

Conclusions and recommendations of the National Audit Office

Current status and development of the Suomi.fi services

The audit was targeted at the current status and development of the Suomi.fi services. The Suomi.fi services were created in the National Service Architecture (KaPA) Development Programme in 2014–2017, after which they have been further developed. The Suomi.fi services play a key role in public administration's shared infrastructure for electronic services, and their use is, in principle, mandatory for public administration. The audit aimed at examining whether the Suomi.fi services support the digitization of public administration and whether they are developed according to need.

The Suomi.fi services have promoted the digitization of public administration

The Suomi.fi services play an essential role in enabling the digitization of public administration. The services have thus partly met the objectives set by the Act on Public Administration's Shared e-Service Support Services (571/2016). However, the benefits achieved and the extent of service use vary to a great extent between different services, and overall, a lot of potential still remains to be tapped.

Ensuring the continuity and reliability of the Suomi.fi services is of paramount importance to the organizations using them in their own activities, as the Suomi.fi services are an integral part of their electronic services. There have been no significant service breaks in the Suomi.fi services in recent years. However, the organizations responsible for critical services have identified risks that the services are continuously subject to and have tried to prepare for them.

The strategic steering of the services should be developed

The strategic steering of the Suomi.fi services has been fragmented and not met the expectations of different parties. In its current form, the normal performance management of the agencies responsible for the services is so general in nature that it alone is not sufficient to ensure that the services develop in the desired direction. A separate strategic steering group has been set up for the Suomi.fi services. However, it has not found its own role but has mainly dealt with issues related to operational monitoring.

The strategic steering of the Suomi.fi services should be clarified and strengthened. It is important to define an objective for the service portfolio and the measures required to support it. The steering should enable long-term and

determined development of the services in accordance with the Government Programme and the guidelines set by the Finnish digital compass, which is currently being prepared. The strategic steering should also take a stand on what support services for digitization should be provided in a centralized manner and, if necessary, identify needs that are either new or no longer topical. The strategic steering should have a clear link with the sources of funding for the service maintenance and development and with the funding decisions.

The service development is not found customer-oriented

According to the audit findings, the organizations using the Suomi.fi services feel that they can hardly influence the service development. Although information is provided on planned development measures, the communication has been found to be rather unidirectional without genuine interaction. However, in order for the jointly produced services to be truly useful, the development must be based on customer needs. The audit revealed a number of examples where the service development has not met the needs of the user organizations, as a result of which the services are not used actively.

The National Audit Office finds it important that customer needs are taken actively into consideration in the service development and that the development of the services is based on them. The prioritization of identified development targets should be transparent to the user organizations. A more genuine dialogue is needed with the user organizations and stakeholders in the case of each service. To ensure that the shared support services are used efficiently in the user organizations' own processes, the development must be based on clear use cases. When different development projects are coordinated, it should also be considered how they affect the main user groups.

The shared support services should be smooth and easy to introduce so that the threshold for using them is as low as possible. Based on the audit findings, the guidelines and customer support for the services provided by the Digital and Population Data Services Agency, in particular, do not always support customers as well as possible in the introduction of the services, even though the practices have improved in recent years.

Recommendations of the National Audit Office

1. The Ministry of Finance should clarify and strengthen the strategic steering of the Suomi.fi services in order for the service development to be determined and systematic.
2. The Digital and Population Data Services Agency should ensure a genuine dialogue with the user organizations when developing the services in order for the development to address the needs and use cases that are relevant to the customers.

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3. The Digital and Population Data Services Agency should further clarify and streamline the procedures related to the introduction of the Suomi.fi services in order to make the use of the shared support services as easy as possible.