholders' views into account improves the quality of government decisions. The actual text of the communication recommendations begins with the basis for the communication recommendations, such as democracy and the values of a northern welfare society. The recommendations then state the goals and communication tasks which concentrate on communication between the government and citizens. Internal communication is mentioned as existing in order to all the parties to have the relevant information of the goals and tasks at hand. The principles for effective government communication are openness, reliability, impartiality, promptness and interactivity. Government communication should also take into consideration the equality of regions and languages. (Valtioneuvoston kanslia 2010, 9 – 14.)

The communication channels of government communication are releases, press conferences and seminars, customer service, online communication, brochures and other material, campaigns and visibility at fairs. Releases and newsletters are also sent to stakeholders by e-mail. It is stated in the communication recommendations that especially online communication is increasing in government communication, and social media is recognized as a new communication opportunity. As the recommendations move on to realization of government communication, six different types of communication are specified: communication with citizens, media communication, stakeholder and specialist communication, international communication, EU communication and internal communication. (Valtioneuvoston kanslia 2010, 15 – 22.) As the government's stakeholder communication is relevant to my thesis, I will go through the communication recommendations' overview of that.

The government's stakeholder communication is usually communication at different events, such as press releases, meetings, seminars or hearings, or conveying information to stakeholders via releases, brochures and memoranda. When government tasks and projects are initiated, the stage at which stakeholders are included in the planning should be decided. The recommendations state that the communication between the government and stakeholders should go two ways: the government is able to convey a message with the help of stakeholders and stakeholders can give the government information on how to improve its actions. As well as the communication units and the management, each civil servant is through their work responsible for also stakeholder communication. The stakeholder communication channels are separated into two main categories: direct communication channels and indirect communication channels. The main direct communication channels are personal meetings, seminars and working groups. Different indirect stakeholder communication channels are press releases, web pages, e-mails, electronic newsletters and brochures. (Valtioneuvoston kanslia 2010, 19 – 20.)

3.2 The Department for Local Government and Regional Administration

The Department for Local Government and Regional Administration consists of three units: Municipal Development Unit administrated by Director Ms Auli Valli-Lintu, Municipal Finance Unit headed by Director Mr Markku Nissinen and Administration Unit led by Director Ms Tarja Hyvönen. The Department for Local Government and Regional Administration, that is all these units, is headed by Director-General Ms Päivi Laajala. (Ministry of Finance 2013e.)

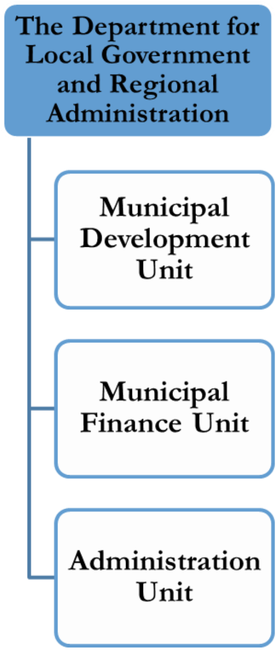

Figure 8. Organization diagram of the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration

The tasks of the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration are related to matters dealing with municipalities. The tasks include taking care of the development of municipal self-government, being responsible for the co-operation between the government and the municipalities and developing the structures and operations of government administration and regional administration. The department is also responsible for the preparation of matters dealing with the administration, personnel and economy of municipalities and groups of municipalities. The department is also in charge of the preparation of matters dealing with the following: public service systems, placing services and government functions outside the metropolitan area, as well as tasks and performance management of the Regional State Administrative Agencies, the Population Register Centre and the local register offices. (Ministry of Finance 2013e.)

3.2.1 The Administration Unit

The Administration Unit is specifically responsible for developing the structures and operations of government administration and regional administration, placing services and government functions outside the metropolitan area, developing public service systems and the direction and performance management of Regional Administrative Agencies of the State, the Registry Office and local registry offices. (Koivisto, M. 25 Oct 2013.)

3.2.2 Communication guidelines at the Administration Unit

The Department for Local Government and Regional Administration's Administration Unit does not have a specific communication strategy, but the unit's communication follows general communication guidelines issued by the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Finance. The Media and Communication unit of the Ministry of Finance is responsible for the Administration Unit's communication practices. The Media and Communication Unit formulates the Administration Unit's releases, newsletters and web pages in co-operation with the Administration Unit. During work placement I learned that the unit's two project assistants were responsible for many communication tasks. The projects of the Administration Unit have their own marketing communication strategies. (Koivisto, M. 25 Oct 2013.)

The Administration Unit's operations are run in the form of different projects and working groups that are appointed. Larger projects usually have their own marketing communication strategies. The projects that are currently going on at the Administration Unit are Customer Service 2014, Citizen Advice Service and Remote Services. The two latter projects have their own communication strategies. (Koivisto, M. 25 Oct 2013.)

3.3 Public Service Info

Public Service Info is a new government service created by the Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury. The service is created as a result of the work done in the project Citizen Advice Service which is one of the ongoing projects of the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy. The Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy acts as the financier of the project Citizen Advise Service. Citizen Advise Service is directed by the Ministry of Finance and it is a project of the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration. The result of the project, Public Service Info, is as a service located at the State Treasury. This structure explains the complex nature of the service created in co-operation with many parties. (Haavisto L. & Parikka H. 28 Oct 2013.)

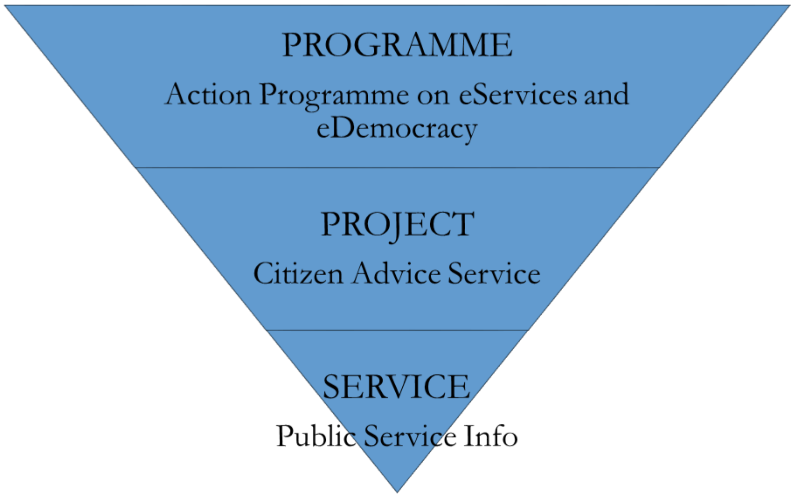

Figure 9. The relationship between the programme, project and service

3.3.1 Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy

The projects Citizen Advice Service and Remote Services are part of the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy (in Finnish SADe). The objective of the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy is to provide citizens and companies with useful, fluent and easy e-services in public services. (Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hanke 2013a.) The Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy consists of five projects and two separate projects that are run by six different ministries. Out of these projects the separate projects are those that the Ministry of Finance and especially the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration's Administration Unit is in charge of. The separate projects are Citizen Advice Service and Remote Services. Citizen Advice Service is in charge of creating the new government service Public Service Info in co-operation with the State Treasury. (Ministry of Finance 2013f.)

3.3.2 Citizen Advice Service

The project Citizen Advice Service is part of the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy. The project Citizen Advice Service was initiated by the Ministry of Finance at the end of 2009 and the preliminary plans for the project were made during

2010. The final report of the preliminary planning period included information on the concept and schedule of the advising service under development. It was also decided that the advising service would be located in the city of Kouvola. There was still resolving to be done regarding the project and the implementation of the project was transferred. After that the new goal of the project Citizen Advice Service was to develop a common advising service which is shared by the government and municipalities and at disposal during the year 2013. (Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hanke 2013a, 1.)

3.3.3 Description of Public Service Info

During this thesis process the amount of information that is available on Public Service Info is limited because the service is still at its' launching period. Public Service Info is a new government service that is launched on 25 November 2013. (Haavisto L. & Parikka H. 28 Oct 2013.) The Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury have created the service in co-operation. The service is designed to help citizens with their questions of public services. Public Service Info helps citizens by providing basic information of public services and by guiding the citizens in finding the right authority or a corresponding electronic service for dealing with their questions. (Valtiovarainministeriö 2013, 6.)

The establishment of the service aims to decrease the number of unnecessary calls to different authorities when a citizen tries to find the right one. An even more important goal of the service is to reduce the number of non-urgent calls to the emergency number, so that real emergency calls can get through. Public Service Info functions in co-operation with the information services of different authorities, such as Kela, Tax Administration and employment services. (Valtiovarainministeriö 2013, 6.)

Public Service Info has several communication channels. One of them is telephone service. Public Service Info doesn't pass on calls but it guides the caller to the right public authority by giving the authority's contact information. It is also possible to contact Public Service Info by sending a service request via text message or e-mail. (Ministry of Finance 2013g.)

On Public Service Info's website there's information about public authorities' services and their contact information as well as answers to frequently asked questions. The website also has a contact form by which the customer can send a service request to Public Service Info. It has been planned that later on also social media, in the form of a Facebook page and a chat service, will be utilized in Public Service Info. (Valtiovarainministeriö 2013, 12.)

Public Service Info promises to advise and guide the customer to the right authority, provide information of the different public services that help the customers in different life situations and support customers in using electronic support services. The service languages are Finnish, Swedish and English. All service advisers are able to attend to the customers in all service languages. The opening hours for telephone service are Monday to Friday from 8.00 to 21.00 and on Saturdays from 9.00 to 15.00. Public Service Info costs only as much as a normal phone call; there are no extra service costs. (Ministry of Finance 2013g.)

3.3.4 Public Service Info's stakeholder communication strategy

Public Service Info has its own stakeholder strategy. The strategy is called ''marketing communication strategy'' but due to its content being suitable for calling it stakeholder communication strategy, I will do so based on the emphasis of this thesis. The stakeholder communication strategy includes communication to internal and external stakeholder groups. External stakeholders are all citizens of Finland who need guidance in matters dealing with public services or e-services. Internal stakeholders are, on the innermost level, the personnel involved in creating the new service, and on the other inner level the personnel of the government of Finland, the personnel of each public authority, co-operative parties and municipal representatives. (Kansalaisen yleisnevontapalvelu –hanke 2013b, 2.)

This thesis concentrates on analyzing the stakeholder communication strategy aimed at one internal stakeholder group, municipalities of Finland. Municipalities have partly also been involved in developing the service. The representative of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities is a member of Citizen Advice Service's cluster working group. When the concept for Public Service Info was constructed Citizen Advice Service met individual municipalities whose points of view for the concept were requested. Also the training of Public Service Info's service advisors has been planned and implemented with the help of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. (Haavisto L. & Parikka H. 28 Oct 2013.)

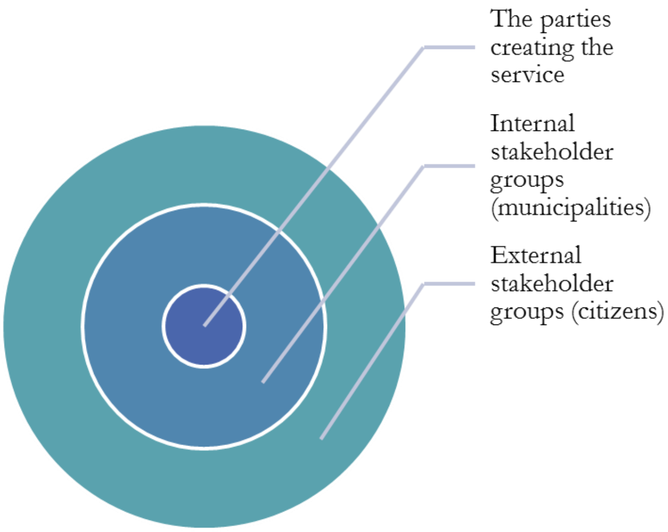

Figure 10. The different stakeholder groups of Public Service Info

The objective of internal stakeholder communication is internal engagement. Through internal engagement the stakeholder groups are made to understand the new service's impacts on stakeholder groups' actions. It is also essential to convey the message of Public Service Info being a support service. Public sector authorities still need to invest in the development and communication of the communication channels of their own services. (Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hanke 2013b, 2.)

The internal stakeholder groups should know what Public Service Info is, how it functions and where it is located. The internal stakeholder groups should also be aware of the time when Public Service Info started its operations. It should be noted that the advantage of Public Service Info is reducing the number of unnecessary calls to the Emergency Response Centre Administration as well as other authorities. So that the service advisors of Public Service Info are able to guide the citizens, public authorities should make sure that the information on their electronic services is easily accessible and current. (Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hanke 2013b, 2 – 3.)

4 Research strategy and methods

This thesis concentrates on finding out how well the municipalities of Finland think they are informed of the new service Public Service Info and by which communication practices the level of information could be improved. Because the intention was to find out the opinions of 320 municipalities of Finland, I chose quantitative research as my main research strategy which I implemented with the help of a questionnaire. I complemented the research with a qualitative method in the form of two interviews with the employees of the Administration Unit.

4.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative survey research is a research strategy for collecting information in a standard form from a group of people. The survey research is conducted by choosing a sample of people, in this case the representatives of 320 municipalities of Finland, and collecting the needed material from the sample in the form of a structured questionnaire or interview. The material is then analyzed in order to describe, compare and explain certain phenomena. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2006, 125.)

In order to find out the municipality representatives' thoughts on Public Service Info, I used the survey research approach by formulating a semi-structured questionnaire with the help of the commissioning party. The questionnaire was implemented with the survey program Webropol and the results were analyzed with the help of Webropol and Microsoft Excel. Also qualitative research was utilized with the help of two structured interviews carried out with the personnel working at the Ministry of Finance to obtain information on the common communication guidelines at the Ministry of Finance and the stakeholder communication strategy of Public Service Info.

4.2 The questionnaire

There are several reasons for conducting this thesis research with the help of a questionnaire. Launching Public Service Info can be seen as a campaign, and the campaign's goals define the right research methods. This thesis concentrates on finding out changes in stakeholders' knowledge or attitudes related to the campaign, and therefore the appropriate research method is a questionnaire. (Åberg 2000, 271.)

According to Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara (2006, 174) to find out what people think, feel, experience or believe one should use interviews, questionnaires and attitude scales. The commissioning party's wish was to ask Public Service Info's stakeholder communication related opinions of 320 Finnish municipalities. Because the number of people whose thoughts were sought after was so extensive, I ruled out interviews.

Gathering the needed information with the help of a questionnaire was the right choice also because of the time limitation set to this research. The whole research was to be conducted during the time period of August 2013 – November 2013 leaving one week at the beginning of December for the final touches. The questionnaire was implemented as an online questionnaire with the survey program Webropol.

4.2.1 The phases of the questionnaire

During August 2013 meetings were held with the representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury. The main tasks for August were defining the things the commissioning party wanted to find out through the research and formulating the questionnaire. The questionnaire and covering letters were modified numerous times based on the feedback from the Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury.

The next step was sending the questionnaire to the official translator of the Ministry of Finance for it to be translated into Swedish. Finland is a bilingual country in which both Finnish and Swedish are official languages. Most official documents need to be translated into Swedish for this reason. The questionnaire was also translated to respect this language issue and also to reach the Swedish speaking municipalities.

The questionnaire alongside with a covering letter was sent to all 320 municipalities of Finland, including municipalities of Åland, on 16 September 2013. The municipality representatives were given two weeks to answer the questionnaire. After that a reminder was sent on 30 September giving the municipality representatives an additional week for answering the questionnaire.

Unfortunately there were some technical difficulties with the questionnaire on the first day, 16 September. One municipality representative was kind enough to tell that questions 8 and 9 were difficult to answer to. I then checked the situation, corrected the rankings and added a choice "no answer". Also some additional instructions were added on the questions themselves to facilitate answering. New instructions were sent to the municipalities, and those who had answered when the questionnaire was still faulty were politely asked to answer again. These technical difficulties could have been avoided by thorough testing of the questionnaire prior to sending it to the municipalities, but unfortunately there was not enough time for that and the testing was left insufficient.

After the initial technical difficulties everything went quite smoothly as most of the respondents understood the new directions and the questionnaire received a sufficient amount of responses. The questionnaire was closed on the night between 7 October and 8 October. The results of the questionnaire are discussed and evaluated in the chapter "Analysis of the results".

4.3 The interviews

In addition to the quantitative research method utilizing a questionnaire, the research also includes finding out communication strategies and objectives of the Ministry of Finance at ministry and unit level with the help of a qualitative method; two interviews with the employees of the Administration Unit. Some of the answers to these questions are also referred to in the background information part of this thesis. The first interview about the general communication strategies at the Ministry of Finance and the Administration Unit was carried out via e-mail with the Administration Unit's project assistant. The second interview about Public Service Info's communication strategies was carried out in person with two employees of the Administration Unit dealing with the launch of Public Service Info.

4.3.1 Interview with the Administration Unit's project assistant

To find out the general communication strategies of the Ministry of Finance, I interviewed one of the project assistants of the Department for Local Government and Regional Administration's Administration Unit via e-mail on 25 October 2013. I asked four questions and I got very useful and thorough answers. The interview is translated from Finnish into English. The interview went as follows:

1) Does the Administration Unit have its own communication strategy or does the strategy follow the common communication guidelines of the Ministry of Finance?

The Administration Unit does not have a separate communication strategy. We follow the common communication guidelines issued by the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Finance. The Media and Communication unit at the Ministry of Finance is responsible for the Administration Unit's communication with the help of press releases, (electronic) newsletters and websites. Larger projects usually have their own marketing communication plans.

2) Which parties does the Administration Unit co-operate with and what are its stakeholder groups? Which projects are these parties connected with?

Co-operation is done with agencies that are under the Ministry of Finance's administrative branch and with ministries and central agencies that direct these agencies. In addition there is a wide range of co-operative parties and stakeholder groups which vary according to which project is in question. In practice the list is quite long:

- The Prime Minister's Office, ministries and the Parliament of Finland
- Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority, Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira and Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency Tukes
- Regional State Administrative Agencies, the Population Register Centre, the local register offices and the State Treasury

- The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and municipalities of Finland (which co-operate with Customer Service 2014 and Remote Services)
- Local and regional authorities: the Social Insurance Institution of Finland Kansaneläkelaitos, Finnish Tax Administration Verohallinto, Public Legal Aid Offices and Employment and Economic Development Offices (which co-operate with Customer Service 2014 and Remote Services)
- Regional councils (which co-operate with Citizen Advice Service and Remote Services)
- The Federation of Salaried Employees Pardia, Julkisalan koulutettujen neuvottelujärjestö JUKO ry and The Public and Welfare Sectors' Unemployment Fund JHL (which co-operate with nearly all working groups of the Administration Unit)

These are the most important co-operative parties and stakeholder groups. The co-operation varies according to the matter or subject at hand.

3) What kind of marketing communication practices does the Administrative Unit have? Which projects and working groups are these connected with?

Marketing communication is almost always connected with a larger project. The projects that are currently going on at the Administration Unit are Customer Service 2014, Citizen Advice Service and Remote Services. The two latter projects have their own communication strategies.

4) What is the Administration Unit's stakeholder communication like? Which communication practices (newsletters, events etc.) are included in stakeholder communication and how often does the communication happen? Which projects and working groups include stakeholder communication?

Stakeholder communication is usually connected with projects that are going on. Stakeholder groups are informed of the initiation of the project as well as the progress and final outcome. Stakeholders can be asked for comments, statements or feedback during a project or they can be invited to an event related to the project.

Stakeholder communication is done via e-mail, electronic newsletter, press releases and the project's own and/or the Ministry of Finance's website. Also certain stakeholder events, such as seminars and regional tours are organized. Newsletters are published about once a month and they contain timely matters. Press releases are done mainly at the stage when the project has reached decisions which have national or regional impact or when the work in the project is completed. Stakeholder events are arranged as required by each project.

Furthermore, the Administration Unit's tasks include developing the structures and operations of government administration and regional administration, placing services and government functions outside the metropolitan area, developing public service systems and the direction of Regional Administrative Agencies of the State, the Registry Office and local registry offices. For example as the direction tasks bring changes in the operations, structure or personnel of the agencies, these agencies that are under the Administrative Unit's branch are informed of the changes. The communication channels vary depending on the situation from e-mail, the agencies' intranet, newsletters and press releases to personnel events. For example now there is a process of transferring tasks of the Ministry of Education and Culture to Regional Administrative Agencies of the State. Because of this transfer, personnel from the Centers for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centers) move to Regional Administrative Agencies of the State. An information event is arranged to the personnel at the Ministry of Finance.

4.3.2 Interview with the representatives of Public Service Info

I also interviewed the Administration Unit's employees, project specialist Heli Parikka and specialist Leni Haavisto, who deal with the launch of the new service. The interview is about Public Service Info's communication strategies and it was conducted on 28 October at the Ministry of Finance. The interview is translated from Finnish into English. The interview went as follows:

1) What is Public Service Info's general communication strategy?

   Public Service Info is a service produced in the project Citizen Advice Service, which is a part of the programme Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy. The Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy will go on until June 2015 and it has its own communication guidelines.

   Public Service Info's communication strategy consists of internal stakeholder communication and external marketing communication. Internal communication and external communication have been planned in a marketing communication subproject of Citizen Advice Service. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the implementation of the communication strategy together with the State Treasury and other central authorities such as the Emergency Response Centre Administration.

2) What are the objectives of the communication strategies of Public Service Info?

   The service has two communication strategies: one for the internal stakeholder groups and one for the external stakeholders. The objective of internal stakeholder communication is internal engagement. Through internal engagement the stakeholder groups are made to understand the new service's impacts on stakeholder groups' actions. An essential objective is to convey the message of Public Service Info being a support service. Public sector authorities still need to invest in the development and communication of the communication channels of their own services.

   The objectives of external marketing communication are that most of the citizens of Finland are familiar with Public Service Info, its content, nature and communication channels. These core elements must be communicated to all citizens of Finland living in or outside the country as well as the citizens of other countries living or having residence in Finland. The launching period target group emphasis must be taken into consideration.

3) Who are the people in the Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury, involved in the project Citizen Advice Service, who participate in planning communication of Public Service Info?

   Primarily the Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury, as well as the personnel involved in implementing the new service, such as the members of the cluster working group and other working groups. All the members in these working groups are sent internal releases on the progress of the service.

4) Which are Public Service Info's internal stakeholder groups?

   Ministries, the Emergency Response Centre Administration, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland Kansaneläkelaitos, Finnish Tax Administration Verohallinto, Police, the Centers for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centers), Employment and Economic Development Offices, the Population Register Centre, the local register offices, customer service offices, municipalities, congregations and certain organizations.

5) What is the concept for Public Service Info's internal stakeholder communication?

   The internal stakeholder groups should know what Public Service Info is, how it functions and where it is located. The internal stakeholder groups should also be aware of the time when Public Service Info started its operations. It should be noted that the advantage of Public Service Info is reducing the number of unnecessary calls to the Emergency Response Centre Administration as well as other authorities. So that the service advisors of Public Service Info are able to guide the citizens, public authorities should make sure that the information on their electronic services is easily accessible and current. It is important to be aware of Public Service Info's nature of being a support service. Therefore the authorities still need to put an effort on developing their own service and communication channels. Public authorities can ask questions from Public Service Info by e-mail.

6) What does Public Service Info's stakeholder communication include?

Public Service Info has started its stakeholder communication by meeting public authorities. These meetings ensure that public authorities are aware of Public Service Info and its role in developing public sector customer service. The emphasis of Public Service Info's stakeholder communication is on stakeholder groups' intranet and other internal media. The Ministry of Finance informs stakeholders of matters concerning the project Citizen Advice Service and the State Treasury of matters concerning the service itself. The websites of the Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury function as sources of information as well as newsletters from the Ministry of Finance and the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy.

7) Which communication channels have been used in stakeholder communication between the service and municipalities?

The State Treasury is in charge of practical stakeholder communication. Municipalities have been informed of Public Service Info and finding out the correct contact persons is in progress. In addition Public Service Info has been presented in the events "Kuntamarkkinat" (event for municipality representatives) on 12 September and "Asiakaspalvelupäivät" (event for municipalities' service advisors and office personnel) on 27 November with the help of PowerPoint slides and Public Service Info flyer.

8) Does Public Service Info have contact persons who are in contact with internal stakeholder groups and whom internal stakeholder groups can contact?

Yes, the contact persons are: for questions about the service Hannu Korkeala from the State Treasury (hannu.korkeala@valtiokonttori.fi) and for questions about the project Citizen Advice Service Heli Parikka from the Ministry of Finance (heli.parikka@vm.fi).

9) What is the website of Public Service Info like? Is there co-operation between Public Service Info and the portal Suomi.fi?

The website of Public Service Info opens on 25 November when the service is launched. The website has its own sections for authorities and for citizens. The website is improved according to feedback. There is co-operation between the website of Public Service Info and the portal Suomi.fi. Both websites are modified and certain functions such as electronic contact form are transferred to Public Service Info's website.

10) Will there be overlapping work among Public Service Info, customer service offices and municipal offices?

There will be no overlapping work because the intention of Public Service Info is to be a support service for other service channels.

11) What are the next steps of Public Service Info?

The service will be launched on 25 November.

5 Analysis of the results

The analysis of the results begins with describing the results of the questionnaire and the reasons for said results. The analysis then proceeds to disseminate which parts of the questionnaire answer to which communication objectives, how well these objectives are met and whether there is a gap between some of the objectives and the results of the questionnaire.

5.1 Results of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent to the registry e-mails of 320 municipalities of Finland. The questionnaire was sent in two versions, in Finnish and in Swedish. In this analysis of the results of the questionnaire, I have combined the answers of both versions of the questionnaire.

General information and response rate

In total 75 people answered the questionnaire. Two answers from these 75 were not applicable due to problems with the online questionnaire program Webropol, so the total number of answers is 73. Because two different people from one municipality and three different people from another municipality answered, I reduced the number of respondents by 3 to get the correct answering percentage for Finnish municipalities out of 320. Thus the response rate, as in the number of Finnish municipalities that answered out of the possible 320, was 70/320 = 22 %. In those questions that require the answers per municipality I have continued to analyze the answers in a way that brings the total number of responses to 70. I did it by counting the averages of the two responses from one municipality that has Finnish as its official language (Ilomantsi) and the averages of the three responses from another municipality that is bilingual (Vantaa). The response rates in the analysis are rounded up or down to the closest natural number.

As questions 8 and 9 with multiple choices proved to be unclear and problematic to some of the respondents, I permitted the municipality representatives to answer the questionnaire twice. Thus if a municipality representative answered the questionnaire two times, I have not analyzed the respondents' first answers but the corrected ones they submitted the second time they answered the questionnaire. Although if the corrections from the second round of answering the questions did not provide any changes in the answers for questions 8 and 9, but the answers for open questions 10 and 11 were lost, I have analyzed the respondents' first answers.

There were two different links for answering the questionnaire, one in Finnish for the Finnish speaking municipalities and the other one in Swedish for the Swedish speaking municipalities. The content was the same in both questionnaires. In total four Swedish speaking municipalities which have Swedish as their official language or are bilingual answered. Out of these four, one municipality answered to the Finnish questionnaire and three to the Swedish questionnaire.

For the language in which the respondent answered, the total number of respondents, 73, can be applied. Most of the respondents answered the questionnaire in Finnish. 69/73 = 95 % answered in Finnish and 4/73 = 5 % answered in Swedish. One Swedish speaking respondent from a municipality whose official language is Swedish answered the Finnish questionnaire in Swedish. The rest of the respondents answered the Finnish questionnaire in Finnish or the Swedish questionnaire in Swedish. The three remaining Swedish answers were of municipality representatives from bilingual municipalities.

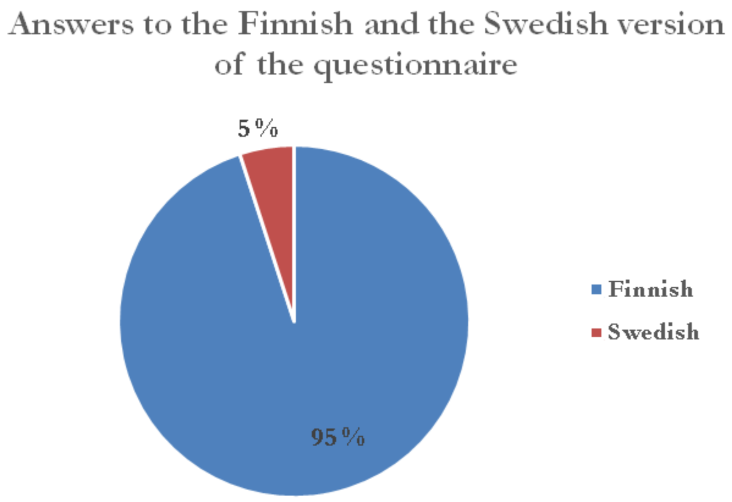

Figure 11. The responses to the Finnish and Swedish language versions of the questionnaire (n=73)

Having gone through the response rate and other general information on the questionnaire, I will proceed to analyze the responses to each question. The first and second questions in the questionnaire inquired the respondent's municipality and the respondent's post or title at the municipality. This background information is useful for the commissioning party but cannot be well statistically analyzed so I will proceed with the analysis with question number 3.

Question number 3: ''What is the population of your municipality?''

In this question we return to the total number of respondents being 70. Most of the respondents, in total 29/70 = 41 %, were residents of a smaller municipality of under 6 000 inhabitants. The next group was municipalities of 6 000 – 19 999 inhabitants with 22/70 = 31 %. Municipalities with a population of 20 000 – 39 999 was represented by 7/70 = 10 % and the municipalities with a population of 40 000 – 99 999 and over 100 000 were represented with the same number of respondents, 6/70 = 9 % both. The municipalities' population is described in the figure below.

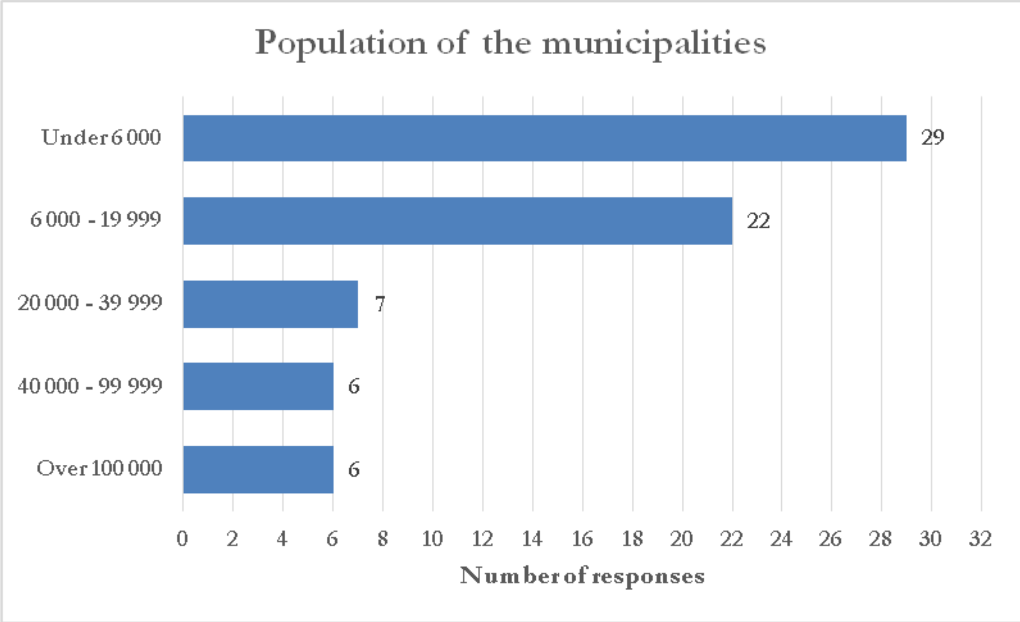

Figure 12. The municipalities' population (n=70)

Question number 4: "The official language of my municipality is (Finnish/Swedish/bilingual)"

Question number 4 also requires analyzing the answers per municipality so the number of respondents is again 70. The respondents stated the official language of their municipality as follows: 56/70 = 80 % said that their municipality's official language is Finnish, 1/70 = 1 % said that their municipality's official language is Swedish and 13/70 = 19 % stated that their municipality is bilingual meaning that the official languages are both Finnish and Swedish. The three responses from Vantaa (which is a bilingual municipality) and two responses from Ilomantsi (of which the official language is Finnish) have been combined.

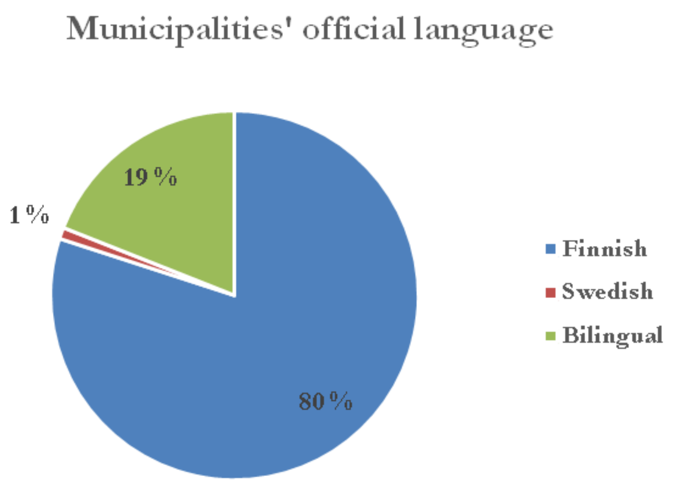

Figure 13. The division between the answering municipalities' official language (n=70)

Question number 5: "Have you heard of Public Service Info before?"

In this question it is again important to know the division of responses between municipalities, so the total number of respondents is 70. The municipality representatives were asked whether they had heard of Public Service Info before or not. If the respondent answered "no" they were advised to continue to question 8 because questions 6 and 7 go into details about the communication channels and the sufficiency of information to which someone who has not heard of the service clearly could not answer.

To get the correct response rate for the answers "yes" and "no" I had to look at the responses from Vantaa and Ilomantsi. As the three respondents from Vantaa all answered "yes" the average for the answers is clearly "yes". The other municipality representative from Ilomantsi answered "yes" and the other one "no" so a clear average cannot be decided. Therefore both answers from Ilomantsi are removed from the analysis and the total number of respondents for this question has to be reduced by one (which would equal the average for the two answers from Ilomantsi), from 70 to 69. A positive 51/69 equaling to 74 % of the respondents answered that they had heard about Public Service Info before. 18/69 = 26 % of the respondents said that they had not heard about Public Service Info before. The awareness of the service between the respondents was quite good, but the fact that over a quarter of the respondents has not heard of the service before indicates that even more effort can be put in the communication about the service to municipalities.

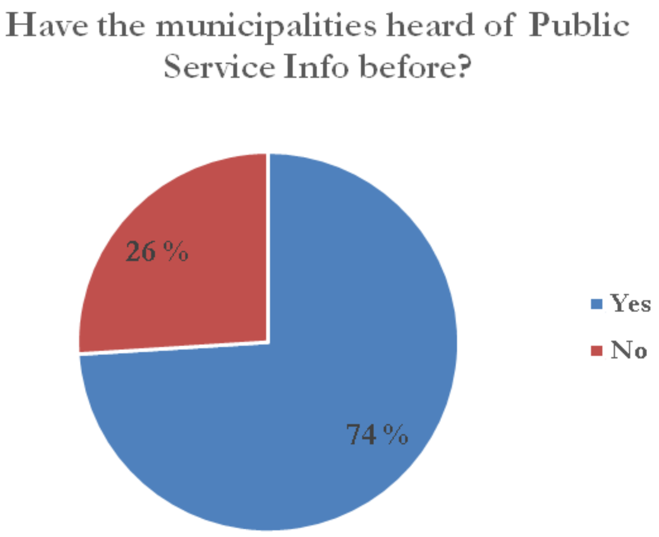

Figure 14. The municipality representatives' awareness of Public Service Info (n=69)

After question 5 about the municipality representatives' awareness of Public Service Info the questionnaire does not measure the division of responses between municipalities but the division of responses between all the respondents. Thus the total number of respondents is 73, as the averages for the three answers from Vantaa and two answers from Ilomantsi are no longer calculated.

Question number 6: "Through which communication channel/channels have you heard of Public Service Info?"

The next question in the questionnaire was about the communication channels through which the municipalities have received information of Public Service Info. If the respondent had not heard of Public Service Info before, clearly they did not need to answer this question. As the total number of respondents is 73 and in total 19 people had not heard of Public Service Info before (the other answer from Ilomantsi also counted in), the total number of respondents who had heard of Public Service Info before and answered this question is 54.

The respondents were able to choose multiple alternatives, thus the question measures the number of people using a specific channel out of the possible 54 respondents. The most common communication channel through which the municipality representatives have heard about Public Service Info is the Ministry of Finance's newsletter as 28/54 = 52 % of the respondents chose this channel as a source of information. The next communication channel is the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy's newsletter as 16/54 = 30 % of the respondents had heard of Public Service Info through that channel. Compared to the other communication channels, the conclusion is that newsletters are the most common way for communicating about the new service Public Service Info to municipalities. However there was a quite significant difference between the number of people having heard of Public Service info through the newsletter from the Ministry of Finance and the newsletter from the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy. Overall the newsletter from the Ministry of Finance is clearly the most known and used communication channel for communicating about Public Service Info.

The next communication channel, right behind the newsletter from the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy, was the web pages of the Ministry of Finance. A total of 15/54 = 28 % of the respondents chose the web pages as a source of information through which they have heard of the service. Media was also a used communication channel with 13/54 = 24 %, as well as the Ministry of Finance contacting the municipality about Public Service Info with the same response rate, 13/54 = 24 %.

The yearly event Kuntamarkkinat was held this fall on 11 – 12 September 2013. The thesis questionnaire was sent on 16 September and therefore Kuntamarkkinat was a possible communication channel through which the municipality representatives could have heard about the service before answering the questionnaire, although other events as communication channels are also possible in this alternative. 11/54 = 20 % of the respondents said that they had heard of Public Service Info at an event. 3/54 = 6 % said that they had heard about Public Service Info from their colleagues.

8/54 = 15 % of the respondents said that they have heard of Public Service Info through another channel that was not stated in the alternatives. These other channels were:

- An earlier questionnaire (Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy)
- I am a member of the executive team for the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy
- I have received e-mail regarding the topic
- Through the cluster working group
- I am part of the working group
- Through the Ministry of Finance's co-operative working group for developing education in the Citizen Advice Service project
- I have paid a visit by the Ministry of Finance's request and participated seminars
- Through my own organization

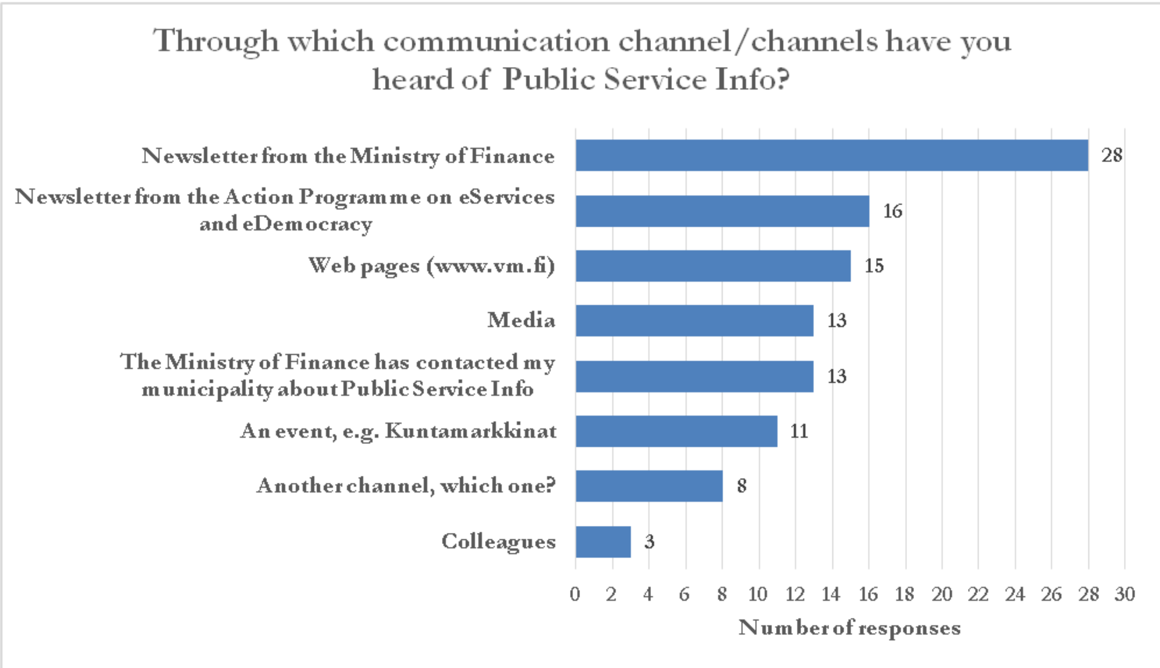

Figure 15. The communication channels through which the municipality representatives have heard of Public Service Info before (n=54)

Question number 7: "In terms of your position, have you received enough information of Public Service Info? See the description of co-operation in the covering letter."

If the respondent had not heard of Public Service Info before, they did not need to answer the following question about the adequacy of information. The total number of respondents is again 54. The municipality representatives were asked whether they had received enough information of Public Service Info in terms of their position and they were also advised to see the description of the co-operation between the service and municipalities in the covering letter. Most of the respondents answered "satisfactorily" as the answering percentage for "satisfactorily" was 19/54 = 35 %. After noticing the vast support for this neutral value, it is good news for the service that the rest of the municipality representatives' evaluations were more on the positive side than the negative. The second largest group was "well" with 17/54 = 32 % of the responses. These views were followed by the statement "quite poorly" with the percentage of 11/54 = 20 %. 2/54 = 4 % of the respondents thought that they have been informed "poorly", but luckily the number of respondents thinking that they have been informed "very well" was greater with the number of respondents being 5/54 = 9 %.

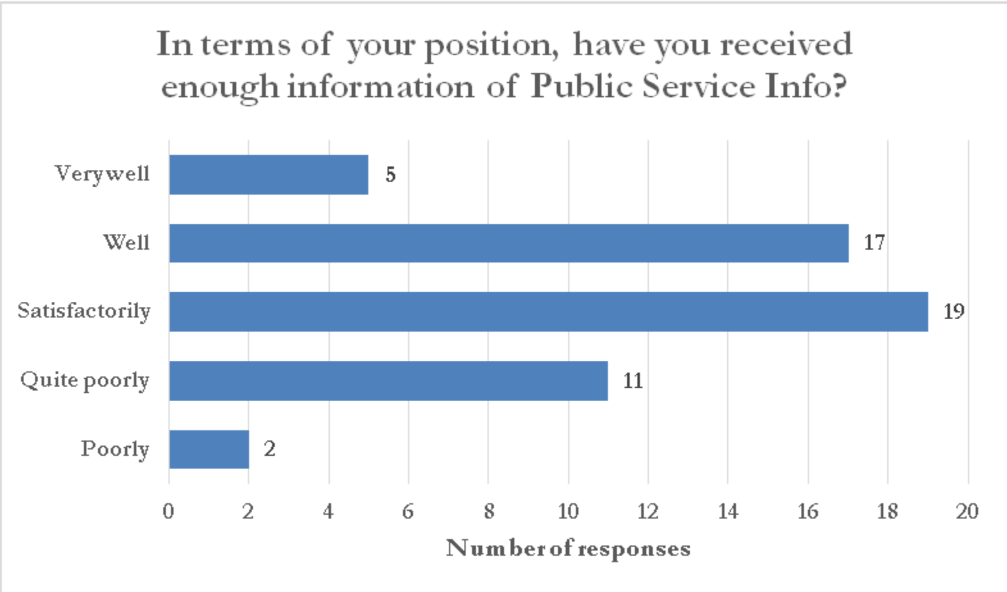

Figure 16. The municipality representatives' views of the adequacy of the amount of information they have received (n=54)

As mentioned before, the multiple choice questions 8 and 9 were unclear and problematic to some of the respondents. The scales from 1 to 7 in question 8 and scales 1 to 5 in question 9 were used in different ways, thus the answers for questions 8 and 9 have been divided into different groups according to different answering patterns. For question 8 and 9 the following groups have been formed:

- Regular answers with clear answering patterns
- Partially regular answers with answering patterns
- Irregular answers that cannot be evaluated as clear answering patterns but general opinions can be extracted
- Answers to the alternative ''Other possible communication practices?''

In this thesis I have analyzed only the regular answers with clear answering patterns and that group's answers to the alternative ''Other possible communication practices?''.

Question number 8: ''Which of the following communication practices would be the best practices for your municipality to receive information of Public Service Info? (Put these in a priority order 1 – 7, the most important practice number 1 and the least important practice number 7. If you do not answer ''Other possible communication practices?'' use the numbers 1 – 6 for the priority order and choose ''No answer'' for the other possible communication practices.)''

The alternatives for question 8 are:

- My municipality receives current information of Public Service Info via newsletters and e-mail.
- My municipality has a contact person from whom it is possible to get needed information about Public Service Info.
- The service advisors of my municipality get needed training material of Public Service Info.
- My municipality can, if needed, contact Public Service Info directly via phone or e-mail.

- The representatives of my municipality and the contact persons of Public Service Info have regular co-operation meetings.
- In my municipality we search for information about Public Service Info online.
- Other possible communication practices?

Because the question included the possibility to answer to ''Other possible communication practices?'' but did not require every respondent to answer that alternative, there was a problem with the flexibility of the scales in the question. Because it is useful information for Public Service Info if there are other communication practices that were not yet thought of by the service, the possibility to come up with your own answer and rate it on the scale was granted to the respondents. In hindsight, having seen the confusion this caused, it would have been good to make ''Other possible communication practices?'' a separate question with no rating possibility. The same goes with question number 9.

The idea of question 8 was to find out which are the most valued communication practices to the municipality representatives. To do so, the respondents were asked to put the alternatives in a priority order using the numbers 1 – 7, 1 for the most important one and 7 for the least important one, because there are in total 7 different alternatives if ''Other possible communication practices?'' is also answered. After finding out the need for the alternative ''No answer'' on the first day that the questionnaire was sent, the respondents were advised again by e-mail. The respondents were advised that if they do not answer ''Other possible communication practices?'' they should use the scales 1 – 6 for the other alternatives and choose ''No answer'' to ''Other possible communication practices?''. This advice on the question proved to be still too unclear, and the idea of the question being a question of priority order was not clear to all the respondents either. This provided a learning experience for forming very clear questions and instructions to the questions as well as very clear scales in the future.

50/73 = 68 % of the respondents answered question 8 in a way that can be accurately scientifically examined. The answers for question 8 by the first group, regular answers with clear answering patterns, are portrayed in the table below.

Table 1. The municipality representatives' opinions on the best communication practices in which municipalities can receive information about Public Service Info (n=50)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No answer	In average
My municipality receives current information of Public Service Info via newsletters and e-mail.	24	8	4	6	1	6	1		**2,48**
My municipality has a contact person from whom it is possible to get needed information about Public Service Info.	11	11	11	7	5	4	1		**3**
The service advisors of my municipality get needed training material of Public Service Info.	3	13	17	6	10	1			**3,2**
My municipality can, if needed, contact Public Service Info directly via phone or e-mail.	1	8	13	20	6	2			**3,56**
The representatives of my municipality and the contact persons of Public Service Info have regular co-operation meetings.	6	2	3	6	15	17	1		**4,54**
In my municipality we search for information about Public Service Info online.	3	7	2	5	12	20	1		**4,6**
Other possible communication practices?	2	1			1		10	36	**5,64**

As this question utilizes a priority order and 1 signifies the most important alternative and 7 the least important alternative, the alternative is more important if it reaches a low value in average. I counted the average for each alternative by adding the values together and dividing the sum with 50 because there were in total 50 responses. Because 36 respondents did not answer with a value to "Other possible communication practices?", the sum for that alternative is divided by 14. The following example portrays the way the average was calculated for the first alternative:

$$\frac{24\ x\ 1 + 7\ x\ 2 + 4\ x\ 3 + 6\ x\ 4 + 1\ x\ 5 + 6\ x\ 6 + 1\ x\ 7}{50}$$

The lowest average 2,48 was for the first alternative "My municipality receives current information of Public Service Info via newsletters and e-mail." and therefore newsletters and e-mail can be seen as the best communication practice for municipalities to receive information about Public Service Info. The priority order for all the alternatives according to the averages of the municipality representatives' responses goes as follows:

1. Newsletters and e-mail
2. Municipality's contact person
3. Training material for service advisors at the municipality
4. Direct contact via phone or e-mail
5. Regular co-operation meetings between municipalities and Public Service Info
6. Searching for information about Public Service Info online
7. Other possible communication practices

Most of the respondents answered either 7 meaning ''the least important'' or ''no answer'' to ''Other possible communication practices?''. Two people out of 50 thought that other possible communication practices would be the most important communication practice, giving this alternative the value 1. The other respondent giving this value provided an additional communication practice and the other one did not. One respondent gave other possible communication channels the value 2 and an answer for this value, as did another respondent when giving the value 5. In total three respondents out of ten, who answered ''Other possible communication practices?'' with the value 7, gave an explanation for this value. 36/50 chose ''No answer'' to this alternative but one of those respondents who had chosen ''No answer'' still mentioned an additional communication practice.

The open answers are translated as accurately as possible to avoid changing the initial message of the answer. All the other possible communication practices are listed below:

- ''Communicating in an understandable language and so that the communication also pays attention to (reaches) the target.'' (Value 1)
- ''Information to be distributed to our municipality about Public Service Info facilitating one's own work.'' (Value 2)
- ''Information is updated online and sent to municipalities.'' (Value 5)
- ''Regional co-operation meetings.'' (Value 7)

- ''E.g. through media to municipality inhabitants/citizens who should if needed use this service.'' (Value 7)
- ''General and comprehensive communication about Public Service Info's services and phone number is of first-rate importance for the project to reach its goals in the first place.'' (No answer)

Question number 9: ''Which of the following communication practices would be the best practices for Public Service Info to receive current information of your municipality? (Put these in a priority order 1 – 5, the most important practice number 1 and the least important practice number 5. If you do not answer ''Other possible communication practices?'' use the numbers 1 – 4 for the priority order and choose ''No answer'' for the other possible communication practices.)

The alternatives for question 9 are:

- Via e-mail.
- My municipality has a contact person from whom it is possible for Public Service Info to get needed information about current matters at my municipality.
- The service advisors of my municipality can convey needed information to Public Service Info.
- The representatives of Public Service Info and my municipality can be in regular contact with each other.
- Other possible communication practices?

Because question number 9 included the possibility to answer to ''Other possible communication practices?'' but did not require every respondent to answer that alternative, there was a problem with the flexibility of the scales in the question. The same difficulties as in question 8 with the scales and the respondents' understanding of the concept of priority order could be seen in the responses to this question.

49/73 = 67 % of the respondents answered question 9 in a way that can be accurately scientifically examined. The answers for question 9 by the first group, regular answers with clear answering patterns, are portrayed in the table below.

Table 2. The municipality representatives' opinions on the best communication practices in which Public Service Info can receive information about municipalities (n=49)

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**No answer**	**In average**
Via e-mail.	23	13	3	10			**2**
My municipality could have a contact person from whom it is possible for Public Service Info to get needed information about current matters at my municipality.	15	16	13	3	2		**2,2**
The service advisors of my municipality can convey needed information to Public Service Info.	2	13	26	7	1		**2,84**
The representatives of Public Service Info and my municipality can be in regular contact with each other.	6	7	7	27	2		**3,24**
Other possible communication practices?	3			2	13	31	**4,22**

As this question utilizes a priority order and 1 signifies the most important alternative and 5 the least important alternative, the alternative is more important if it reaches a low value in average. The priority order for all the alternatives according to the averages of the municipality representatives' responses goes as follows:

1. E-mail
2. Municipality's contact person
3. Service advisors of the municipality convey information to Public Service Info
4. Regular contact between Public Service Info and the municipality
5. Other possible communication practices

Most respondents, in total 31/49 answered "No answer" to "Other possible communication practices". One of the respondents who chose "No answer" actually answered with an additional communication practice. Two respondents who chose value 1 for other communication practices provided other practices, as one respondent who put value 1 did not. Both respondents who chose value 4 for other communication practices also gave an explanation for the practices. 4/13 respondents who chose value 5 for other possible communication practices provided other communication practices.

The open answers are translated as accurately as possible to avoid changing the initial message of the answer. All the other possible communication practices are listed below:

- ”Internet service of the municipality (requires continuous updating).” (Value 1)
- ”Municipality's web pages.” (Value 1)
- ”An address for internet info and a newsletter about updates.” (Value 4)
- ”Web pages of Ylöjärvi city.” (Value 4)
- ”Municipality's web pages.” (Value 5)
- ”Municipality's web pages.” (Value 5)
- ”By familiarizing oneself with ”Virka-info”.” (Value 5)
- ”Several contact persons of different topics to the municipality.” (Value 5)
- ”Tours at the new customer service offices (129/164 pcs) by the representatives of Public Service Info.” (No answer)

Question number 10: ”How could the communication and co-operation between Public Service Info and your municipality be improved?”

As well as the responses to the questions 5 – 9, the responses to questions 10 and 11 are utilized in the recommendations part of the thesis. Question number 10 concerns the ways of improving the communication between Public Service Info and the municipality. 40 respondents answered this question, but as four of these answers were simply ”-”, there were 36 actual responses to the question. The answers for this question are portrayed in the following table. The answers are translated and divided into nine different groups according to the general themes in the answers.

Table 3. Municipality representatives' opinions on how the communication and co-operation between Public Service Info and their municipality could be improved

Web pages and improvements on e-services (7 responses)
"By improving e-service and in co-operation even municipality specific content service."
"Public Service Info should have web pages and a newsletter via which information on the actions is conveyed to municipalities."
"Public Service Info could have clear web pages from which the municipality could retrieve necessary information."
"Public Service Info could retrieve information from each municipality's own web pages, the latest and most current information is online."
"Municipality's web pages could be directly utilized."
"Co-operation could be based on links on web pages and e-mail via the registry e-mail address which would still be in charge of conveying the message to people in different departments who will take care of the matter."
"Common Lync, common chat, compare the Helsinki metropolitan area project real time guidance – click project (More information about this with regard to Espoo Arja.H.Laakkonen)."

Contact persons (6 responses)
"E-mail to the contact persons."
"Clear contact persons for both parties, between whom information is exchanged and at the same time clear responsibilities and tasks are defined for the aforementioned people. The contact persons exchange information via e-mail/online."
"Naming contact persons. Our municipality already has its own customer service office which guides customers."
"Via newsletters, in addition it would be a good idea to name a contact person who conveys information to the municipality or through whom the co-operation is channeled."
"In co-operation with a municipal publicist."

”By contact between Public Service Info and service advisors of the municipality.”

Co-operative meetings and training (5 responses)
”First there should be a seminar for the municipality, in which contact persons and common practices are agreed upon.”
”Mutual training and meetings.”
”Municipalities should be given a sufficient amount of instructions and information of the operations.”
”By organizing electronic and written information for the service advisor and if needed, by organizing a common information seminar at the province for the service advisors of several organizations.”
”By organizing mutual events.”

Municipal customer service (4 responses)
”If legal municipal customer service offices are established, the co-operation should be formed between Public Service Info and customer service offices.”
”The municipality switchboard is still the place from which absolutely everything possible is asked. Other services including Public Service Info are probably quite slow to replace this.”
”I have understood that Public Service Info gives general information on all municipalities. For current local issues customers are guided to contact the municipality’s customer service office, or if there is none, the municipal office or the equivalent. Otherwise there is a danger that this will become an unnecessary job for the municipalities. There will also be overlapping work among municipal customer service offices and Public Service Info. Municipal agendas and minutes of the meeting are sources of current information which can be viewed by anyone online.’
”At first a comprehensive information package to municipalities’ customer service.”

E-mail and newsletters (3 responses)

”Sufficient communication via e.g. e-mail.”
”Via newsletters and e-mail.”
”E-mail is a fast and effective channel.”

Complexity of different authorities (3 responses)
”The government has pulled back from its citizens. This is what economies of scale are all about. There are no longer clear authorities with certain functions but this and that with different foreign names, of which no one understands anything. E.g. Trafi. Would it not have been the most reasonable and cheapest to change the names into plain language and give the contact information of offices and institutions to public distribution. Now officials are secret without the chance to contact them, e.g. environment and employment services let alone Kela.”
”What is the difference between an important message and spam? Who will act as the moderator? Why should the same things be put in many different places?”
”Is there really a reason for giving information about municipalities' services in Public Service Info? The problem will be municipality specific questions. The basic division of labor is always the same between municipalities and the government. Is it worthwhile to strive towards municipality specific guidance.”

Communication and planning (3 responses)
”Communication, systematic introduction of the service.”
”In addition to contact persons, also the municipality's other authorities should be timely informed; customer service representatives, communication unit, contingency planner, rescue personnel.”
”By creating a schedule for updating information based on regularity.”

Multiple suggestions (3 responses)
”1. Contact information of both parties in good condition (knowing the field), 2. Fluent communication channels (internet service, e-mail address, telephone, chat

forum), 3. Informing the municipality about Public Service Info, 4. Now at the launching period a mutual meeting in which the operations are introduced, 5. In the future maybe a yearly meeting.”
”Direct contact via e.g. telephone would always be the best. Or information material in which the co-operation is explained to service advisors. On top of this also named contact persons.”
”Via a newsletter, in addition a yearly survey about developing Public Service Info’s services could be carried out with municipalities/representatives.”

Other (2 responses)
”Heads of department are for their part responsible for the development and production of services in our municipality. This should be asked from them (I will convey the questionnaire).”
”Nowadays a paper letter has more effect than e-mail, therefore I wish for a detailed release by mail and Public Service Info’s clear contact information included.”

Question number 11: ”The main task of Public Service Info is to guide the citizen towards the services of the right authority. Is there something specific in your municipality’s services that Public Service Info should take into consideration?”

In question number 11 it is enquired whether there is something specific about the municipality’s services that Public Service Info should be aware of. 44 respondents answered this question. Out of the 44 responses 9 responses were either ”no” or ”-” so I analyzed 35 responses. Most of the responses dealt with specifications of a certain municipality’s services. The answers for this question are portrayed in the following table. The answers are translated and divided into groups according to the general themes in the answers.

Table 4. Municipality representatives' opinions on the municipality-specific things Public Service Info should take into consideration

Variety of municipality services and overlapping (9 responses)
"Our municipality has a great number of different services which have to be checked over and it should be considered how the advising is done."
"Overall Public Service Info and the municipality should be aware of the fact that municipality citizens/customers are offered many different kinds of services. Overlapping should be minimized and special attention should be paid to information in plain language."
"The pending legislation on forming customer service offices/earlier common service offices should be taken into consideration when organizing Public Service Info. The customer service offices to be founded should be utilized in organizing Public Service Info."
"In our municipality there is a wide range of service providers such as commercial enterprises, municipality groups and limited liability companies. At the moment it is difficult to get concentrated information on the activities of these service providers in other ways than the municipality's information desk."
"Our municipality has a customer service office and the service advisors of it will help."
"The services offered by the common service office."
"The service structure is slightly different in each municipality."
"Our municipality is located near a big city and therefore we do not have a common service office. Only the Social Insurance Institution of Finland Kela's service office."
"A big municipality comes with its challenges, in other words how to find the right authority because in the municipalities of Helsinki metropolitan area and in municipalities in general the names of offices and industries are different from each other but the activities could be the same even though the name does not give this information."

Health care services and social services (6 responses)

”Saarijärvi, Karstula, Kannonkoski, Kivijärvi and Kyyjärvi have formed a municipality group for health care called Saarikka. Regarding Public Service Info there should also be a contact person/co-operation with Saarikka.”
”Health care services are taken care of by the municipality group of Pöytyä's public health care.”
”Social and health care services including environmental health care are organized by the municipality group of Kainuu social and health care services, the municipality organizes day care.”
”Basic services (basic security and health care) are handled by PoSa (the munucupality group of basic services commercial enterprise of North Satakunta). Web pages: www.eposa.fi. PoSa takes care of also environmental services (environmental protection etc.).”
”The social services and health care services of the municipality of Kaustinen are provided by the co-operation area of Jokilaaksot called Jyta. Www.jyta.fi.”
”A part of the services is handled by the municipality group for basic services Selänne.”

Specialized services (5 responses)
”The Social Insurance Institution of Finland Kela's common service office at Virojoki municipal hall's customer service info.”
”Virka Info public information service by Helsinki city provides services also in particular immigration issues.”
”The municipalities of the Helsinki metropolitan region are all part of HSL municipality group (public transportation travel card).”
”The police license services functioning at Myyrmäki common service office and the deviations/limitations from full police services, time reservation practice in police license services.”
”The municipality of Vesanto does not have its own document management program.”

The language (3 responses)
”The language.” (one of the Swedish speaking respondents)
”Bilingual services.”
”We have a lot of Russian speaking people in our municipality, the websites and brochures should be available also in Russian.”

Web pages (3 responses)
”Overall the municipalities of Finland could be given a recommendation (e.g. by the Ministry of Finance, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities does not have enough say) of the structure of their web pages so that the citizens and Public Service Info would find information as easily as possible.”
”Yes, but it is hard to specify them here. I think that municipalities have different service structures and also different kinds of advising services, there is probably most information available of these on each municipality’s web pages. However websites may be difficult to comprehend at fast-paced advisor work and the latest information is not always updated even on web pages.”
”We are a small municipality and we use a lot of purchase services in customer service. Anyhow municipalities do a lot of co-operation which for sure causes an additional challenge for Public Service Info to find the right authorities. The availability of correct information for example from our municipality’s web pages is our task and this new proceeding surely enables municipalities to clarify also their own communication.”

Changes in the municipality structure (2 responses)
”After the great joining of municipalities in 2009 and the financial events thereafter, our municipality is still at a situation in which the citizens of the municipality do not recognize and are not able to differentiate the roles of different authorities (the government, municipality, private etc.). In addition the area is disconnected and consists of many different types of city and countryside areas. Especially taking these kinds of things into consideration is important when offering service and when choosing the

persons to deal with advising.”
“The great joining of municipalities in 2009 and continuing changes in the service structure.”

Multiple suggestions (2 responses)
“The service should be fully bilingual, in other words in Finnish and in Swedish. In addition there should be skills in English and other most important languages spoken in Finland. The phone number of Public Service Info should be short and concise as well as the website address and these should be INFORMED to the citizens extensively. The web pages should be comprehensive and available in at least three languages.”
“1. Fluent service to the municipality citizens/customers in Finnish as well as in Swedish should be taken into consideration. 2. The activities of municipality authorities can be found in multiple addresses.”

Technical aspects (1 response)
“Broadband network connection does not reach every village. The functioning of mobile broadband connection is unsure even in 3G version, 4G does not function at all.”

Improving e-services (1 response)
“With an e-service, “google type” search engine service could be developed.”

Comprehensive information (1 response)
“There are things of which there should be comprehensive information available throughout the country, e.g. the realization of dentist duty, reception and duty for household pets, consumer advisory services and health supervision/health inspector.”

Communication difficulties (1 response)
"As in other municipalities, non-understandable language, inconsistent informing, past deadline, lack of time, not communicating – excessive information etc."

E-mail (1 response)
"Ylöjärvi has only one official e-mail address, kirjaamo@ylojarvi.fi, which is definitely open on all office days except for when the city hall is closed, e.g. in the summertime 1-4 weeks and during Christmas 1-2 weeks."

5.2 Reliability and validity

According to Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2006, 216) reliability of the research means that the results of the research are repeatable and thus not incidental. It can be concluded that the research is reliable if two different people doing the research come up with the same results or if the same person is examined on different occasions and the results are still the same. There was only one person doing this research so the first way of checking the reliability of the research is not applicable. As there were some technical problems with the implementation of the questionnaire regarding the questions 8 and 9, the municipality representatives who had used the scales in those questions in an inaccurate way were permitted to answer the questionnaire again. Most of the answers on the first round and the second round of answering were quite parallel with each other with small enhancements. Even though letting people answer again felt like a setback at the time, the fact that most respondents answered in a similar way both times can be seen as a prove of reliability of the research. However as the research measured what the municipality representatives think, feel, experience or believe in terms of stakeholder communication between municipalities and Public Service Info it should be kept in mind that it is possible that these kinds of personal opinions can change over time. For example increased communication between municipalities and the service can lead to better results if the research is repeated.

Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2006, 217) state that validity in research means that a research method measures what is was supposed to measure. In quantitative research the researcher has an idea what they wish to measure with the help of a research method, for example a questionnaire. However the respondents' thoughts may differ from those of the researcher and they may understand the questions in some other way than the questions were meant to be understood. Thereby the researcher should be careful and not carry out the research entirely based on their initial ideas. The results should be reported as they are to ensure validity. Thus if it seems that the respondents have understood something differently from the researcher's initial thoughts, these findings should be declared. During this research I struggled with the question of validity especially with the questionnaire's questions 8 and 9. At the end of the whole process I feel that the questions and the scales in the questionnaire measured what they were supposed to measure as well as possible, taking into account my beginner researcher skills. I was also quite careful with the results and I did my best to declare the results as they were from the respondents' point of view.

6 Conclusions

The conclusions section of this thesis includes two parts: discussion and recommendations. The discussion part analyzes first the empirical part of the thesis concentrating on the research methods used and continues with an analysis of the theoretical part in relation to the outcomes of the research. The recommendations part presents recommendations for the commissioning party based on the outcomes of the research.

6.1 Discussion

The research methods used were quantitative research method with the help of a questionnaire and also qualitative research method in the form of two interviews. Of course interviewing not only the representatives of the Ministry of Finance but the municipality representatives would have given me more thorough material to work with. However, the time and resources considered, doing the research with the help of an online questionnaire was the most cost-efficient and least time-consuming method. The questionnaire received a sufficient number of responses which provided a good starting point for analysis, conclusions and recommendations. Even though I estimated that the online questionnaire was the least time-consuming method for examining such a large group of respondents, going through the responses required more time than I had figured.

As discussed in the theoretical section Public Service Info has utilized the more modern approach of creating the service in co-operation with its stakeholders, municipalities being one of the internal stakeholder groups. Public Service Info aims at internal commitment with its internal stakeholders which the service can achieve by moving gradually from awareness to commitment. According to Public Service Info’s stakeholder communication strategy (Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hanke 2013b) its internal stakeholders should be aware of the new service and understand the role and purpose of the service. Moreover internal stakeholders should understand their own role in relation to the new service and modify their own operations accordingly. Public Service Info is still at its launching period and at the phase of creating awareness and understanding among its internal stakeholders. This phase should be implemented well in collaboration with municipalities in order to show that municipalities are appreciated as a co-operation party. The service puts municipalities in a new situation in which they have to readjust and strengthen their own advising services and communication channels. Creating a solid base with awareness and understanding builds trust among the two parties, reduces resistance to change and can lead to involvement and commitment. It is important for Public Service Info to keep in mind that the communication should not be one-sided, coming from the service to municipalities. In the launching period municipalities should be able to keep in contact with and give feedback to the service and later on information and feedback should flow between the two parties.

The outcomes of the research showed that Public Service Info has not yet reached its goal of internal commitment. This is understandable as the service is still at its launching period and moving towards internal commitment seems to be in good progress. Most municipality representatives who answered the thesis questionnaire were aware of Public Service Info and thought that they had received a satisfactory amount of information about the service. Municipality representatives' awareness and also sufficiency of information about Public Service Info can be improved. When answering the questionnaire municipality representatives gave very good improvement ideas for co-operation and communication between municipalities and Public Service Info. This indicates that municipalities want to find ways to improve co-operation between them and the service and that there are already chances for involvement and commitment. The municipality representatives' improvement ideas are discussed in the following recommendations part of the thesis.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the research, the representatives of Public Service Info are given several useful recommendations on how to improve communication and co-operation with the municipalities. The recommendations cover how to move from municipalities' awareness and understanding of the service to further involvement and commitment in co-operating with the service. (Cornelissen 2008, 54.) The recommendations are based on the municipality representatives' responses to the questionnaire's questions 5 to 11.

I start the recommendations with the help of the responses to question number 5 in which it was inquired whether the municipality representatives had heard of Public Service Info before or not. I analyzed the answers of 69 municipalities of which 74 % had heard of the service and 26 % had not. Even though this is quite a good result, it is not sufficient because it is important for the functioning of the service that all the municipalities of Finland are aware of the service and committed to co-operation with it. Therefore it can be concluded that Public Service Info should increase stakeholder communication with the municipalities. As stated in Public Service Info's stakeholder communication strategy (Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hanke 2013b) municipalities should know that Public Service Info exists, that it is an advising service for the citizens of Finland and that it is a support service.

The initial objective of Public Service Info is to reduce the number of unnecessary calls to the Emergency Response Centre Administration as well as other authorities. So that the service advisors of Public Service Info are able to guide the citizens of Finland to the right authorities, public authorities should make sure that the information on their electronic services is easily accessible and current. It is important to be aware of Public Service Info's nature of being a support service which means that public authorities still need to put an effort on developing their own service and communication channels.

As Public Service Info is quite a standardized service with its certain objectives and communication channels, it comes to mind that the standardized form of the service is in contrast with the nature of municipalities being very variable in, among others, size, population, services and information technology possibilities and solutions. In order for stakeholder communication between the municipalities and the service to function, it would be a good idea for the Ministry of Finance to recommend certain uniform standards for certain municipality information technology tools, such as official websites and document management programs, from which Public Service Info should be able to find relevant information concerning the municipality. This was also suggested by the municipalities.

Question number 6 revealed that most commonly the municipalities of Finland have heard of the service via newsletter from the Ministry of Finance or the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy. It was also revealed by the question that many of those municipality representatives who had heard of the service through another channel mentioned that other channel being part of a working group related to the service. As only three of the respondents mentioned that they had heard of Public Service Info from their colleagues it can be concluded that municipality representatives could exchange more information with each other. In order for Public Service Info to function in the best way possible all municipalities of Finland should be aware of the service and also committed to co-operating with it. In this case it is not enough that some municipalities whose representatives are part of working groups are well informed of the service and some other municipalities are not. It would be a good idea to arrange information sessions to municipalities of Public Service Info or send a comprehensive information package of the service. Whether the source of information will be an event or an information package, it is important to emphasize that municipality representatives should communicate with each other and convey the information of Public Service Info.

As revealed by question number 7 most of the respondents who had heard of Public Service Info thought that they had been informed satisfactorily or well. This means that Public Service Info is capable of sufficient communication but the most important thing to be improved would be to reach all municipality representatives.

The answers to question number 8 revealed that the three best communication practices, out of the given alternatives, for municipalities to receive information of Public Service Info in priority order were newsletters and e-mails, then the municipality's contact person from whom it is possible to get information of Public Service Info and third that the municipality's service advisors get training material about Public Service Info. Thus the newsletters from the Ministry of Finance and the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy should still be sent. One new way for improving communication between municipalities and the service is in each municipality defining a contact person who deals with the services of the municipality and informs municipality representatives about the current matters of Public Service Info. Another improvement suggestion is training material about Public Service Info that could be compiled and distributed to municipalities' service advisors. One thing that stood out from the open answers to this question was that it was requested that the information given about Public Service Info would be comprehensive and use understandable language.

Question number 9 revealed that the three best communication practices, out of the given alternatives, for Public Service Info to receive current information about the municipalities in priority order were e-mail, then the municipality's contact person who can convey information about the municipality to Public Service Info and third that the service advisors of the municipality convey information to Public Service Info. E-mail is a fast and effective way for municipalities to inform Public Service Info about any current issues. It is also important to note the role of the municipality's contact person and the municipality's service advisors who can be of great help with the communication. In the open answers the municipality's web pages were mentioned by many respondents. It should be noted that municipalities' web pages are an important source of information and they should be regularly updated.

The answers to question number 10 ''How could the communication and co-operation between Public Service Info and your municipality be improved?" revealed themes that were the most common among the answers. The most common themes were web pages and improvements on e-services, contact persons and also co-operative meetings and training. It was stated that both Public Service Info and municipalities should have clear and updated web pages from which information can be easily retrieved. The municipalities stated that contact persons should be named for Public Service Info and municipalities and these contact persons could be in touch with each other. Public Service Info already has contact persons but the municipality representatives' answers to the questionnaire reveal that not all municipalities know these contact persons or their contact information. Thus Public Service Info should inform municipalities of its contact persons. It was also stated that meetings and training about Public Service Info could be a good way to improve communication and co-operation.

The answers to question number 11''The main task of Public Service Info is to guide the citizen towards the services of the right authority. Is there something specific in your municipality's services that Public Service Info should take into consideration?" were very variable but the most common themes were variety of municipality services and overlapping of services, information on health care services and social services and information on specialized services of the municipality. The main recommendation that these answers raised is that Public Service Info should note the municipalities' concern of overlapping services and emphasize to municipalities what the role of Public Service Info being a support service means. In addition it was pointed out that Public Service Info should take into consideration the languages spoken in municipalities. Swedish and Russian were mentioned by the municipality representatives.

In conclusion the recommendations can be divided into what Public Service Info could do and what the municipalities could do. Public Service Info should aim at being known by all municipalities of Finland and the service could put more effort into reaching all municipalities. Public Service Info could arrange information sessions to municipalities or send a comprehensive information package of the service. In addition training material about Public Service Info could be compiled and distributed to the municipalities' service advisors. It should be noted that the information given about Public Service Info should be comprehensive and use understandable language. Municipalities should also be informed of the contact persons that have been named for Public Service Info.

Public Service Info should have clear and updated web pages from which information can be easily retrieved. In addition to facilitate communication it would be a good idea for the Ministry of Finance to recommend certain uniform standards for certain municipality information technology tools, such as official websites and document management programs, from which Public Service Info should be able to find relevant information concerning the municipality. Public Service Info should also note the municipalities' concern of overlapping services and clarify Public Service Info's role of being a support service to municipalities. Public Service Info has chosen Finnish, Swedish and English as its service languages. It should be monitored how the service functions in these languages, if there is room for improvement in service in any of the languages and if there are enough resources and benefits for taking on an additional service language.

There are also certain things municipalities could do. It should be noted that municipalities' web pages are an important source of information for Public Service Info and they should be regularly updated. Each municipality should define a contact person who deals with the services of the municipality and informs municipality representatives about the current matters of Public Service Info. The contact person, as well as the service advisors of the municipality, can also convey information about the municipality to Public Service Info. In addition municipality representatives could exchange more information with each other about Public Service Info.

7 Personal evaluation

Looking back at the beginning of the thesis process I remember that it was very hard for me to get started. My internship at the Ministry of Finance began in January 2013 and I had been informed already at the interview for the position that I could get a thesis topic there. Months passed and I was busy learning new things at the internship. In April at HAAGA-HELIA's first thesis seminar I announced my topic but after that I was again busy at work. I had a summer job at the Ministry of Finance as well and I had planned that I would work on my thesis in July. Surprisingly I had a lot of work to do also in July so I was able to only gather some background information for the thesis at the end of July. I noticed that I could not concentrate on work and the thesis at the same time so I decided not to take on a job in fall but to concentrate on the thesis and completing the courses I had left at HAAGA-HELIA.

In August I started working on the background information and also the questionnaire in co-operation with the Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury. It took all August to perfect the questionnaire and in the beginning of September the questionnaire and covering letters had to be translated and I had to do the questionnaire in Webropol. I had some time here and there to work on the thesis but especially in September and October I was very busy with my courses and I did not make that much progress with the thesis. I got very motivated in completing the thesis in mid-October because I wanted to have as much as possible finished material by the beginning of November when I had my second thesis seminar. I made several improvements on my thesis by the seminar and I continued writing the theoretical background and the analysis of the results simultaneously throughout November. I made the most progress in a short period of time, approximately in six weeks from mid-October to the beginning of December. In addition I had reserved the first week of December for the recommendations and the overall check of all the sections and the language of the thesis.

After the whole thesis process I feel quite proud of myself for completing my thesis by the deadline I had set for myself with my supervisor. In the beginning the thesis felt like a massive project and it was hard to get a grasp of any of the sections that I had planned in the table of contents. At one point I noticed that it did not suit me to finalize one section at a time so I decided to start with a section, write as much as I could and then move onto another section I had ideas for. Working this way enabled me to get rid of any writer's blocks because as I could work on all the sections simultaneously, I did not feel that one section should be perfect before I could move onto another one. I think realizing that the first version of any section does not have to be perfect straight away and that improvements can be made all the time is an important lesson for anyone struggling with writing their thesis.

I am usually a more detail-oriented person but during the thesis process I learned to handle a large project by myself. As well as project management, I learned that setting deadlines and good time management are important when writing a thesis. I had a quite tight weekly schedule because I had many courses to complete and the thesis to write at the same time. Doing all this required hard work but it seems to me that this plan worked out quite well after all. In addition the thesis process developed my research skills and also language and translating skills as I worked in Finnish, Swedish and English during the process.

As well as feeling good about completing the thesis process I think that the content of the thesis is also on the level I strived towards. The theoretical section is relevant and I was able to utilize the knowledge I already had of the communication theories I applied as well as learn more. The background information parts give a thorough picture of the commissioning party and the service and the analysis of the results and the recommendations will be of use to the commissioning party. In conclusion the objectives of this thesis were met quite well. I researched how the representatives of the new government service Public Service Info have communicated with municipalities of Finland and whether this communication has been sufficient or not in the municipalities' point of view. Based on the outcomes of the research recommendations were given on how the co-operation and communication between municipalities and the service could be improved. There are several recommendations from which the commissioning party can choose those that they consider the best and also possible to implement with the time and resources available.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. E-mail covering letter in Finnish

Opinnäytetyökysely Kansalaisneuvonnan sidosryhmäviestinnästä kuntiin

Pyydän välittämään oheisen sähköpostin kuntanne taholle, joka vastaa kuntanne palveluista ja niiden kehittämisestä.

Hyvä vastaanottaja

Opiskelen HAAGA-HELIAn ammattikorkeakoulussa Multilingual Management Assistant –koulutusohjelmassa. Teen opinnäytetyötä aiheesta *Sidosryhmäviestintä kuntien ja Kansalaisneuvonnan välillä.* Tutkin siis uuden loppuvuonna 2013 avattavan palvelun, Kansalaisneuvonnan, sidosryhmäviestinnän roolia kuntien kanssa rakennettavassa yhteistyössä. Tutkimus toteutetaan yhteistyössä valtiovarainministeriön Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hankkeen kanssa.

Kansalaisneuvonta on valtiovarainministeriön ja Valtiokonttorin yhteistyössä rakentama uusi palvelu. Palvelun tuottaa Valtiokonttori. Kansalaisneuvonta auttaa opastamalla kansalaisen oikean viranomaisen tai vastaavan sähköisen palvelun luo ja tarjoamalla perustietoja julkiseen hallintoon liittyvissä kysymyksissä. Palvelun tavoitteena on sujuvoittaa kansalaisen asiointia hallinnossa ja vähentää julkisia palveluita koskevia tarpeettomia puheluja hätänumeroon.

Kansalaisneuvonta toimii yhteistyössä viranomaisten kanssa. Yhteistyö kuntien ja palvelun välillä on tärkeää. Kyselyn vastauksia hyödynnetään Valtiokonttorin ja Kansalaisneuvonnan välisessä yhteistyössä.

Ohessa on linkki kyselyyn:
http://www.webropolsurveys.com/S/01BCDEDFC072173A.par

Vastausaikaa on 30.9.2013 saakka. Vastaaminen kyselyyn vie vain noin 5 – 8 minuuttia. Enemmän tietoa kuntien ja palvelun välisestä yhteistyöstä ja tästä kyselystä löydät saatekirjeestä.

Lisätietoja palvelusta antavat Valtiokonttorista apulaisjohtaja Hannu Korkeala (hannu.korkeala@valtiokonttori.fi) ja valtiovarainministeriöstä projektiasiantuntija Heli Parikka (heli.parikka@vm.fi).

Annan itse mielelläni lisätietoja kyselystä ja opinnäytetyöstä.

Ystävällisin terveisin

Iina Laamo
Multilingual Management Assistant –koulutusohjelman opiskelija

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Attachment 2. E-mail covering letter in Swedish

Enkät om intressentkommunikation mellan Medborgarrådgivning och kommuner (genomförs som en del av ett lärdomsprov)

Jag ber dig vidarebefordra det bilagda e-postmeddelandet till den person som svarar för tjänsterna i din kommun och utvecklingen av dem.

Bästa mottagare

Jag studerar i utbildningsprogrammet Multilingual Management Assistant vid HAAGA-HELIA yrkeshögskola. Jag arbetar med mitt lärdomsprov *Sidosryhmäviestintä kuntien ja Kansalaisneuvonnan välillä* (Intressentkommunikation mellan kommuner och Medborgarrådgivning). Jag undersöker med andra ord vilken roll intressentkommunikationen har i det samarbete som kommer att skapas mellan den nya tjänsten Medborgarrådgivningen och kommunerna. Tjänsten lanseras i slutet av 2013. Enkäten genomförs i samarbete med Allmänna rådgivningstjänsten för medborgare –projekt.

Medborgarrådgivningen är en ny tjänst som har tagits fram i samarbete mellan Finansministeriet och Statskontoret. Tjänsten tillhandahålls av Statskontoret. Medborgarrådgivningen hjälper medborgare att hitta rätt myndighetstjänst eller motsvarande elektronisk tjänst och ger basinformation i frågor om den offentliga förvaltningen. Syftet med tjänsten är att göra det smidigare för medborgarna att sköta sina myndighetsärenden och att minska antalet onödiga samtal till nödnumret i frågor som gäller offentlig service.

Medborgarrådgivningen samarbetar med myndigheterna. Samarbete mellan kommunerna och Medborgarrådgivningen är viktigt. Enkätesvaren kommer att utnyttjas i samarbetet mellan Statskontoret och Medborgarrådgivningen.

Länk till enkäten: http://www.webropolsurveys.com/S/A215537103334765B.par

Svarstiden går ut den 30 september 2013. Det tar endast 5–8 minuter att besvara frågorna. Mer information om samarbete mellan kommunerna och Medborgarrådgivningen och om denna enkät finns i följebrevet.

Ytterligare information om tjänsten lämnas av biträdande direktör Hannu Korkeala på Statskontoret (hannu.korkeala@valtiokonttori.fi) och projektsakkunnig Heli Parikka på Finansministeriet (heli.parikka@vm.fi).

Jag ger gärna ytterligare information om enkäten och mitt lärdomsprov.

Med vänlig hälsning

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Attachment 3. Covering letter in Finnish

Opinnäytetyökysely Kansalaisneuvonnan sidosryhmäviestinnästä kuntiin

Hyvä vastaanottaja

Opiskelen HAAGA-HELIAn ammattikorkeakoulussa Multilingual Management Assistant –koulutusohjelmassa ja teen opinnäytetyötä aiheesta *Stakeholder communication between municipalities and the new service Public Service Info (Sidosryhmäviestintä kuntien ja Kansalaisneuvonnan välillä).* Opinnäytetyö tarkastelee loppuvuonna 2013 lanseerattavan uuden palvelun, Kansalaisneuvonnan, sidosryhmäviestinnän merkitystä ja mahdollisuuksia. Tutkimus toteutetaan yhteistyössä valtiovarainministeriön kanssa.

Kansalaisneuvonta on kehitetty valtiovarainministeriön Kansalaisen yleisneuvontapalvelu –hankkeessa. Kansalaisneuvonta on valtiovarainministeriön ja Valtiokonttorin yhteistyössä luoma uusi palvelu, joka aloittaa toimintansa loppuvuonna 2013. Palvelun tuottaa Valtiokonttori. Kansalaisneuvonta auttaa opastamalla kansalaisen oikean viranomaisen tai vastaavan sähköisen palvelun luo ja tarjoamalla perustietoja julkiseen hallintoon liittyvissä kysymyksissä. Palvelun tavoitteena on myös vähentää tarpeettomia puheluja yleiseen hätänumeroon.

Kansalaisneuvonnan palvelukanavat ovat puhelin, sähköposti, verkkosivusto ja sähköinen yhteydenottolomake sekä erityisryhmille kuten kuulovammaisille suunnattava tekstiviestipalvelu. Kansalaisneuvonnan palvelukielet ovat suomi, ruotsi ja englanti.

Kansalaisneuvonta toimii yhteistyössä kuntien ja valtion eri viranomaisten ja näiden neuvontapalvelujen kanssa. Yhteistyö kuntien ja palvelun välillä on erittäin tärkeää. Konkreettiseen yhteydenpitoon Kansalaisneuvonnan ja kuntien välillä kuuluvat kansalaisten lähettämät palvelupyynnöt, joita Kansalaisneuvonta käsittee kunnan kanssa. Palvelupyyntöjä voivat olla suorat palautteet kunnalle, Hallintolain 21 § mukaiset asiakirjat, jotka epähuomiossa toimitetaan Kansalaisneuvontaan ja palvelupyynnöt, joihin ei heti löydetä vastuullista viranomaista tai tahoa viranomaisessa.

Palvelupyynnön saapuessa edetään seuraavasti:

- Kunta vastaanottaa palvelupyyntötiketin Kansalaisneuvonnasta ja kirjaa sen omaan asiakaspalvelujärjestelmäänsä.
- Tämän jälkeen kunta käsittelee palvelupyyntötiketin omien asiakaspalveluprosessiensa mukaisesti.
- Lopuksi kunta toimittaa vastauksen asiakkaalle ja kuittauksen Kansalaisneuvontaan.

Kyselyyn vastaaminen hyödyttää sekä minua opinnäytetyöni valmistumisessa, että Kansalaisneuvontaa, jonka lanseerausvaiheessa mietitään erilaisia viestintäkeinoja kuntien ja palvelun välille. Kyselyyn vastaamalla kunnat voivat myös suoraan vaikuttaa kuntien ja Kansalaisneuvonnan välisen viestintäyhteistyön kehittämiseen.

Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään ehdottoman luottamuksellisesti. Vastausaikaa on 30.9.2013 saakka.

Ohessa on linkki kyselyyn.

http://www.webropolsurveys.com/S/01BCDEDFC072173A.par

Lisätietoja palvelusta antavat Valtiokonttorista apulaisjohtaja Hannu Korkeala (hannu.korkeala@valtiokonttori.fi) ja valtiovarainministeriöstä projektiasiantuntija Heli Parikka (heli.parikka@vm.fi).

Annan itse mielelläni lisätietoja kyselystä ja opinnäytetyöstä.

Ystävällisin terveisin

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Attachment 4. Covering letter in Swedish

Enkät om intressentkommunikation mellan Medborgarrådgivning och kommuner (genomförs som en del av ett lärdomsprov)

Bästa mottagare

Jag studerar vid HAAGA-HELIA yrkeshögskola och mitt utbildningsprogram är Multilingual Management Assistant. För närvarande arbetar jag med mitt lärdomsprov som gäller intressentkommunikation mellan kommuner och Medborgarrådgivning, *Stakeholder communication between municipalities and the new service Public Service Info (Sidosryhmäviestintä kuntien ja Kansalaisneuvonnan välillä).*

I mitt lärdomsprov granskar jag vilken betydelse och vilka möjligheter intressentkommunikationen har i den nya servicen, Medborgarrådgivning, som lanseras i slutet av 2013. Enkäten genomförs i samarbete med Finansministeriet.

Medborgarrådgivningen har tagits fram inom Finansministeriets projekt Den allmänna rådgivningstjänsten för medborgare. Den är en ny tjänst som har skapats i samarbete mellan Finansministeriet och Statskontoret och som inleder sin verksamhet i slutet av 2013. Tjänsten tillhandahålls av Statskontoret. Medborgarrådgivningen hjälper medborgare att hitta rätt myndighetstjänst eller motsvarande elektronisk tjänst och ger basinformation i frågor om den offentliga förvaltningen. Syftet med tjänsten är också att minska antalet onödiga samtal till allmänt nödnummer.

Medborgarrådgivningens servicekanaler är telefon, e-post, webbplats och elektronisk kontaktblankett samt SMS-tjänst för specialgrupper, såsom hörselskadade. Medborgarrådgivningen ger service på finska, svenska och engelska.

Medborgarrådgivningen samarbetar med kommunerna och olika statliga myndigheter och deras rådgivningstjänster. Samarbete mellan kommunerna och Medborgarrådgivningen är mycket viktigt. Till den konkreta kontakten hör merdborgarnas serviceförfrågningar som Medborgarrådgivningen behandlar tillsammans med kommunerna. Sådana förfrågningar kan vara direkt respons till kommunerna, handlingar som avses i 21 § i förvaltningslagen och som av misstag skickats till Medborgarrådgivningen, eller förfrågningar där Medborgarrådgivningen inte genast kan hitta ansvarig myndighet eller ansvarig person hos myndigheten.

Så här behandlas serviceförfrågningar:

- Kommunen tar emot serviceförfrågan (ticket) från Medborgarrådgivningen och registrerar den i sitt eget kundservicesystem.

- Kommunen behandlar förfrågan i enlighet med sina egna kundserviceprocesser.

- Kommunen skickar ett svar till kunden och ett kvitteringsmeddelande till Medborgarrådgivningen.

När du besvarar enkäten påskyndar det mitt lärdomsprov samt gynnar Medborgarrådgivningen som nu inför lanseringen kartlägger olika möjliga kommunikationsmetoder mellan kommunerna och tjänsten. Dessutom kan kommunaktörerna på så sätt direkt medverka i utvecklingen av samarbetet mellan kommunerna och Medborgarrådgivningen.

Alla svar behandlas absolut konfidentiellt. Svarstiden går ut den 30 september 2013.

Länk till enkäten:

http://www.webropolsurveys.com/S/A21553710334765B.par

Ytterligare information om tjänsten lämnas av biträdande direktör Hannu Korkeala på Statskontoret (hannu.korkeala@valtiokonttori.fi) och projektsakkunnig Heli Parikka på Finansministeriet (heli.parikka@vm.fi).

Jag ger gärna ytterligare information om enkäten och mitt lärdomsprov.

Med vänlig hälsning

Iina Laamo
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Attachment 5. Questionnaire in Finnish

1. **Vastaajan kunta**

2. **Vastaajan virka- tai muu nimike kunnassa**

3. **Kunnan suuruus asukasmäärältään**

    a. Yli 100 000 asukasta
    b. 40 000 – 99 999 asukasta
    c. 20 000 – 39 999 asukasta
    d. 6 000 – 19 999 asukasta
    e. Alle 6 000 asukasta

4. **Kuntani on**

    a. Suomenkielinen
    b. Ruotsinkielinen
    c. Kaksikielinen

5. **Oletko kuullut aiemmin Kansalaisneuvonnasta?**

    a. Kyllä
    b. Ei

6. **Mitä kautta olet saanut tietoa Kansalaisneuvonnasta? (Voit valita useita vaihtoehtoja.)**

    a. Verkkosivuilta (www.vm.fi)
    b. Jossakin tapahtumassa, esim. Kuntamarkkinat
    c. Valtiovarainministeriön uutiskirjeestä
    d. SADe-ohjelman uutiskirjeestä
    e. Valtiovarainministeriö on ollut yhteydessä kuntaani Kansalaisneuvonnasta
    f. Tiedotusvälineistä
    g. Työtovereilta
    h. Muuta kautta, miten?

7. **Oletko saanut mielestäsi työtehtäviesi kannalta riittävästi tietoa Kansalaisneuvonnasta? Katso saatekirjeen kuvaus yhteistyöstä.** (Arvioi asteikolla erittäin hyvin, hyvin, tyydyttävästi, melko huonosti, huonosti.)

8. **Mitkä seuraavista viestinnällisistä toimenpiteistä auttaisivat kuntaasi saamaan parhaiten tietoa Kansalaisneuvonnasta?** (Laita nämä haluamaasi tärkeysjärjestykseen 1 – 7; tärkein numero 1, vähiten tärkeä numero 7.)

   a. Kuntani saa ajankohtaista tietoa Kansalaisneuvonnasta uutiskirjeiden ja sähköpostin välityksellä.
   b. Kunnallani on yhteyshenkilö, jolta saa tarvittavaa tietoa Kansalaisneuvonnasta.
   c. Kuntani palveluneuvojat saavat tarvittavaa koulutusmateriaalia Kansalaisneuvonnasta.
   d. Kuntani yhteyshenkilö voi ottaa tarvittaessa suoraan yhteyttä (puhelimitse tai sähköpostitse) Kansalaisneuvontaan.
   e. Kuntani edustajilla ja Kansalaisneuvonnan yhteyshenkilöillä on säännöllisiä yhteistyötapaamisia.
   f. Etsimme kunnassani verkosta tietoa Kansalaisneuvonnasta.
   g. Muita mahdollisia keinoja?

9. **Millä viestinnällisillä toimenpiteillä Kansalaisneuvonta saa parhaiten tietoa kuntasi ajankohtaisista asioista?** (Laita nämä haluamaasi tärkeysjärjestykseen 1 – 5; tärkein numero 1, vähiten tärkeä numero 5.)

   a. Sähköpostin välityksellä.
   b. Kunnallani voisi olla yhteyshenkilö, jolta Kansalaisneuvonta saa tarvittavaa tietoa kuntani asioista.
   c. Kuntani palveluneuvojat voivat välittää tarvittavaa tietoa Kansalaisneuvontaan.
   d. Kansalaisneuvonnan ja kuntani edustajien kesken voidaan järjestää säännöllistä yhteydenpitoa / pitää säännöllisesti yhteyttä.
   e. Muita mahdollisia keinoja?

10. **Miten Kansalaisneuvonnan ja kuntasi välistä tiedonkulkua ja yhteistyötä voisi rakentaa?**

11. **Kansalaisneuvonnan päätehtävä on ohjata kansalainen oikean viranomaisen palveluihin. Onko kuntasi palveluissa jotakin erityistä, mikä Kansalaisneuvonnan olisi hyvä ottaa huomioon?**

Attachment 6. Questionnaire in Swedish

1. **Deltagarens kommun**

2. **Deltagarens tjänstebeteckning eller annan beteckning i kommunen**

3. **Invånarantal i kommunen**

   a. över 100 000
   b. 40 000 – 99 999
   c. 20 000 – 39 999
   d. 6 000 – 19 999
   e. under 6 000

4. **Kommunen är**

   a. finskspråkig
   b. svenskspråkig
   c. tvåspråkig

5. **Har du hört talas om Medborgarrådgivningen förut?**

   a. Ja
   b. Nej

6. **Varifrån har du fått information om Medborgarrådgivningen? (Du kan välja flera alternativ.)**

   a. på Finansministeriets webbplats (www.vm.fi)
   b. på ett evenemang, t.ex. Kommunmarknaden
   c. i Finansministeriets nyhetsbrev
   d. i SADe-programmets nyhetsbrev
   e. Finansministeriet har kontaktat min kommun i frågor rörande Medborgarrådgivningen
   f. i media
   g. av mina arbetskamrater
   h. via en annan kanal, vilken?

7. **Tycker du att du med tanke på dina arbetsuppgifter fått tillräcklig information om Medborgarrådgivningen? Se beskrivning av samarbetet i följebrevet.** (Bedöm på följande skala: mycket bra, bra, nödaktigt, ganska dåligt, dåligt.)

8. **Vilka av följande kommunikativa sätt kunde hjälpa din kommun att bättre få information om Medborgarrådgivningen?** (Sätt dessa i prioritetsordning 1–7: det bästa sättet är 1 och det sämsta är 7.)

   a. Kommunen får aktuell information om Medborgarrådgivningen i nyhetsbrev och per e-post.
   b. Kommunen har en kontaktperson som ger den information som behövs om Medborgarrådgivningen.
   c. Kommunens servicerådgivare får det utbildningsmaterial som behövs om Medborgarrådgivningen.
   d. Vid behov kan kommunens kontaktperson kontakta direkt Medborgarrådgivningen (per telefon eller e-post).
   e. Kommunens representanter och Medborgarrådgivningens kontaktpersoner håller regelbundna samarbetsmöten.
   f. Vi på kommunen söker information om Medborgarrådgivningen via Internet.
   g. Eventuella andra kanaler eller sätt?

9. **På vilka kommunikativa sätt kan Medborgarorganisationen bäst få information om aktuella frågor i din kommun?** (Sätt dessa i prioritetsordning 1–5: det bästa sättet är 1 och det sämsta är 5.)

   a. Via e-post.
   b. Kommunen ska kunna ha en kontaktperson av vilken Medborgarrådgivningen kan få nödvändig information om olika frågor i kommunen.
   c. Servicerådgivarna i kommunen kan förmedla nödvändig information till Medborgarrådgivningen.
   d. Medborgarrådgivningen och representanterna för kommunen kan komma överens om regelbunden kontakt/hålla regelbundna möten.
   e. Eventuella andra kanaler eller sätt?

10. **På vilket sätt kan informationsförmedlingen och samarbetet mellan Medborgarrådgivningen och din kommun organiseras?**

11. Medborgarrådgivningens huvudsakliga uppgift är att anvisa medborgaren till rätt myndighets tjänster. Finns det något särskilt i kommunens service som Medborgarrådgivningen bör ta i beaktande?