



Future vision of e-government

Efficiency and proximity to citizens thanks to digitization

Current status of e-government in Switzerland

Digitization is in full swing. The Confederation, cantons and municipalities are providing more and more services online. This approach is correct and important. A large proportion¹ of the population is familiar with digital services – and expects them to be provided by public authorities.

Switzerland has had an e-government strategy since 2008. The strategy coordinates the expansion of the online services offered by public authorities at all levels: completing tax returns, ordering official documents, registering a change of address or launching citizen projects via dialogue platforms.

The National eGovernment Study published by Digital Public Services Switzerland shows that solutions of this kind are in line with the habits and expectations of a growing number of people. From buying clothes to ordering

food, almost everything is now available fully online, anytime and anywhere. This simplicity and flexibility is also required for administrative procedures.

Most cantons now have their own digital strategy, and many are already working closely with municipalities on implementation. This kind of coordination is vital in order to provide services for cross-authority procedures without any media disruptions.

In summary: Switzerland is on the right path but has ground to make up. This whitepaper outlines how authorities can implement digitization more consistently – in the interests of residents, but also with a view to improving the efficiency and security of their own processes.

¹ SFSO, survey on digital skills (2021)



The key points at a glance

- Authorities must work to drive digitization forward. The National eGovernment Study shows that this is in line with residents' requirements.
- Digital services are citizen-friendly, reduce the workload for administration staff and save time by automating simple processes.
- To establish digital trust, great emphasis must be placed on transparency, data protection, cybersecurity and digital skills.

What residents want

The population is satisfied with the existing online public sector services – and would like to see more of them. The recipe for success when it comes to digital solutions is simplicity, consistency and security.

Surveys indicate that around 60 percent of the Swiss public uses digital public authority services on a regular basis. And they are completely satisfied with services such as tax returns, document ordering and eMoving, as can be seen in the eGovernment MONITOR for Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

A survey by the consultancy firm Deloitte indicates that most people also want to see an expansion of e-government services. Right at the top of the wishlist: ordering passports or ID documents online, purchasing motorway tax stickers, obtaining residence certificates, paying parking fines and taking part in votes and referendums via e-voting.

However, the public also have some reservations, as the National eGovernment Study shows: services cannot always be found, registration processes are time-consuming, support is lacking and concerns over data protection persist. These are the most common reasons why residents either do not or prefer not to use e-government services.

The population expects public authorities to provide simple and secure digital services. According to Deloitte's survey, around three quarters of the population are in favour of nationally uniform digital solutions – even though this is much more challenging to implement in Switzerland than abroad, due to its federal structure.

² National eGovernment Study 2022

³ Deloitte Digital Government Survey 2020



Top five most used public authority services in Switzerland (2021)²

- Completing and submitting tax returns
- Booking appointments for coronavirus vaccinations
- Receiving electronic invoices / e-bills
- Making electronic inpayments / e-payments
- Ordering SBB municipality 1-day travelpasses

New services the public would like to see (2020)³

- Purchasing motorway tax stickers online
- Paying parking fines contactlessly (e.g. via TWINT)
- Exchanging data and information 100% electronically
- E-voting
- Ordering passports or ID documents fully online

Why Switzerland has ground to make up

E-government is significantly more advanced in other European countries than in Switzerland. One reason for this is Switzerland's federal structure.

The widest range of e-government services in Europe can be found in Malta. The island state provides 99 percent of public authority services online. According to the EU report "eGovernment Benchmark 2022"⁴, these services are deemed user-friendly, transparent and secure.

The report also states that Switzerland has room for progress in the digital sphere, ranking in 28th place out of the 35 countries surveyed. While Swiss residents can access useful information on almost all services via public authority websites, a visit to the counter is required for more than a third of processes.

One of the reasons for this is Switzerland's federal structure. Many cantons are implementing their own e-government projects, but this takes longer and is more expensive than a centralized "digitization from above". There is also no E-ID in Switzerland, which limits the options for digital services.

The situation is complicated by the fact that public authority processes frequently involve several different bodies, and not all have reached the same level of digital progress. This means that residents may start a process online with Authority 1 but have to visit Authority 2 in person in order to complete it.

⁴ eGovernment Benchmark 2022

E-government maturity in Europe

The podium:

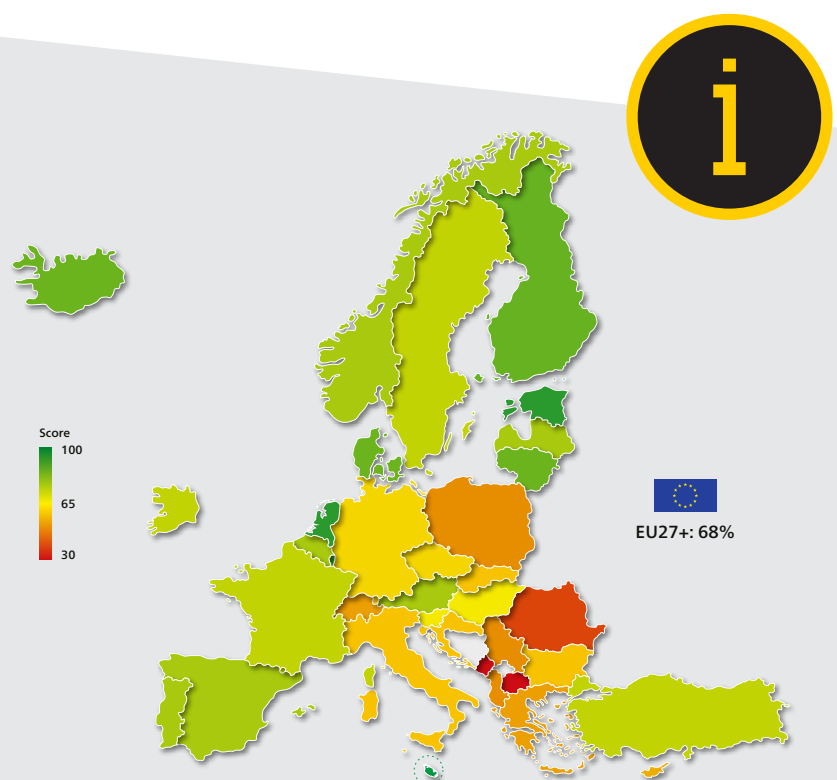
Malta	96%	(1 st place)
Estonia	90%	(2 nd place)
Luxembourg	87%	(3 rd place)

Our neighbours:

Austria	76%	(13 th place)
France	70%	(18 th place)
Germany	63%	(21 st place)
Italy	61%	(24 th place)

And us:

Switzerland	55%	(28 th place)
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E-government of the future

Residents have clear expectations: studies and surveys show that they want simple, consistent and secure e-government. What might that look like in federal Switzerland in future? And what has already been achieved in other countries?

Just as we currently shop, stream boxsets and communicate with friends online, that's how easy it should be for residents to carry out online procedures with local authorities in future: with simple, streamlined and fully digital processes.

Achieving this goal in a federal state such as Switzerland requires above all uniform and networked digital solutions, as well as a consistent "Digital First" strategy at all levels of the state. For example, a common E-ID as is already available in Denmark:

1

Good practice in Denmark: one solution for everything

All residents and companies have had a government E-ID since 2012. This is used to access around 300 digital public authority services but is also valid for 700 private services, such as at banks and insurance companies.⁵

In the Swiss e-government of the future, services will not just be available 24/7, they will also be accessible via modern channels. For example, via an app that is just as easy to use as Instagram or Spotify. And a digital mailbox that brings together public authority communication in one place. A glance at Iceland shows what that might look like:

2

Good practice in Iceland: focus on user experience

People in Iceland can access their personal public authority mailbox via the smartphone app Island.is. This gives them access to key documents and the current processing status for their public authority procedures. Smartphone instead of counter: it's practical and user-friendly.

⁵ Source of good practices: eGovernment Benchmark 2022



In the Swiss e-government of the future, residents will be able to store and update their data centrally, without unauthorized parties gaining access to it. At all times, it will be transparent and traceable which organizations or government bodies can access an individual's personal data. Belgium already has this kind of solution:

3

**Good practice in Belgium:
data transparency**

In Belgium, a website ensures data transparency: residents can find out which public authorities are using their personal data and for what purpose on the MyData portal.

Top priority is also given to security in communication: thanks to nationwide use of encrypted e-mails, electronic signature and verified

E-ID, senders and recipients would in future be able to identify themselves digitally and exchange data confidentially when dealing with Swiss public authorities.

Political participation would also be digitized in future. Votes and elections would be held using a secure e-voting system, and consultation procedures on urban or district development would take place online. As is fitting in a digital direct democracy – and as has already been implemented to some extent in Portugal:

4

**Good practice in Portugal:
political participation**

The Participa.gov platform enables citizens to take part in public procedures, propose ideas and vote on these proposals. Blockchain technology is used to ensure that the platform is secure, anonymous and transparent.

How the population and authorities benefit

Digitization creates added value for everyone: residents save time and enjoy greater flexibility, while authorities benefit from efficient processes and simple collaboration.

A digitized authority is a citizen-friendly authority: the more services are provided online, the more flexibly residents can use them – anytime and anywhere.

While digital technologies require special emphasis to be placed on security issues, they also increase transparency, which makes it easier to check and trace which data was used, when it was used and by whom.

E-government enables public authorities to reduce costs continually. Especially when they rely on “Digital First”. Simple processes can be automated – reducing the workload for staff and helping to combat the shortage of specialists. Collaboration across departmental and organizational boundaries becomes easier, which improves the efficiency and quality of services.

By expanding their digital services, public authorities also meet the expectations of residents, who already perform a wide variety of activities online in their private lives. Implementing secure, simple and user-friendly solutions helps create a positive and modern image for public authorities. This boosts the attractiveness of municipalities and cantons – and of Switzerland as a modern, digital state.



Five benefits for the public

- Services available 24/7 from anywhere
- Time savings
- Data transparency
- Data quality and data security
- Improved quality of services

Five benefits for authorities

- More efficient processes
- Reduced workload for staff, reduced shortage of specialists
- Easier collaboration
- Data quality and data security
- More positive image

Implementing e-government successfully

There are two key aspects on the path to the e-government of the future: firstly, security must take top priority. And secondly, the public's requirements must be the focus.

Residents want more digital services. However, according to a study by Deloitte⁶, two thirds of the population have reservations about data protection and cybersecurity when it comes to new services. This is particularly true for issues such as the digital signature and e-voting.

These concerns have to be dispelled and hurdles concerning the use of e-government services overcome. Authorities can achieve that by focusing on security and user requirements.



Swiss Post as a partner

Trust is a key factor in the success of e-government projects. Thanks to its network, Swiss Post is a trustworthy partner. Whether it's for handling individual processes digitally, protecting the entire digital infrastructure or exchanging sensitive data – we offer secure, simple and pragmatic solutions. We are committed to digitization that takes everyone on board thanks to intuitive online services and front-line staff who bridge the gap between digital and analogue.



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This includes:

Data sovereignty: Residents have an overview over what data is collected and stored and who uses and processes it.

Data security: Only authorized persons have access to personal data thanks to more secure authentication. Secure channels are available to the public and authorities for the exchange of data.

Cybersecurity: Facilities and systems operated by authorities are protected against attacks with serious consequences.

Digital empowerment: Services are intuitive enough to allow anyone to use them or easily learn the skills needed to do so.

Summary: Provided these requirements are met, digital trust can be established among users. This trust is essential for achieving widespread acceptance of digital services amongst the population and for ensuring that e-government is successful in the long term.

⁶ www2.deloitte.com/ch/en/pages/public-sector/articles/schweizer-misstrauen-e-government-services-wegen-datenschutz-und-datensicherheit.html