

**H2020-SC6-CULT-COOP-2016-2017**  
**CULT-COOP-11-2016-2017**

**Co-VAL [770356] “Understanding value co-creation in public services for transforming European public administrations”**



**D2.5: Survey implementation protocol**

<b>Project Reference No</b>	Co-VAL [770356]
<b>Deliverable</b>	D2.5 Survey implementation protocol
<b>Workpackage</b>	WP2: Measuring and Monitoring Public Sector Transformation
<b>Type</b>	R = Document, report
<b>Dissemination Level</b>	Public
<b>Date</b>	24/06/2019
<b>Status</b>	Final
<b>Editor(s)</b>	Nordine Es-Sadki and Anthony Arundel, UNU-MERIT
<b>Contributor(s)</b>	Benoit Desmarchelier (USTL), Hector Lagunes (UAH), Katona Marton (CUB), Anne Nordii (INN)
<b>Reviewer(s)</b>	
<b>Document description</b>	This report includes a detailed description of the survey protocol, including the timeline, the number of contacted managers on specific dates, the timing of online and mailed contacts, all telephone follow-ups, contact and follow-up letters, etc.

## Document Revision History

Version	Date	Modifications Introduced	
		Modification Reason	Modified by
V0.1	14/05/2019	First draft	UNU-MERIT
V0.2	31/05/2019	Second Draft	UNU-MERIT
V0.2	20/06/2019	Third Draft	UNU-MERIT
V0.3	24/06/2019	Final version	ATC
V1.0	24/06/2019	Submission	ATC



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 770356. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.

## Executive Summary

This report includes a detailed description of the survey protocol, including the timeline, the number of contacted managers on specific dates, the timing of online and mailed contacts, all telephone follow-ups, contact and follow-up letters, etc.

The survey is designed to use mixed methods, as this has been established in the literature to increase response rates. The protocol calls for three stages. The first stage consists of an initial contact by post followed by two postal reminders for non-respondents. The following stage uses an online method, with a first email contact followed by two email reminders. The final state consists of a telephone reminder call. All contact letters, by post or mail, are provided in the national language.

The first and second stages are conducted by UNU-MERIT. With the exception of the UK (handled by UNU-MERIT), the third stage of telephone reminder calls is conducted by the national partners in the national language.

The protocol requires the survey to run for a minimum of 15 weeks from the date of the mail out of the initial contact letter.

The initial contact date varies by country, due to when contact details were provided by UNU-MERIT. The initial contact dates are as follows: 11 March for the UK, the Netherlands and part of Norway, 14 March for France and the remaining contacts for Norway, 25 March for Hungary, and 18 April for Spain.

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION PROTOCOL .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	SURVEY STRATEGY .....	5
<b>3</b>	<b>SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>RESPONSE RATES BY COUNTRY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>ANNEXES .....</b>	<b>12</b>

## List of Figures

-

## List of Tables

Table 1.	Timeline and methodology for the survey .....	6.
Table 2.	Survey implementation by country.....	7.
Table 3.	Response rate by country.....	8.

## 1 Introduction

This report includes a detailed description of the survey protocol, including the timeline, the number of contacted managers on specific dates, the timing of online and mailed contacts, all telephone follow-ups, contact and follow-up letters, etc.

## 2 Survey implementation protocol

### 2.1 Survey strategy

**1. Pre-survey preparation:** The survey will be sent to 750 managers in three large countries (France, Spain and the UK) and to 375 managers in the three small countries (Hungary, Netherlands and Norway). The contact details have been collected by randomly sampling managers in public administration in each country. The sample is constructed by first identifying government organizations that meet the selection criteria and then randomly selecting managers within the selected organizations.

Each partner provided contact details to UNU-MERIT who coordinates the survey. Researchers from UNU-MERIT cleaned the database and prepared them so that invitation letters could be sent to the identified respondents. Tailormade questionnaires were printed by a printing agency, with unique ID numbers and in the corresponding national language. In addition postal return envelopes were printed to lower the response burden for potential respondents.

**2. Survey implementation:** The survey is conducted over 4 to 5 months and includes one mailed introductory letter and two postal mail reminders. After this point, the survey switches to contacting non-respondents by email, with an additional 2 email reminders. Lastly, remaining non-respondents will be contacted by telephone. UNU-MERIT is responsible for sending contact letters by mail and email. All letters are translated into the national languages by Co-Val partners. The follow-up calls will be conducted by the national partners, with the exception of the UK, where. UNU-MERIT will conduct the telephone follow-up calls. All calls will be conducted in the national language.

The online version is protected with a unique web link that is emailed to each respondent and mentioned in follow-up communications. The key allows respondents to access their questionnaire at any time, permitting updates or corrections. Online responses are automatically entered into a database. Responses from mailed questionnaires are entered, when received, into a specially designed data capture interface that replicates the appearance of the mailed questionnaire in order to reduce data entry errors. If needed, respondents will be contacted by telephone to check any errors or other problems that are identified during data entry. The online version of the questionnaire is held on a UNU-MERIT server so that UNU-MERIT obtains responses in real time and can check for logical inconsistencies.

The quantitative first phase survey is carried out in batches. In total 3,250 managers are contacted through several staggered batch mail-outs.

**3. Data cleaning:** The final task is to conduct data cleaning in order to identify outliers and other anomalies with the data.

Table 1 provides a timeline and methodology for the survey.

**Table 1 – Timeline and methodology for the survey**

Weeks	Task
	<b><i>Pre survey preparation</i></b>
- 12	Cognitive testing of survey questions
- 7 to -4	Verify contact details for the respondents
- 4 to -2	Set-up online survey, printing of questionnaires and testing of online survey.
	<b><i>Survey implementation</i></b>
0	Mail out of a cover letter, co-signed by the highest ranking researchers for each partner, requesting participation in the survey. The cover letter 1) describes the main purpose of the survey, 2) refers to the European Commission as the study sponsor, 3) provides instructions for answering the questionnaire, 4) offers full confidentiality, and 5) provides contact information for the responsible researcher in case the respondent is not the correct person to answer the questionnaire or if the respondents has any questions. The mail-out includes a translated questionnaire with a unique ID number to track responses. In addition, a postage-paid reply envelope is enclosed so that respondents can freely return their completed questionnaires.
2.5	Mail a <b>first reminder</b> letter to non-respondents
5	Mail a <b>second reminder</b> letter to non-respondents
7	First approach to non-respondents <b>by email</b>
9	E-Mail a <b>first reminder</b> letter to non-respondents
11	E-Mail a <b>second reminder</b> letter to non-respondents
13 -15	<b>Telephone follow-up calls.</b> If requested, a printed copy of the questionnaire will be mailed with a postage-pad return envelope or a printable copy emailed. Each non-respondent will be called once with a final request to participate in the survey.
	<b><i>Post-survey data cleaning</i></b>
16	Clean data to identify errors, outliers etc. Respondents for which outliers are detected will be telephoned to verify or correct the data.
17	Constructing the final data set.

Copies of the initial invitation letter and the first and second postal reminder letters are included in Annex A.

### 3 Survey implementation

Due to several reasons described below, the start date for the survey varied by country. In addition, there were a few national differences in the survey protocol. This section describes the actual survey implementation to date (14 May 2019). The survey is still ongoing and the invitation letters by e-mail still remain to be sent, apart for Norway. During the April 2019 progress meeting in Athens, the Norway partners advised switching to an online survey for the first reminder letter, due to the widespread use and acceptance of online methods by Norwegian civil servants.

Table 2 provides an overview of the actual survey implementation by country

**Table 2. Survey implementation by country**

<b>Netherlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First mail: 11-03-2019</li> <li>▪ First responses: 15-03-2019</li> <li>▪ First reminder: 03-04-2019</li> <li>▪ Second reminder: 03-05-2019</li> <li>▪ First email for online survey: 24-05-2019</li> <li>▪ Second email for online survey: 17-06-2019</li> <li>▪ First follow-up calls: foreseen 24-06-2019</li> </ul>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First mail: 11-03-2019</li> <li>▪ First responses: 26-03-2019</li> <li>▪ First reminder: 05-04-2019</li> <li>▪ Second reminder: foreseen 07-05-2019</li> <li>▪ First email for online survey: 03-06-2019</li> <li>▪ Second email for online survey: 17-06-2019</li> <li>▪ First follow-up calls: foreseen 24-06-2019</li> </ul>
<b>Norway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First mail: Full sample municipalities and 113 from national sample on 11-03-2019, 75 remainder from national sample on 14-03-2019</li> <li>▪ First responses: 02-04-2019</li> <li>▪ First reminder email: 23-04-2019</li> <li>▪ Second reminder email: 20-05-2019</li> <li>▪ Telephone follow-up calls: Beginning of June</li> </ul>
<b>France</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First mail: 14-03-2019</li> <li>▪ First responses: 02-04-2019</li> <li>▪ First reminder: 26-04-2019</li> <li>▪ Second reminder: foreseen 16-05-2019</li> <li>▪ First email for online survey: 11-06-2019</li> <li>▪ Second email for online survey: foreseen 24-06-2019</li> </ul>
<b>Hungary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First mail: 25-03-2019 / 18-04-2019</li> <li>▪ First responses: 11-04-2019</li> <li>▪ First reminder: 17-05-2019</li> <li>▪ Second reminder: 04-06-2019</li> <li>▪ First email for online survey: foreseen 20-06-2019</li> </ul>

<b>Spain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First mail: 18-04-2019</li> <li>▪ First responses: 02-05-2019</li> <li>▪ First reminder: 22-05-2019</li> <li>▪ Second reminder: 17-06-2019</li> <li>▪ First email for online survey: foreseen July 1</li> </ul>
--------------	--

The date of the first mail contact differs by country, largely because of differences in when contact details were provided by national partners to UNU-MERIT and because of the need to stagger mail-outs due to the amount of work required to prepare the envelopes. The databases for France, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK were ready first, but the mail-out was staggered, with the first invitation letters mailed out on 11 March for the Netherlands, the UK and part of Norway and on 14 March for France and the remainder of Norway. The initial mail outs for Hungary and Spain followed the delivery to UNU-MERIT of contact details. The longest delay was for Spain, due to difficulties encountered by the Spanish partner.

#### 4 Response rates by country

This section provides an overview of the response rates by country to date (17-06-2019). The goal is for a response rate of approximately 15% to 20% in the mailed phase of the survey, with an increase to approximately 30% in the online phase and 40% after telephone follow-up calls. As of this date, the response rate exceeds expectations in the Netherlands (23.4%) and Norway (33.6%). It is not possible to determine if the response rates meet or lag expectations for France, Hungary and Spain due to a combination of later start dates for the first contact and long postal time delays. However, the response rate so far for the UK (8.5%) is considerably below expectations, which might be due to the effects of the Brexit situation in the UK on civil servants. This situation will hopefully improve with a shift to online methods and telephone calls.

##### Netherlands

NL	Sent	Received mail	Online	Response rate	Incorrect address or wrong contact	Adjusted RR
Small Municipalities	91	15	2	18.7%	7	20.2%
Large Municipalities	101	21	6	26.7%	7	28.7%
National	192	36	10	24.0%	20	26.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23.4%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25.7%</b>

##### United Kingdom

UK	Sent	Received mail	Online	Response rate	Incorrect address or wrong contact	Adjusted RR
Small Municipalities	188	11	2	6.9%	3	7.0%
Large Municipalities	188	16	4	10.6%	10	11.2%
National	385	21	11	8.3%	46	9.4%



<b>Total</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
--------------	------------	-----------	-----------	-------------	-----------	-------------

**Norway**

<b>NO</b>	<b>Sent</b>	<b>Received mail</b>	<b>Online</b>	<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Incorrect address or wrong contact</b>	<b>Adjusted RR</b>
Small Municipalities	108	27	10	34.3%	1	34.6%
Large Municipalities	79	17	12	36.7%	0	36.7%
National	188	35	25	31.9%	0	31.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>33.6%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33.7%</b>

**France**

<b>FR</b>	<b>Sent</b>	<b>Received mail</b>	<b>Online</b>	<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Incorrect address or wrong contact</b>	<b>Adjusted RR</b>
Small Municipalities	193	30	3	17.1%	5	17.6%
Large Municipalities	193	19	2	10.9%	2	11.0%
National	364	46	8	14.8%	5	15.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14.6%</b>

**Hungary**

<b>HU</b>	<b>Sent</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Incorrect address or wrong contact</b>	<b>Adjusted RR</b>
Small Municipalities	94	11	11.7%	4	12.2%
Large Municipalities	94	21	22.3%	0	22.3%
National	188	24	12.8%	4	13.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15.2%</b>

**Spain**

<b>NO</b>	<b>Sent</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Incorrect address or wrong contact</b>	<b>Adjusted RR</b>
Small Municipalities	191	24	12.6%	3	12.8%

---

Large Municipalities	185	22	11.9%	4	12.2%
National	375	49	13.1%	9	13.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12.9%</b>

## 5 Conclusions

This report includes a detailed description of the survey protocol, including the timeline, the number of contacted managers on specific dates, the timing of online and mailed contacts, all telephone follow-ups, contact and follow-up letters, etc.

Preliminary response rates are provided. These meet or exceed expectations for the Netherlands and Norway and lag expectations for the UK. It is not possible to assess the response rates for France, Hungary and Spain due to later start dates for the survey and long postal time delays to these countries.

## 6 Annexes

### Cover letter for the first mail-out

Dear [Name],

We would like to invite you to participate in a survey on the development of new or improved services or processes in the public sector. The survey is funded by the European Commission as part of a Horizon 2020 research project called CO-VAL (<http://co-val.eu>).

The survey is being sent to randomly selected public sector managers at municipal departments and national ministries responsible for public services in [COUNTRY NAME] and in [5 OTHER COUNTRIES]. The survey is coordinated by UNU-MERIT of Maastricht University in the Netherlands, in close cooperation with CO-VAL university partners in each country.<sup>1</sup>

The survey questions ask about the methods that you use to develop and implement new or improved services or processes, which are defined in the questionnaire as innovations. Most of the questions ask you to focus on a single innovation that was introduced in the last two years. The questions ask about the sources of the idea for this innovation, the use of different inputs in its development, the involvement, if any, of future users of this innovation, and any obstacles that were faced in its development.

The goal of the survey is to provide practical recommendations for public sector managers and policy makers on good practices for improving the development of public sector services and the outcomes of services. A better understanding of these factors can lead to improvements in the design of innovation projects in the public sector.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it using the enclosed postage-paid return envelope. Several of the questions are also relevant and should be completed even if you think you did not have any new or improved services or processes in the past two years. If you change your mind after returning the questionnaire, you can send us an email until August 31, 2019 to ask for your results to be deleted.

In recognition of your time and effort in completing the survey, all respondents will receive a summary report of the main results.

Please note that all of your answers are strictly confidential. No information will be released in any form (printed, electronic, verbal, etc.) that could be used to identify yourself or your government organisation. All reported results will be aggregated to ensure confidentiality. The survey data will only be used for academic research by a small number of CO-VAL researchers.

If you believe that you are not the best person for responding to this survey, or if you have any questions, please email or phone [NAME of ORGANISATION ([name@email.com](mailto:name@email.com), tel: + ....)].

Thanking you for your cooperation,

---

<sup>1</sup> Partner universities include the Universidad de Alcalá in Spain, the University of Edinburgh in the UK, the Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille in France, the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences in Norway, and Corvinus University in Hungary.

[NAME]  
[INSTITUTION]  
[email], [telephone number]

Anthony Arundel  
Professorial Fellow, MERIT

### First reminder letter

Dear [Name],

Recently UNU-MERIT mailed you a copy of a questionnaire survey on how your work unit develops new or improved services or processes, but we have not yet received a reply from you. We understand that you may not have had time to answer this survey. Your response is however vitally important to the survey's objective to identify factors that improve or hamper how new or improved services or processes are developed within the public sector and how to achieve better outcomes.

The questionnaire is printed on light blue coloured paper. A postage free reply envelope that does not require a stamp was enclosed in our letter to you. We would greatly appreciate it if you would complete the questionnaire and return it using this envelope.

If you have already sent back your completed questionnaire through the mail, we would like to thank you very much for doing this and please accept our apologies for sending this reminder.

In recognition of the time and effort required to complete the survey, all respondents will receive a summary report of the main results in October of this year. These results can be used to learn about the methods that other government agencies, both in your country and abroad, use to develop services or process and how they manage problems with their development.

Please note that all of your answers are strictly confidential. No information will be released in any form (printed, electronic, verbal, etc.) that could be used to identify yourself or your government organisation. All reported results will be aggregated to ensure confidentiality. The survey data will only be used for academic research by a small number of researchers that are part of the CO-Val project (<http://co-val.edu>). If you change your mind after returning the questionnaire, you can send us an email until August 31, 2019 to ask for your results to be deleted.

If you believe that you are not the best person for responding to this survey, or if you have any questions, please email or phone [Name researcher] of [Partner institute] [email@email.com, tel.: number].

Thanking you for your cooperation,

[NAME]  
[INSTITUTION]

Anthony Arundel  
Professorial Fellow, MERIT

## Second reminder letter

REMINDER to participate in a survey on new or improved services or processes in the public sector

Dear [Name],

Several weeks ago UNU-MERIT asked for your participation in a survey on how your work unit develops new or improved services or processes, but according to our records we have yet to receive a reply. We know that you may not have had time to answer this survey or you may have misplaced your copy of the survey questionnaire. If this is the case, we enclose another copy of the questionnaire and a postage free reply envelope.

If you have recently completed and returned the questionnaire to us, we would like to thank you for your cooperation and please ignore this reminder.

Your response will enrich existing information by providing new metrics and empirical evidence that can be used to improve services and processes in the public sector. With this information we will be able to address the project's objectives of increasing broader adoption levels of innovative practices that can produce better services or processes or possibly increase public trust.

UNU-MERIT will provide all survey respondents with a copy of the survey report. You should find this useful as these results can be used to learn about the methods that other government agencies, both in your country and abroad, use to develop services or process and how they manage problems with their development.

Please note that your responses will be kept strictly confidential – only aggregate results will be made publicly available. No information will be provided, in any form (written, oral, etc.) that could be used to identify you or your organization.

If you believe that you are not the best person for responding to this survey, or if you have any questions, please email or phone [Name researcher] of [Partner institute] [email@email.com, tel.: number].

Thanking you for your cooperation,

[NAME]  
[INSTITUTION]

Anthony Arundel  
Professorial Fellow, UNU-MERIT