

National eGovernment Study 2017: Summary Report



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Foreword

Today, the federal, cantonal, and communal authorities provide a lot of information and services also online. But the world is moving steadily towards standard electronic government services. Switzerland still has a way to go in further developing e-government services.

eGovernment Switzerland, the organization of the Confederation, the cantons, and the communes, has an important hub function here. It is responsible for the expansion of electronic government services. With this, it promotes the attractiveness of Switzerland as both a business location and a place to live. Thanks to e-government, transactions can be conducted with the public and with the business community time-efficiently and easily. And the authorities among each other can increase their efficiency through electronic commerce.

The first eGovernment Strategy was approved by the Federal Council in 2007, and the first framework agreement under public law between the Confederation and the cantons came into force in 2008. In 2016, the Confederation, cantons, and communes started their e-government cooperation on new bases. Since then, they have followed a new eGovernment Strategy and a new strategic plan as the implementation instrument.

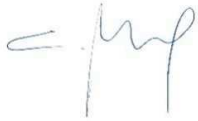
There is a need for electronic government services among the general public and the business community. The National eGovernment Study shows that we have a need to catch up in this area. Thanks to widespread broadband access, a secure political and regulatory environment, and a high innovation capacity, Switzerland is excellently placed to further develop e-government services. This potential must be realized. Digitalization of public administration and the economy is the foundation for innovation, simpler processes, and new models for cooperation across organizational borders.

The development of national basic infrastructures and fundamental key technologies remains a challenge. This should be the focus of the joint efforts and resources of the Confederation, cantons, and communes but also private-sector companies. Under the eGovernment Strategy Switzerland, the basis for a nationally and internationally recognized electronic means of identification (E-ID) is being established. The E-ID ensures authentication for e-government services and optimizes processes. To expand e-government, further basic key technologies and basic infrastructures are needed, such as secure data registers that facilitate data exchange and interoperability and also legal frameworks for protection and security of data and personal privacy rights.

E-government services must be offered in a fully transactional way, faster, and more inexpensively. The aim is to ease the administrative burden for the authorities at all levels of government and to increase the efficiency of processes. For this, cooperation between all levels of government, with the involvement of businesses and other stakeholders, must function consistently. In addition, the authorities must ensure that once recorded data and infrastructures can be used repeatedly, just as is the case at easyGov.swiss, the online desk for companies launched in November 2017.

The continuing digitalization gives eGovernment Switzerland the opportunity to perform its work for the Swiss public and businesses in a modern and service-minded manner. The Swiss authorities have recognized the importance of digitalization and aim to further develop their e-government services.

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1. About the study

In early 2016, the Swiss Confederation, cantons, and communes started their e-government cooperation on new foundations. Since then, they have followed a new eGovernment Strategy and a new strategic plan as the implementation instrument. In the course of this revision it was decided to conduct a National eGovernment Study. The study, for the first time, simultaneously surveys the Swiss general public, businesses, and public administration on e-government. The general public and businesses are the users and the public administration is the provider of electronic government services. The purpose of the study is to produce a basis for review and updating of the strategy.

In 2016/2017 the Programme Office of eGovernment Switzerland and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO launched the first National eGovernment Study. The study is planned to be conducted every 18 months, so that it can trace developments over a longer period. The study is based on surveys of the three target groups, conducted simultaneously.

A mixed mode approach was chosen for the surveys, meaning that the target persons were free to choose to participate in the survey online or by telephone. During the 8-week field time in the summer of 2017, 5,122 valid interviews were conducted. The table just below shows the number of interviews conducted with each target group:

Populations and Response Rates

Target group	Population	Valid interviews	Response rate
General public			
Language-assimilated ¹ resident population of Switzerland aged 18 to 70	5,079	2,454	48.9%
Businesses			
Located in Switzerland and active businesses in the secondary and tertiary sectors according to BER	4,000	1,479	38.3%
Public administration			
All departments and offices of the Federal Administration	78	28	35.9%
All cantons of Switzerland	26	20	76.9%
All communes of Switzerland	1,600	1,141	71.3%

Note. BER = Business and Enterprise Register of the Federal Statistical Office; secondary sector = industry and construction; tertiary sector = services.

This summary report is a short version of the report on the National eGovernment Study 2017.² It is a summary of the most important results of the surveys conducted on demand and supply in the area of e-government in Switzerland. The 'Overall conclusion' section indicates where there is a need for action and what can be done about it.

¹ All persons able to participate in the survey in German, French, or Italian.

² Buess, M.; Iselin, M.; Bieri, O. (2017): Nationale E-Government-Studie 2017. E-Government in der Schweiz aus Sicht der Bevölkerung, der Unternehmen und der Verwaltung. Demo SCOPE AG/INTERFACE Politikstudien Forschung Beratung GmbH, Adligenswil/Luzern.

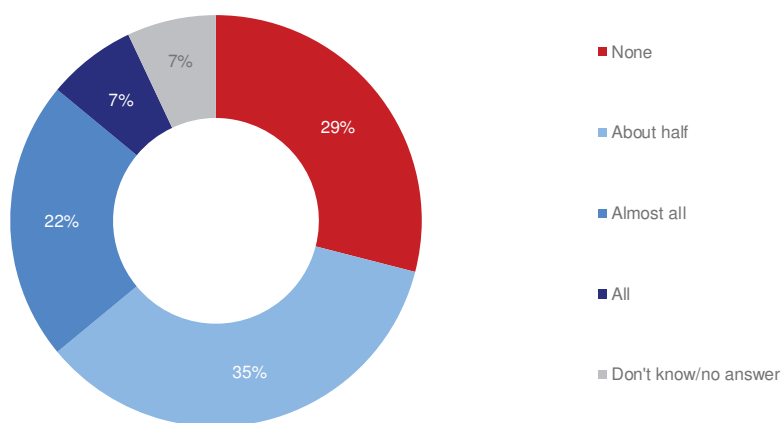
2. Survey results

This section presents a summary of the most important results of the surveys of the three target groups. Figures illustrate selected main results.

2.1 Target group: general public

The general public primarily communicates with cantonal and communal authorities in person or by telephone and with federal authorities electronically. The general public makes active use of government services only seldom.³ Fifty percent use 1 to 2 government services a year; 20% use no services at all. When services are used, they are used exclusively electronically⁴ in approximately 30% of cases. Also about 30% of persons use at least one half of the government services online.

1. Of the services provided by the authorities that you use, how many do you use electronically?



Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, target group: general public, Demo SCOPE AG.
Note. Basis: All respondents who use government services (n = 1,965).

The most important arguments for using electronic government services are *time savings*⁵ and greater *time flexibility*. The most frequently used e-government services are *fill out tax return* and *apply for extension of time to file tax return*. *Information on maps or statistical data* is sought, *electronic invoices* are received, and *e-payments* are made. The survey respondents would like to use a lot of government services online that are not yet available electronically. There is a great deal of interest in *electronic voting* but also in *electronic reporting and seeking of lost property*, *ordering vehicle number plates*, and *ordering replacement driving licences*.

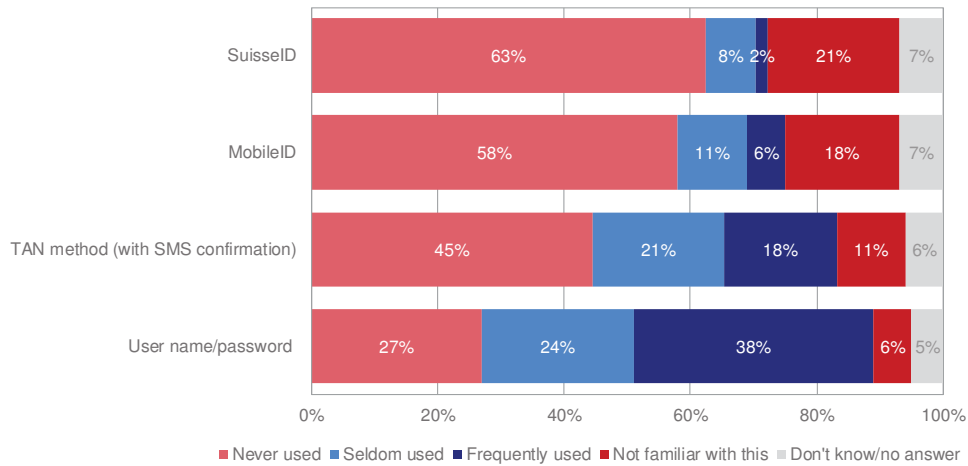
Registration and authentication methods with *user names and passwords* are the most widespread. *SuisseID* and *MobileID* are hardly used, and there is little trust in them. The survey respondents are the most satisfied with *TAN* (transaction authentication number) *authorization*.

³ A distinction was made between active and passive use of services. Active use of services is, for example, the use of eMovingCH – the online reporting process. Passive use of services is the use of rubbish removal services.

⁴ In this summary report, the terms digital, online, and electronic are used synonymously.

⁵ In this summary report, response options in the surveys are shown in italics.

2. Which of the following methods do you use?



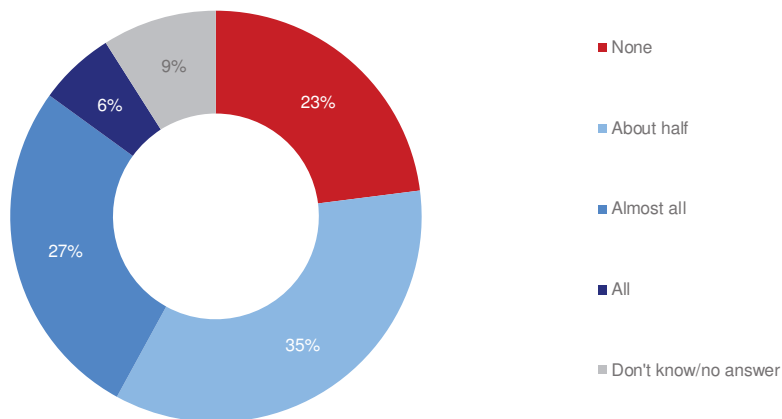
Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, target group: general public, Demo SCOPE AG.
 Note: All respondents who use the Internet (n = 2,409).

Obstacles to using e-government services are seen by 20% of the respondents. The greatest obstacles are lack of trust in *data privacy and data security*, followed by *difficulty finding the right government services online*.

2.2 Target group: businesses

Businesses communicate with the cantonal and communal authorities mainly by e-mail or telephone. Contact with the federal authorities takes place mainly electronically. Businesses actively use government services more frequently than the general public. Almost half of businesses use government services at least three times per year. A large part of businesses uses at least half of these services electronically.

3. Of the services provided by the authorities that your business uses, how many are used electronically?

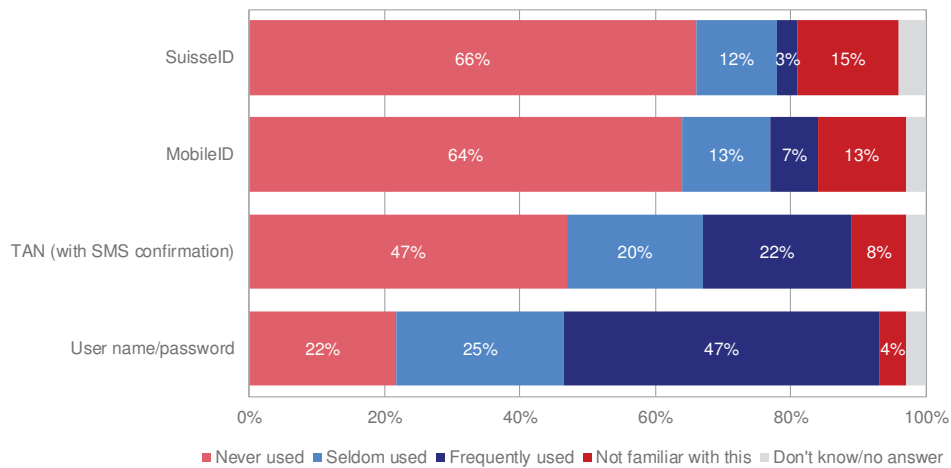


Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, target group: businesses, Demo SCOPE AG.
 Note: Basis: All businesses that use government services (n = 1,354).

As with the general public, businesses' most important reasons for preferring electronic services are *time flexibility* and *time savings*. Used most by the businesses surveyed are *statistical surveys by the authorities*. Just one half of businesses *fill out and file tax returns online* or *apply for extension of time to file tax return online*. More than one third of businesses have *reported address changes*, *registered the business with the social insurance system online* or *paid social security contributions online*. The majority of the businesses surveyed that have not used any e-government services up to now would like to see an online option for using almost all services. Wanted the most is *reporting changes to the trade register* and *ordering debt enforcement information* and *submitting debt collection requests*.

Businesses' use of registration and authorization methods is similar to that of the general public: The most widespread are methods based on *user names and passwords*. *SuisseID* and *MobileID* are seldom used; satisfaction is the lowest with *SuisseID*. Businesses are the most satisfied with *TAN*.

4. Which of the following methods do you/does your business use?



Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, target group: businesses, Demo SCOPE AG.
 Note: Basis: All businesses surveyed (N = 1,479).

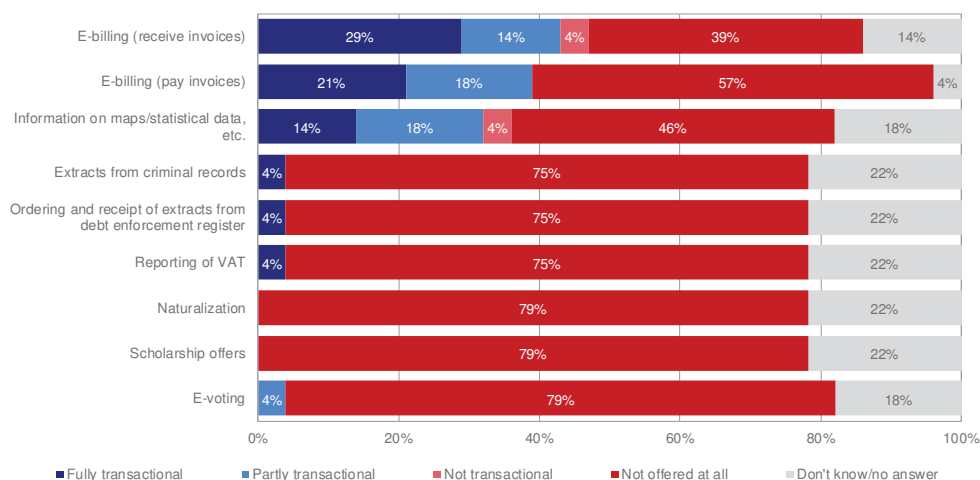
Only 8% of the businesses surveyed see obstacles to using e-government services. The main obstacle is *difficulty finding the right government services online*.

2.3 Target group: public administration

Almost all authorities offer contact options via e-mail, telephone, or letter. Cantonal authorities are the most active in offering contact options via social media or online portals.

Three levels of government need to be distinguished regarding electronic access to government services. The three most frequent fully or partly transactional electronic services offered by the Federal Administration are *e-billing (receive invoices)*, *e-billing (pay invoices)*, and *publication of information on maps/statistical data etc.* Other electronic services are offered by a small number of federal authorities. However, this does not mean that there is a lack of e-government services, as many services do not have to be offered by each federal authority (such as *electronic voting*).

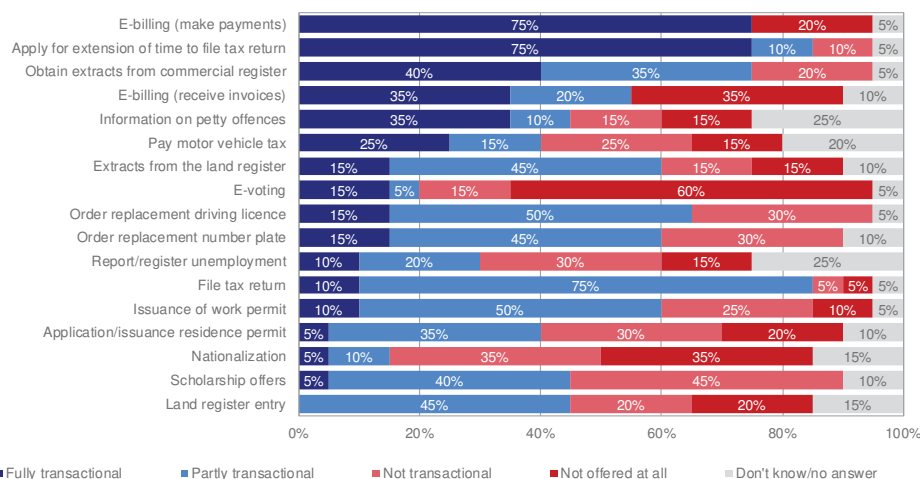
5. For each of the following services, please indicate if your government organization offers a fully transactional, partly transactional, or not transactional service, or if your government organization does not offer the service at all.



Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, target group: public administration, Demo SCOPE AG.
 Note. Basis: All federal authorities surveyed (N = 28).

The fully transactional e-government services offered the most frequently by the cantons are *e-billing (pay invoices)* and *apply for extension of time to file tax return*. More than two thirds of the authorities surveyed offer these services seamlessly (without discontinuity of media). A number of partly transactional services are offered by a large part of the cantons, including *receipt of tax returns, orders for replacement driving licences, and issuance of work permits*.

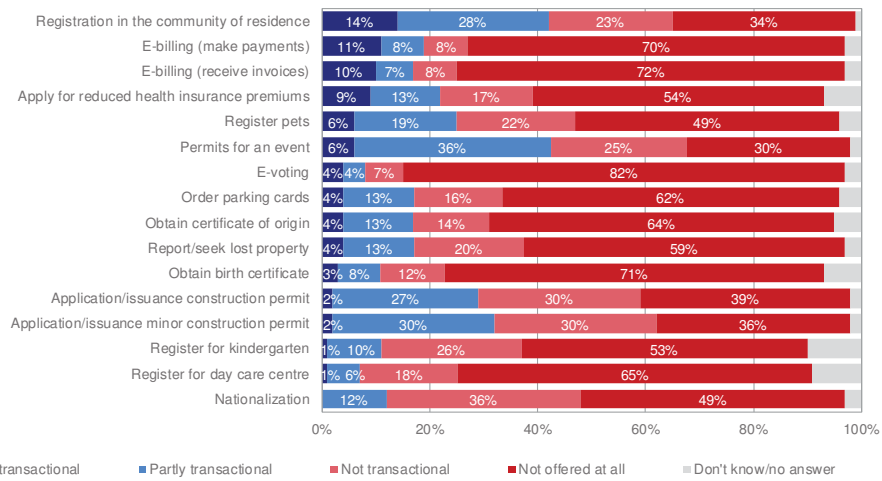
6. For each of the following services, please indicate if your government organization offers a fully transactional, partly transactional, or not transactional service, or if your government organization does not offer the service at all.



Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, target group: public administration, Demo SCOPE AG.
 Note. Basis: All cantonal authorities surveyed (N = 20).

In contrast to the federal and cantonal authorities, the communes offer only a few fully transactional services. The most frequent fully transactional service (offered by 14% of all communes surveyed) is *registration in the community of residence*.

7. For each of the following services, please indicate if your government organization offers a fully transactional, partly transactional, or not transactional service, or if your government organization does not offer the service at all.



Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, target group: public administration, Demo SCOPE AG.
 Note. Basis: All communal authorities surveyed (N = 1,141).

The cantonal and communal authorities are motivated to launch online services mainly by the needs of the users and the opportunity to *improve the quality of services*. The main concern of the federal authorities is more *process optimization*.

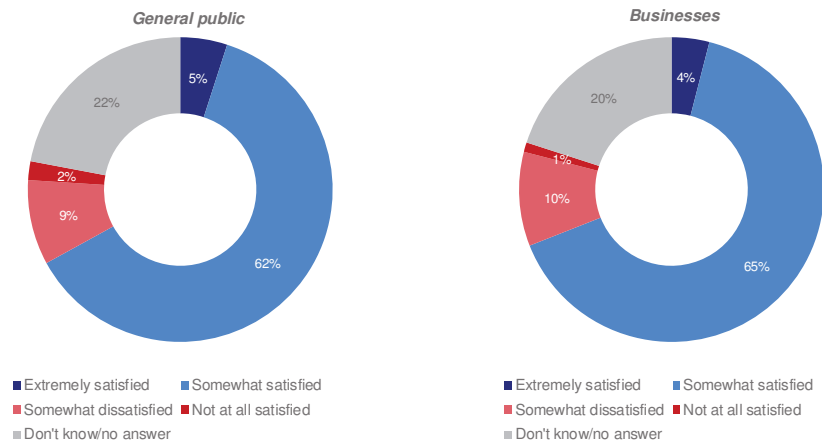
The federal and cantonal authorities are clearly of the opinion that e-government services must be expanded. The communes are more satisfied with the status quo, but also here, the majority desire to expand the services provided online.

According to the authorities surveyed, the main obstacle to implementing e-government services is a lack of resources: money, personnel, and time. And in fact, not a lot of personnel for e-government matters is available to the authorities, especially not to the communal authorities. The cantons have more personnel for this, but even so, the cantons are not more satisfied with the personnel resources available.

2.4 Comparison between demand and supply

The majority of users are satisfied with the e-government services offered by the authorities.

8. How satisfied are you/is your business in general with the Swiss authorities' online offerings (also called e-government services)?



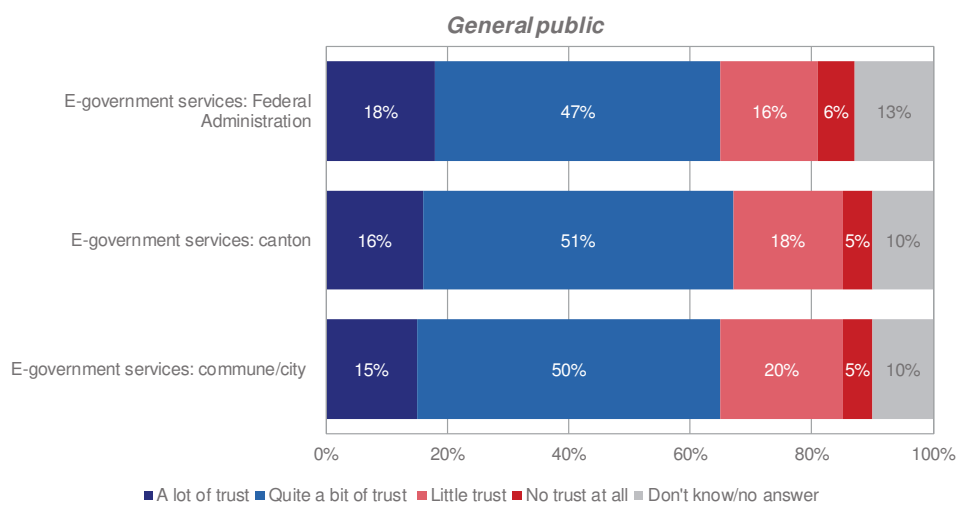
Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, Target group: general public and businesses, Demo SCOPE AG.

Note: Basis: All persons surveyed that use the Internet (n = 2,409) and all businesses (N = 1,479).

The majority of users rate the current e-government services provided by the Federal Administration and the cantons as sufficient. About 40% of users see a need for the communes to expand e-government services; about the same percentage is in favour of the communes keeping the same scope of existing offerings.

The majority of users trust e-government services, also regarding personal right to privacy and data protection. Businesses have greater trust than the general public in online services at all three levels of government.

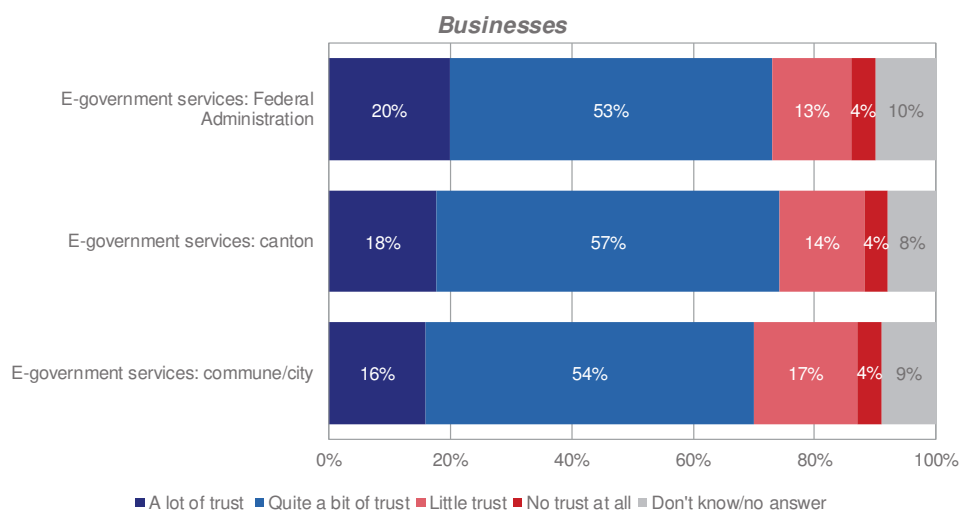
9. How much trust do you have in general in e-government services provided by the authorities at the local, cantonal, and national level regarding personal right to privacy and data protection?



Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, Target group: general public, Demo SCOPE AG.

Note: Basis: All persons surveyed that use the Internet (n = 2,409).

10. How much trust do you have in general in e-government services provided by the authorities at the local, cantonal, and national level regarding personal right to privacy and data protection?

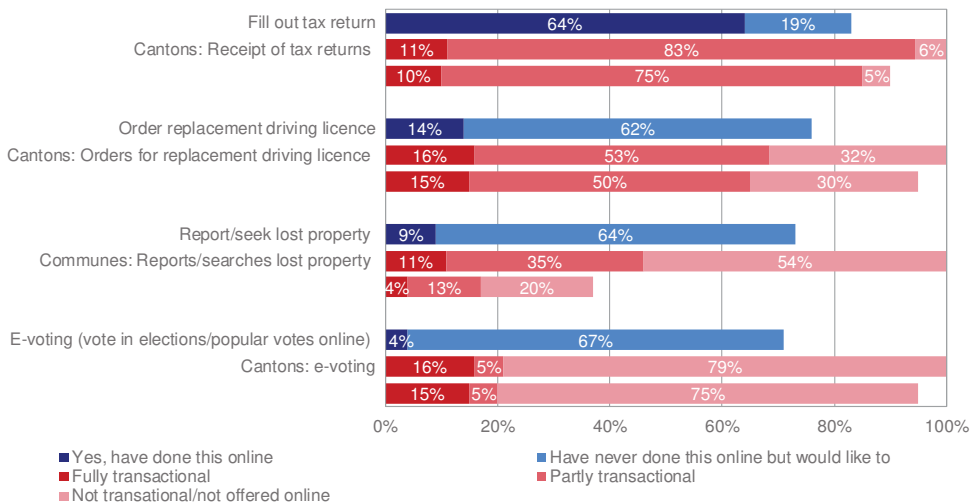


Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, Target group: businesses, Demo SCOPE AG.
 Note. Basis: All businesses (N = 1,479).

The general public's current utilization of e-government services corresponds to what the cantons and communes offer.⁶ *Fill out tax return* should become fully transactional. For the communes there is room for improvement in the area of *e-billing (make payment)* and *e-billing (receive invoice)*. Regarding additional e-government services wanted by the general public, the desire for *e-voting* (cantons) and *report-see lost property* (communes) is not currently fulfilled. Approximately 70% of the cantonal authorities surveyed offer *orders for replacement driving licence* as a fully or partly transactional e-government service. This service is apparently not well known among the general public and is seldom used.

⁶ It makes no sense to make comparisons of demand and offerings at the level of the Federal Administration (for example, for *ordering extracts from debt enforcement register*), because first, not all federal offices responded, and second, many e-government services are offered by only a few offices or only a single agency is meant to offer a particular service. For this reason, the comparison was restricted to the e-government services provided by the cantonal and communal authorities.

11. Supply and demand of the general public for e-government services

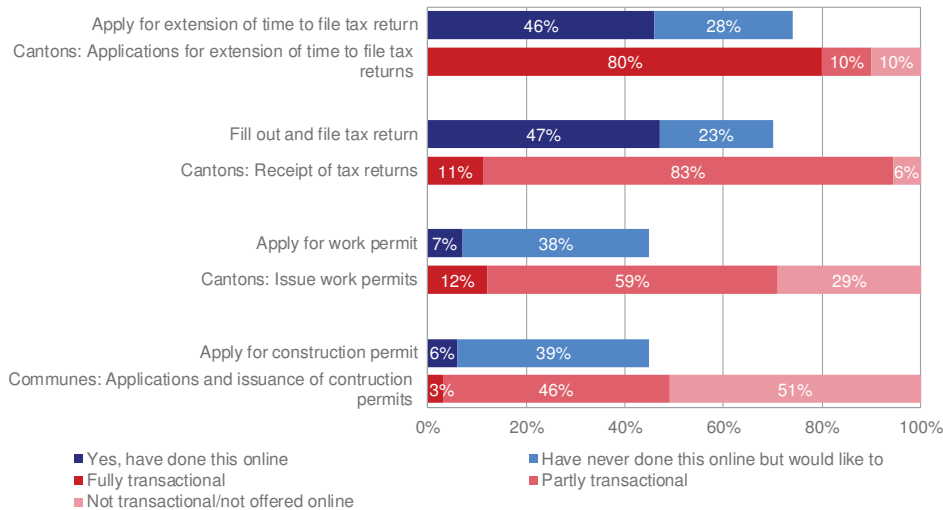


Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, Target group: general public and public administration, Demo SCOPE AG.

Note: Basis: All persons surveyed that use the Internet (the queried services were split, n = 768 and n = 741) and all authorities at the cantonal level (N = 20) and communes (N = 1,141).

For both actual and desired use of e-government services by businesses, supply appears to be in accord with the demand. There is potential for further development in making the services available in a fully transactional way: This holds mainly for *fill out tax return* and *apply for work permit and construction permit*.

12. Supply and demand of businesses for e-government services



Source: National eGovernment Study 2017, Target group: businesses and public administration, Demo SCOPE AG.

Note: Basis: All businesses surveyed (N = 1,479) and all public authorities at the cantonal level (N = 20) and communes (N = 1,141).

In both groups of users, more than half of the respondents did not approve of the low fees charged for using e-government services rather than non-online services. Indeed, more than one third strongly disapproved these fees. The authorities are more in favour of this suggestion. This result underscores that the users are basically satisfied with the status quo and do not generally intend to use more e-government services. In contrast, the authorities as providers

are more interested in moving towards further expansion and anchoring of e-government services.

3. Overall conclusion

Overall, the study shows that fully transactional e-government services are not yet well developed in Switzerland. Especially at the level of the communal authorities, fully transactional services are the exception.

From the viewpoint of the authorities, this is mainly due to insufficient resources: personnel, time, and money. At the level of the authorities, a point of departure would insofar be a firmer anchoring of the topic of e-government and allocation of sufficient resources for its development.

At first glance, the current demand for e-government services on the part of the general public and especially on the part of businesses appears to be well met by the existing online offerings. However, respondents' ratings of online offerings depend on how the questions are asked. When surveying the need for electronic government services, if the questions mention specific, individual online services, respondents report a greater need than if they are asked generally about a need for expanded e-government services. Accordingly, there is a desire for additional, fully transactional online services that the authorities currently offer only to a limited extent. This observation relativizes in part the results mentioned first on general need for additional e-government services. That is because the users can only rate offerings that they know of or offerings the existence of which they can at all imagine.

Users often do not have sufficient knowledge of existing e-government services. In addition, concerns regarding personal privacy rights and data protection are preventing more widespread use. This finding underlines the desire for increased efforts by the authorities to allay privacy and data protection concerns with online government services. For businesses it is also difficult to find the right government services online. They want a clear presentation and targeted announcement of the (existing) services available online.

From the viewpoint of the general public, there is a need for government services that they can use wherever and whenever they wish, that are fast and easily available, and that are secure at all times.

Publication details

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Notice

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