



Una manera de lacer Europa

Implementation of a Prior Appointment System and In-Person

BUENAS PRÁCTICAS

Actuaciones Cofinanciadas

EDUSI ALBACETE PROGRAM. ALBACETE CITY COUNCIL

Queue Management

Programa Operativo Plurirregional de España

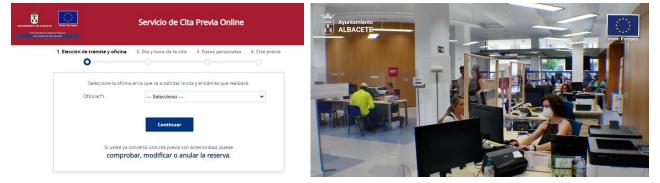
Año 2022

Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional

GOOD PRACTICE IN THE EDUSI ALBACETE PROGRAM, ALBACETE CITY COUNCIL

IMPLEMENTATION OF A PRIOR APPOINTMENT SYSTEM AND IN-PERSON QUEUE MANAGEMENT TO ADMINISTER ALBACETE CITY COUNCIL ADMINISTRATRATIVE PROCEDURES

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The implementation of a system to make prior appointments and manage in-person queue times for Albacete City Council administrative procedures is intended to promote the use of electronic channels for communication between citizens and companies with local public organizations, which will then provide a more accessible and efficient municipal service to the public.

This will be conducted through two systems; making a prior appointment online in order to carry out administrative procedures and processes and managing the in-person queues implemented in various offices and services of Albacete City Council.

The application for a prior appointment can be filled out at the website created for that purpose (<u>https://citaprevia.ayto-albacete.es/</u>), where you can apply for, check, modify, or cancel any prior appointments in any of the offices and for any of the available services.

A simple and intuitive process in which the user selects the appointment from the available days and times, facilitating user availability and mobility when scheduling local in-person procedures.

The queue management system allows for queue control and position management in the offices, reducing waiting times and improving efficiency in customer service. The platform allows appointment requests made online to be centrally managed and the position in the queue can be given by ticket dispensers located in municipal offices. From these dispensers you can request an appointment or confirm the prior appointment made online, and in both cases a ticket with your position number will be printed. The different screens in the waiting room will then display the call numbers and the assigned position to receive assistance.

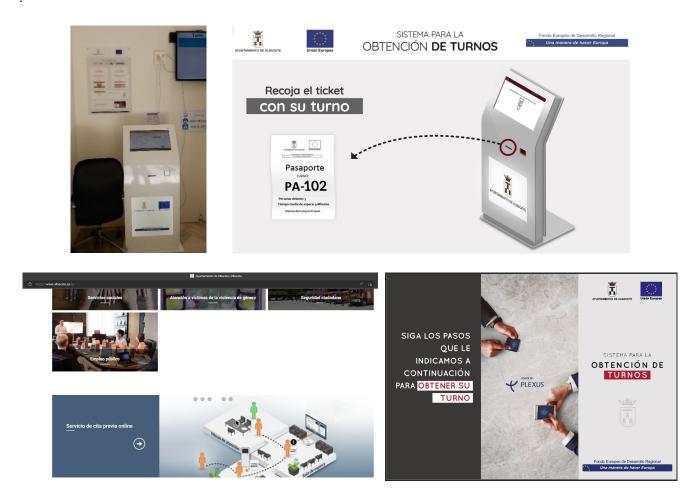
The eligible cost of this action amounts to \notin 36,689, with **co-financing from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) of \notin29,351.** The scope of the action is the entire municipal area, with an impact on the 172,357 inhabitants.

This action is considered Good Practice based on the following criteria:

1. The role that ERDF has played in the action has been successfully communicated to the beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries, and the public.

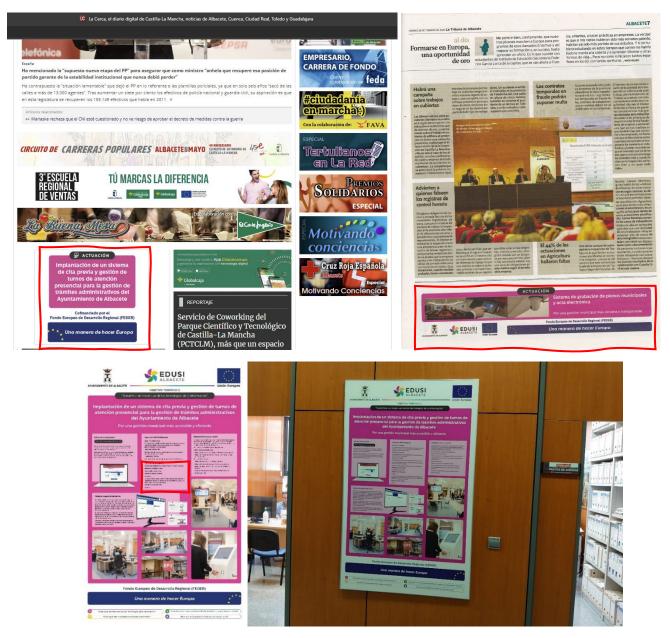
In addition to the obligatory permanent plaque, the ERDF's role has been disseminated to the public through the following means:

Video tutorial and informative brochure of the implemented Management System for the queue positions and prior appointments, with access on the home page of the municipal website for making prior appointments online.



Placement of advertisements in the urban bus line in Albacete and in the press. Advertising banners in local and regional digital media, radio spot on local radio stations and information panel for exhibitions.





Descriptive brochures of the action distributed at information points in the different municipal offices, merchandising and a digital version on the EDUSI Albacete social networks.



Making an explanatory video of the action (<u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5xDe-geH_U</u>), subtitled in Spanish and English, posted on the Albacete City Council YouTube channel, EDUSI Albacete social networks, the display screen in Urban Planning and Housing Municipal Management, merchandising material and exhibitions.



All the informational and publicity material, as well as the information and description of the action, has been disseminated in the EDUSI section on the website of the Albacete City Council.

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News bulletins in the local and regional media. Periodic publications on the EDUSI Albacete social networks, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.



2. The action incorporates innovative elements.

This action introduces a new communication channel for citizens conducting administrative procedures with Albacete City Council, in order to make local public services more accessible and efficient.

The innovative elements were included both for the citizens who need to conduct administrative procedures and the City Council itself in its attention to the public.

Therefore, we consider planning and estimation information to be an innovative element when taking care of administrative procedures. Citizens have a website to plan and select the most appropriate time to schedule their procedures, minimizing waiting times for in-person consultations. With this prior appointment system, as it is an

online service and available 24 hours a day, citizens can request the day and time for their procedure without having to travel and without being subject to office opening hours.

When they collect the ticket, users are given an estimate of how much time is remaining until they are called, and since they will be given information about the people waiting in front of them, they are able to decide whether they would prefer to wait or would rather take advantage of the time to complete other tasks. Another innovative function is that users will know exactly where to go for each appropriate procedure.

On the internal level and also innovative, with the queue management system, Albacete City Council will have statistics that will allow it to better allocate resources to serve citizens more quickly. This is not currently available.

Another innovative element is that the implemented system is scalable and manageable from Albacete City Council and can be extended to other municipal services that have decided to manage in-person queue waiting times in their offices. Since implementation, several of these services have already been extended.

3. The results obtained have met with the established objectives.

The main objective was to promote the use of electronic channels to facilitate the communication between citizens, companies, and public entities, bringing the local administration closer to these sectors and providing more accessible and efficient municipal service to the public. This will ensure availability and mobility for citizens when they are scheduling their local in-person administrative procedures.

With the implementation of the online prior appointment system, greater flexibility and availability has been achieved so that citizens can organise all their administrative procedures, as they can request an appointment at any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, any day of the year, reducing the need for mobility since each citizen can manage their visit anywhere and at any time from a computer, smartphone, or tablet, ensuring that everyone can receive personal and discreet service in the shortest amount of time possible.

This has contributed to modernising the local administration and improving efficiency in in-person service since there is an online agenda where all confirmed appointments can be seen, which serves as a basis for the allocation of resources, personnel, etc depending on the most requested procedures. Online appointment services are increasingly present in our society, and can be found in various fields, since it is a fact that people increasingly prefer to interact with the Administration online.

4. The action contributes to the resolution of a problem or weakness.

Prior to the implementation of this system, the Albacete City Council used a prior appointment service for many years, which had become obsolete both technically and functionally and did not meet the current digitalisation needs of the administration. In addition, it was an isolated system, as it did not have a system for queue management. Citizen use of this this system was minimal, due to its limitations, which led to long queues and waiting times for in-person procedures, causing people to become upset and waste time.

With the implementation of the prior appointments and in-person queue management system to manage administrative procedures for Albacete City Council, waiting times and queues have been significantly reduced in the services where the system was implemented. In 2022, in the Municipal Citizen Service Office (general registry of the Albacete City Council), which is the service that the largest number of people use (57,495), 74% of the users were attended to in less than 10 minutes, which shows that the problem of long waiting times has been solved.

On average, in 2022, 10% of users requested a prior appointment online, but this percentage varies greatly depending on the procedure and the corresponding service, reaching 81% in the Employment and Economic Development Program. This variation is influenced by the nature of the procedure and the social status of the user, meaning that the use of online and electronic services is greater or less depending on the digital divide and access to new technologies. In the two years since the system has been implemented, there has been an 18% increase in the second year (2022) as compared to the first year (2021) in the online request for a prior appointment.

5. The action exhibits extensive coverage of the target population.

The action is primarily aimed at the population residing in the municipal area and at any person who must conduct an in-person procedure at Albacete City Council, but the action's scope extends to 100% of the population of the municipality of Albacete (172,327 inhabitants, according to INE register 02/01/22).

6. Horizontal criteria for equal opportunity and non-discrimination have been taken into account, as well as social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

The action guarantees equal treatment and opportunities for all people, regardless of nationality, sex, race, or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation, since it is aimed at all citizens, guaranteeing the provision of basic services to the entire population, facilitating access for everyone to the information and communication systems for Albacete City Council administrative management, and increasing the possibility of carrying out procedures without the need for unnecessary travel.

Regarding environmental sustainability, the action aligns with the principle of sustainable development, since trips to physical offices and waiting times have been reduced, which in turn reduces CO_2 emissions and therefore greenhouse gases. Digitalisation and citizen service management have enabled the optimisation of the material and personnel resources in different offices based on the information obtained from the implemented system.

7. Synergies with other policies or public intervention tools.

This action contributes to reinforce and enhance the effects of the following funds, policies, and public instruments:

- The "National Plan for Smart Cities" (March 2015). Referring to the introduction of new technology to provide more efficient public and local services to citizens, companies, and visitors.
- Local Agenda 21, which applies to making decisions in the municipality based on respect for the environment, aimed at managing the municipality more sustainably.
- The "Spanish Urban Agenda" (2019). Regarding the establishment of a new comprehensive and inclusive urban vision which improves areas such as planning, governance, transparency, and public participation through the promotion of electronic administration.

Albacete City Council signed a collaboration agreement in October 2016 to adhere to the Electronic Administration services developed by the Albacete Provincial Council. This agreement stated that the Albacete City Council would incorporate the tools provided by the SEDIPUALBA platform, which consists of a set of fully integrated tools, intended for the complete administrative management of City Council, which must comply with the standards established by the Technical Interoperability Standards (NTI ENI) as well as with the security conditions required in the National Security Framework (ENS). This strategic line of action aims to promote greater efficiency in administrative management, and the development of the information society, generating a more useful and easily accessible electronic administration.

In the Strategy for Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development of Albacete (EDUSI Albacete), Albacete City Council is moving towards a more transparent, more easily accessible and faster administration, using any necessary technological tools to ensure that this happens, which is why it has implemented a system which allows video recording of the Plenary Council sessions, as well as a live broadcast online, which gives citizens access to the political debates that occur at the municipal level. This action costs &lember e216,590 and received co-financing from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for &lember e173,272.

Complementary to the implementation of the prior appointment system and the in-person queue management service, in March 2022 Albacete City Council transferred its entry register to a new location, which required an investment of 1.2 million euros to adapt the Municipal Citizen Service Office for its new purpose, where resources have been centralised into a new, larger space that has improved in-person service for citizens who need to conduct any municipal procedures.





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