

# Electronic Document and Records Management Systems in Austria's Municipalities: Status and Success Factors

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**Abstract:** An online-survey was conducted among Austrian Municipalities regarding the status and success factors in implementing Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS). The results show that bigger Municipalities tend to be less dependent on their IT supplier and they were the early adopters, as more than 50 percent already have an EDRMS in operation. The survey shows a very positive feedback: only very few said that their expectations were not met. In the decision making process, most Municipal representatives discuss the selection process with their colleagues and/or management and they put together reports resulting in a decision or recommendation. The Municipalities facing a decision-making process can nowadays select among at least 14 different EDRMS on the Austrian market.

## 1. Introduction

Austria's continuous top ranking in the EU e-government benchmarks is foremost a result of a strong effort on federal government level. In their function as a document and workflow management system for the electronic implementation of internal work processes, Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) become a kind of data hub in which different applications and data sources can be integrated so that changes in media format can be avoided. The electronic record system of the federal administration (ELAK) was implemented as early as 2001 for all Austrian Ministries and the larger cities in Austria [1]. (Smaller) municipalities are currently facing an evolving market for EDRMS, many have not yet implemented a system or even made their product decisions.

## 2. Objectives

The survey was set up to get an overview of the implementation status of EDRMS in Austria's municipalities as well as insights into the process towards implementation: What were the main factors that drove the decision process? What are success factors of the implementation?

## 3. Methodology

An online-survey was conducted among all Austrian municipalities with 5,000 inhabitants or more. Due to the structure of Austria's municipalities, only 219 of 2,357 municipalities (9,3%) fulfil this criterion. The number 5.000 was chosen because this size roughly defines administrative structures where the municipalities are in a position to choose among different EDRMS solutions. Smaller municipalities often do not have IT staff on their own, their IT knowledge and support is provided by communal IT service providers who provide

their own solutions to their customers. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent by e-mail to the heads of administration. Almost 40% took part in the survey (86 municipalities).

## 4. Results

A total of 14 EDRMS products could be identified on the market. 9 were identified in a desk-research prior to the survey, 5 more have been named in an open text field. The survey shows that the EDRMS products are not known very well: an average of 38 percent indicate that the product is not known.

### 4.1 Selection criteria

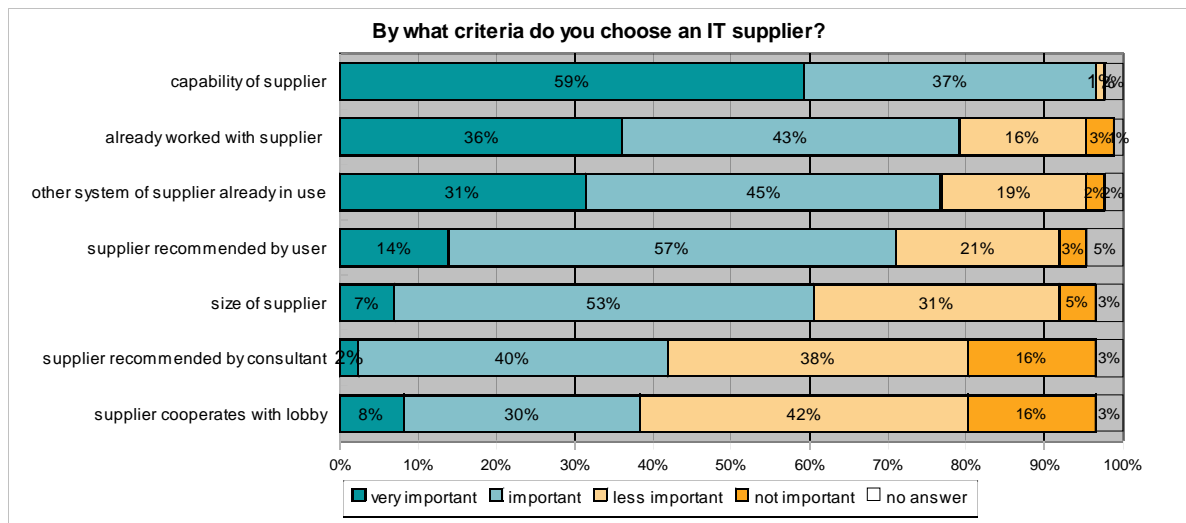


Figure 1: Criteria for choosing an IT supplier

Figure 1 shows the criteria for choosing an IT supplier. The most important criterion is the general capability of the supplier. There were differences regarding the size of the municipalities (less than 20,000 inhabitants and 20,000 inhabitants or more) regarding the two aspects “Already worked with supplier” and “Other systems of supplier already in use”: These aspects are less important in larger municipalities as shown in Figure 2. Therefore it can be shown that smaller municipalities are in a larger dependency to their existing suppliers. Recommendation of the supplier by other users and size of supplier are not as important, followed by recommendation by a consultant and cooperation with a lobby.

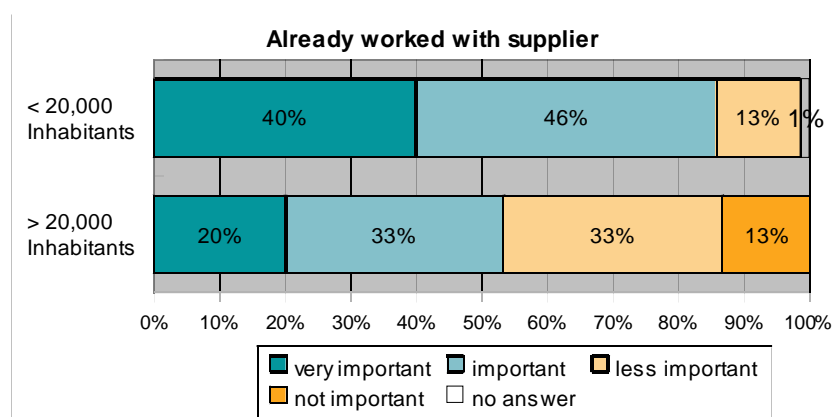


Figure 2: Criterion "Already worked with supplier"

The top ranked criteria for choosing an EDRMS shown in Figure 3 are security (97% say “very important” and “important”), flexibility (96%), integration with other applications (96%), costs of the system (95%), open interfaces (90%), followed by market size and system requirements (81%). Implementation time (project time) is less important, the last two criteria are Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) (57%) and open source (41%).

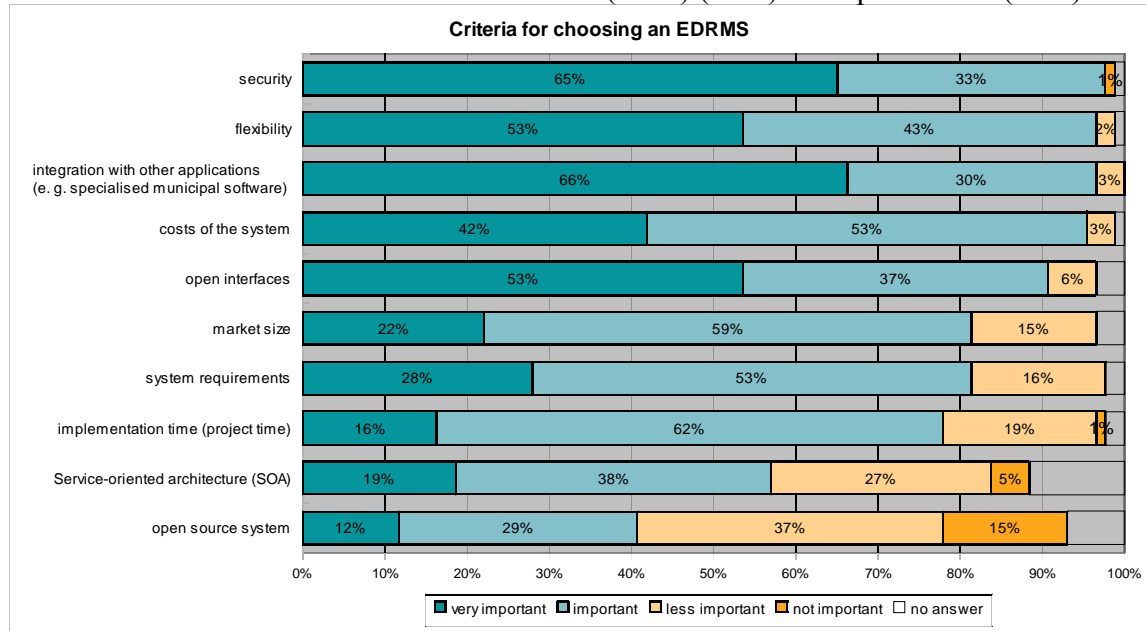


Figure 3: Criteria for choosing an EDRMS

#### 4.2 Decision making process

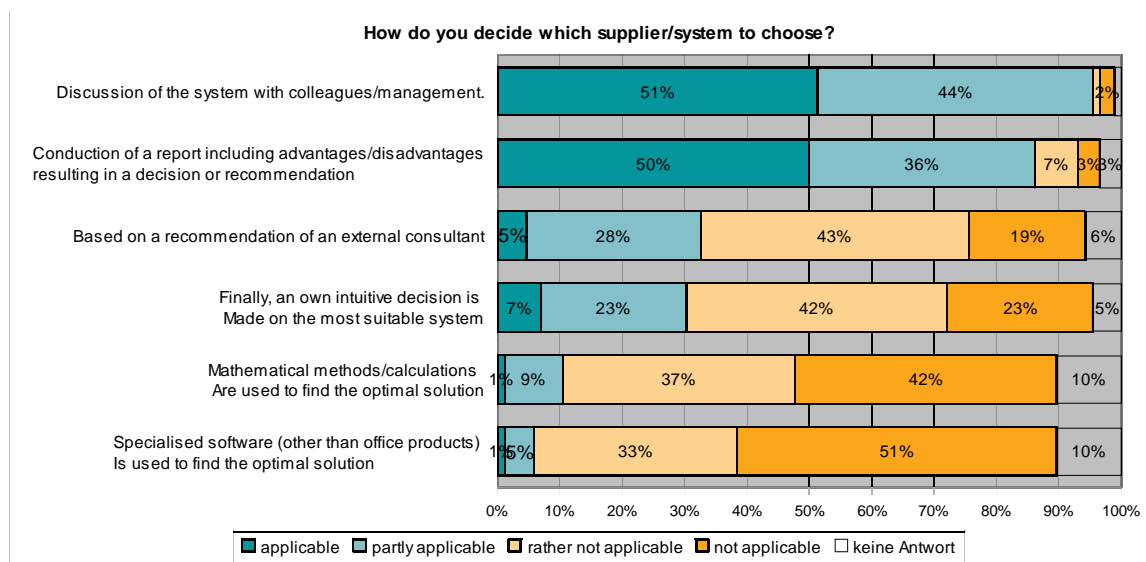


Figure 4: The decision making process

Asked about their decision-making processes (see Figure 4), most municipal representatives discuss the system with colleagues and/or management (95% applicable/partly applicable), 33% base their decision on a recommendation of an external consultant. 30% say that finally, they make their own intuitive decision on the most suitable system. Only 10% use mathematical methods/calculations to find the optimal solution and 6% use specialised software (other than regular office products) to find the optimal solution.

### 4.3 Status of EDRMS implementation

53% of the larger municipalities in Austria already have an EDRMS implemented as shown in Figure 5, 33% are currently evaluating solutions and further 13% plan to tackle the problem in the next 12 months. The situation of the smaller municipalities (less than 20,000 inhabitants) is slightly different: 30% have an EDRMS implemented, 11% are evaluating, 27% plan it within the next 12 months. 30% of the smaller municipalities say that for them it is a topic for the future, so they have no immediate plans.

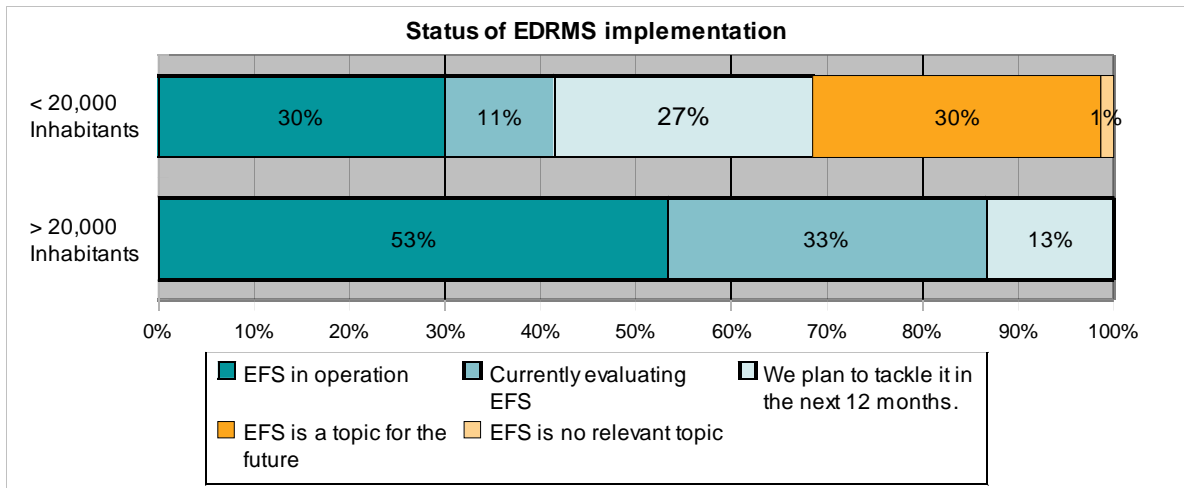


Figure 5: Status of EDRMS implementation

This result corresponds to the findings of Moon et al. that large city governments are more likely to adopt e-government than small ones because larger cities are under greater pressure to find alternative ways to provide public services; larger cities also have more resources (including more and better trained staff, a larger budget and often a formal and well-established IT department) to pursue alternatives [2].

The satisfaction is generally high: only 13% of the bigger municipalities say that their expectations regarding implementation of an EDRMS were not met. There were no unsatisfied municipal representatives, but on the other side, the positive opinions were not as numerous as in the larger municipalities.

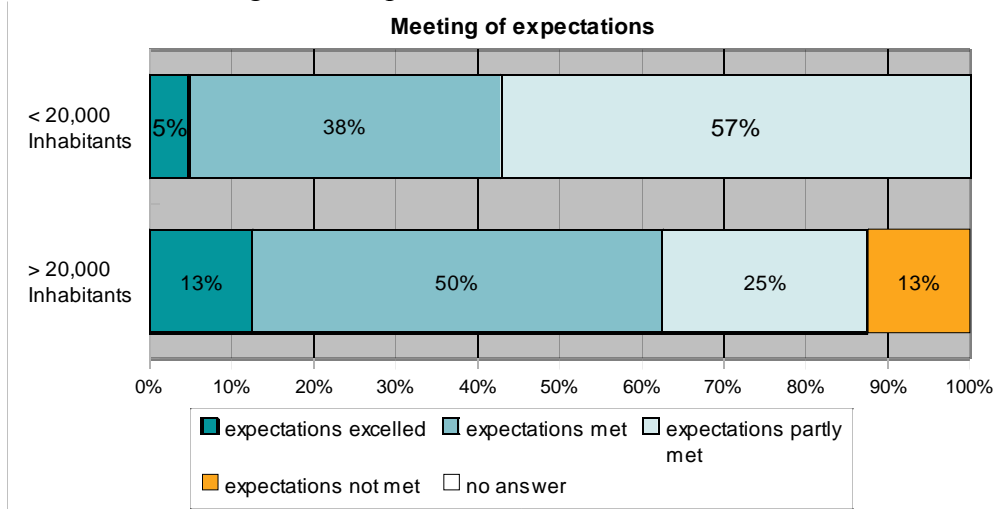


Figure 6: Very positive statements regarding meeting of expectations

The most important driver in the EDRMS project is the administration management (61%), and the IT department (50%) followed by the specialist's departments (28%) and politics with only 24%.

## **5. Conclusions**

Austria's bigger municipalities were early adopters alongside with the Austrian Ministries. Since the first bigger roll-out phase in 2000/2001 14 different EDRMS have evolved. The late followers now have a much wider choice. The question is whether the positive experiences with the EDRMS implementation can be transferred to the municipalities to follow and if the smaller municipalities can reduce their dependency on their current IT service providers to make use of the big choice of systems on the currently quite in-transparent market. Further research including qualitative interviews with municipal experts will be part of Elvira Stöckler's diploma thesis at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (to be finished in September 2010).

## **References**

- [1] Platform digital Austria. Electronic record system. Online in: <http://www.digitales.oesterreich.gv.at/site/6518/default.aspx> (2010-06-29)
- [2] Moon, M. Jae und Norris, Donald F. 2005. Does managerial orientation matter? The adoption of reinventing government and e-government at the municipal level. *Information Systems Journal*. 15(1), 2005, p 43–60.