

Pasáže ze zprávy

ŠPAČEK, D., REPÍK, O., NEMEC, J. THE CZECH E-PROCUREMENT ENVIRONMENT AND THE NATIONAL ELECTRONIC TOOL (NEN) (final report) (version 1.3, as of 10.08.2017)

...

This report summarizes historical background, current circumstances and future prospects and challenges of the Czech e-procurement system and its components. Special attention is paid to the National Electronic Tool ('Národní elektronický nástroj', NEN) which is perceived as a crucial component of the national e-procurement infrastructure (NIPEZ), operating under the responsibility of the national e-procurement coordinator – the Ministry of Regional Development (MMR).

...

The report was prepared for the European Commission within Tender SRSS/C2016/042 – 'Evaluation of the design and functioning of the Czech National Electronic Tool (NEN) within the Czech e-procurement environment'.

....

4.4 Functionality and user ergonomics – as perceived by users

...

For the final report, we carried out 16 interviews with respondents from 14 organizations. We interviewed three respondents from institutions that can be characterized as small contractors, three respondents from two universities that are not currently using NEN (two heads of departments of their rectorates responsible for public tenders and one employee who is responsible for administering public tenders who was hired to test the functionalities of NEN), five respondents from four Ministries (including the two Ministries that are the most active users of NEN), experts from two companies that are administering tenders for various tenderers, and one expert working in the e-procurement field since 2000. We also interviewed representatives of two companies that are providing competing e-tools and have the majority share of the IENs market.

Most of these interviews took place in February or March 2017. The last interview was on March 3, 2017; only two interviews were made as pilots in November 2016.

...

Table 8: Summary of main NEN weaknesses (based on the perceptions of users)

A. NEN IS NOT PERCEIVED AS USER FRIENDLY
NEN is not well arranged or intuitive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult to navigate; to know what to click, what to do, or where to find information
NEN contains boxes and instructions which are not always clear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear what to fill in, what to choose, or what is required in a certain step
B. USE OF NEN IS PERCEIVED AS INEFFICIENT AND DIFFICULT
Using NEN is unreasonably difficult and energy consuming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User registration is difficult Too many unnecessary boxes to fill in Too many operations required to finish a procedure (individual steps, ticking-off, duplicated tasks; some data are already stored in other information systems and could be used automatically) Too much information is required, even for small-scale public tenders Difficult structure of roles for economic operators Due to the absence of functional templates, users must perform repetitive tasks (mentioned particularly for small-scale tenders and the dynamic purchasing system) Difficult to find published calls for tenders and individual tenders and their documents. Insufficient filtering (according to CPV codes). Difficult to make changes (e.g. insert corrected documents) Too many unnecessary e-mail notifications Difficult ciphering (we must make a certain key available for bidders and this was automatic in a former IEN) Not possible to use Ctrl+F to find something on the web page (the only way is to export data into xml and use other software) Not possible to generate links to published public tenders.
NEN does not control user (actions and inactions) sufficiently
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not warn users of required fields, the system sometimes allows nonsense, it announces some deadlines but not others (including deadlines for bids)
The system is rather slow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long down time between individual steps Delays in the actual publication of documents Long down times for ciphering
User support is insufficient
UNCLEAR INSTRUCTIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS WITHIN THE SYSTEM (DURING INDIVIDUAL STEPS)
ServiceDesk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> slow (for new problems) sometimes replies to other things Information is not always correct insufficient office hours inconsistency of instructions from the ServiceDesk and from the MMR
USER MANUALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> too long and not well arranged fragmented not always updated
TRAINING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> insufficient (in terms of quantity) insufficient (in terms of quality – based on presentations rather than real training in functionalities on computers) insufficient promotion no e-learning available
INSUFFICIENT COOPERATION OF THE MMR IN EXPORTING DATA FROM FORMER IENS
Customization and development is limited, slow, and costly

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impossible to satisfy all needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It takes too long to incorporate even highest priority requirements (due to the necessity to organize public tenders).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costly changes due to technology used (Silverlight) and related dependency on provider.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEN is arched over by the incompetent MMR – the MMR does not have experience with real (e-)procurement and centralized purchasing.
C. NOT ALL FUNCTIONALITIES ARE ACTUALLY FUNCTIONAL
NEN evokes uncertainty / unclarity for contractors and economic operators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear what gets published and when, what gets saved when proceeding to the next step or when the system collapses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear what a bidder actually sees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear what to fill in, instructions may be unclear or misleading
NEN is not fully functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistakes and errors when generating some announcements or protocols
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When there is no bid no protocol can be generated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized purchasing functionalities (e.g. gathering information from subordinated organizations, confirming calls for tenders before their publication).
The technology and system is obsolete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silverlight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ciphering.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties with usage that have been overcome by commercial IENs and their development.
NEN may not work for some users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silverlight (problems in some browsers, on mobile technologies, on MAC, Linux)
It is rather difficult to interconnect NEN with other systems
It is difficult to import data from former IENs
NEN may involve high additional costs for small contractors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Small contractors will use NEN to administer small-scale public tenders, and will have their profile in NEN because it is free, but will contract out the administration of larger tenders and the situation will be similar to what it is now.'
D. NEN IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY OR PROACTIVELY PROMOTED BY THE MMR

Source: Authors.

Table 9: The summary of main NEN strengths (based on the perceptions of users)

ServiceDesk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness and helpfulness Duplication of e-mail support (after the phone call we also receive an e-mail describing the problem and its solution) Patience of employees Fast resolution of problems (for problems that have already occurred).
Financial advantage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free, more functionalities for free.
One complex state e-procurement instrument.
Future potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibility to unify the publication of information and documents on public tenders in the country. Possibility for higher interconnection with other state information systems than with commercial IENs.

Source: Authors.

Respondents linked the strengths of NEN particularly with its future potential if NEN is further developed. The contract on development was stopped by the Office for the Protection of Competition (ÚOHS) in its decision from 22 November 2016 and it is not clear now how NEN will be developed. Some respondents recommended having NEN under a state-owned company that would

be responsible for its development, believing that this would get NEN out of the vicious circle in which tenders for development are attacked by NEN competitors.