



ASM - CENTRUM BADAŃ I ANALIZ RYNKU

SOCIAL AND EVALUATION RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Presentation of the survey
findings:

**Impact of digitalization on the operation of the
public administration offices in Poland 2015**



Ministerstwo
Cyfryzacji

WIĘCEJ NIŻ AGENCJA BADAWCZA

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Information about the survey

Purpose of the survey:

The survey "Impact of digitalization on the operation of the public administration offices in Poland", conducted in October and November 2015, was conducted for the 6th time. The primary purpose of the survey was to examine the condition of IT introduction and to specify its impact on streamlining the operation of offices in Poland in 2015.

Implementation:

The survey was conducted by using the method of web surveys **CAWI**.

The questionnaire was available on a special dedicated platform prepared by **ASM Sp. z o. o.**

The respondents had also the possibility to download the questionnaire from the website, fill in its paper form, and send it back by mail.

The target respondents were **management representatives of office and IT staff**. At the same time, filling in the questionnaire could require consultations with people responsible for other areas of the office operation.

Finally, **2095 offices** took part in the survey, including 95% self-government administration offices, and 5% state administration offices.

	Number of records in the database	Filled in questionnaires	%
Total offices	2942	2095	71,2
State administration, including government	133	104	78,2
Self-government administration	2809	1991	70,9
Marshal's offices	16	11	68,8
District offices	381	283	74,3
Commune offices	2412	1690	70,7

	State administration			Self-government administration		
	Number of records in the database	Filled in questionnaires	%	Number of records in the database	Filled in questionnaires	%
Dolnośląskie	1	1	100	196	123	62,76
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	1	1	100	164	120	73,17
Lubelskie	1	1	100	234	185	79,06
Lubuskie	1	1	100	96	59	61,46
Łódzkie	1	1	100	199	143	71,86
Małopolskie	3	1	33,33	202	148	73,27
Mazowieckie	110	83	75,44	352	241	68,47
Opolskie	1	1	100	83	69	83,13
Podkarpackie	1	1	100	182	136	74,73
Podlaskie	1	1	100	133	99	74,44
Pomorskie	3	3	100	140	90	64,29
Śląskie	2	2	100	185	138	74,59
Świętokrzyskie	1	1	100	116	84	72,41
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	2	2	100	136	87	63,97
Wielkopolskie	2	2	100	258	184	71,32

Zachodniopomorskie	2	2	100	133	85	63,91
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Deadline for completion:

The survey was conducted **from 12 October to 3 November 2015.**

Main conclusions

Strategic management in the area of digitalization

The offices do not treat the area of digitalization as a key in the context of managing subordinate territories (communes, districts, provinces) or with regard to the assigned area of competencies (state and self-government administration), or for optimization of their own actions. This is proven by a small share of offices with data communication development strategy (digitalization or IT introduction). Preparation of this document was declared only by 9% of the representatives of the offices participating in the survey. The problem affects, first of all, the self-government administration, where only 8% of the offices (as opposed to 36% in the state administration) have such a document.

In the case of the self-government administration, data communication development strategies refer to an insufficient degree (half of total cases) to the environment of offices, including inhabitants of given areas.

Strategic documents with regard to digital development are relatively rarely verified for their effectiveness. It happens especially in the case of the self-government administration, within which only almost one third of this type of offices with data communication development strategy opt for that verification.

The self-government administration offices, especially the lowest level offices seldom undertake actions consisting in promoting and awarding employee innovativeness. It happens in 32% of the commune offices and 35% of the district offices.

Projects financed from the European funds were focused to an insufficient extent on the development of information society (e.g. almost half of the commune offices opted to determine such objectives of project actions). It is important, since shaping IT competencies of office employees or local communities is required to provide accordingly high level of use of the effects of the digitalization projects (e.g. electronic services offered by offices).

The most often mentioned by office representatives effects of the implemented projects are present to the greatest extent in the area of interest in electronic services and customer satisfaction with service. Significant changes in the method of operation of mere offices are not noticed, which may be a derivative of either low IT competencies of employees, who are not able to adequately use the potential resulting from the introduced changes, or the fact that projects did not have entirely well thought-out objectives and products. It should be also emphasized that the assessment of impact of projects on the operation of offices is not completely reliable since activities and phenomena taking place in offices are not practically monitored.

The most common standards applied in offices are information safety standards (PN-ISO/IEC 27001 – 13% of total offices). In the context of implementation of standards, basic importance is attained to the rank of office and widely understood organizational culture, also linked to some degree to the hierarchy of office. The higher the rank of the office, the greater the awareness of activities undertaken and consequences of possible omissions or unforeseen events – almost 90% of the commune offices and more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the district offices do not apply any standards.

Information society development

Actions undertaken by the administration with regard to information society are dominated either by actions consisting largely in provision of computers or stations with access to the internet (75% of the self-government administration offices) or, in the case of the state administration, by various types of actions propagating communication with the use of web channels (the use of solutions Web 2.0 – 47%, encouraging citizens to electronic contact with offices – 43%).

The self-government administration, beyond actions consisting in making available computer stations, focuses mainly on promoting the use of the Internet among the people endangered with digital exclusion (46%), arrangement and support for courses and trainings (38%), as well as cooperation with the internet providers in order to support the construction of broadband networks (32%, though in the case of the marshal's offices the share is as much as 82%).

The self-government administration offices undertake actions for starting public points of access to the internet. As it seems from analyses, the leaders in this respect are first of all commune offices (73% as opposed to 21% in the case of district offices). The intensity of this kind of actions has been unchanged for several years, which means that commune inhabitants report demand for such services.

IT competencies

The offices see the importance of IT competencies of employees, therefore they include their verification in the recruitment processes (approx. 70% of the offices). At the same time, they are mostly checked in the simplest manner, i.e. by analysing declarations contained in recruitment documents (82% of the indications for total offices towards 29% of the offices that opt for practical tests).

The newly hired office employees relatively rarely have mandatory IT training (in 27% of the offices). From among all types of offices, IT training is used most by the marshal's offices, in more than a half of which such IT training is delivered. On the one hand, it can result from the consciousness of the essence of this kind of skills, but it is possible, which results from the conducted surveys, that the marshal's offices are relatively most advanced when it comes to the use of IT systems the service of which is taught to employees who start work.

Notwithstanding training of newly hired employees, the offices deliver IT training for the whole staff (46% of total offices declared such actions). Most often such trainings were delivered in the marshal's offices (91%), and least frequently in the commune offices (41%) where, as we can suppose, changes in IT systems are not so numerous.

IT training delivered by particular offices in 2015 was related mainly to widely understood safety of the use of data communication systems in the context of information processing (57%) or principles of electronic documentation circulation management (56%). In the self-government administration offices vast

part of trainings was devoted to the ePUAP system – on average 48% of offices, and commune offices opted for that to the lowest degree (only 9%).

The reasons for non-delivery of IT training are above all, sufficient, in the opinion of office representatives, competencies of their employees, or resulted from the fact that such training was delivered in the previous period.

Use of IT technologies in the office

There is a high disproportion between offices of the government and self-government administration – to the disadvantage of the self-government administration – in terms of the number of people having individual e-mail accounts and electronic signatures. However, it is worth emphasizing that in the recent few years we have been dealing with improvement in the situation in this aspect. It is worth mentioning that the share of officials with individual e-mail accounts in total number of office employees is smallest in the case of communes.

The self-government administration offices relatively less frequently, as compared to the state administration, provide their employees with remote access to e-mail, documents and applications of the office. The practice is less and less common along with decreasing rank of office – in the commune offices only half of them offer such a possibility.

In the commune offices the use of the electronic documentation management system is hardly common (44%), whereas in other types of offices this possibility is used to a much greater extent (for instance in 56% of the state administration offices, 60% of the district offices or 55% of the marshal's offices).

Although in the offices changes are introduced in the form of implementation of documentation management systems, most entities prefer a mixed system – traditional documents supported by data communication tools. The traditional system is, above all, domain of self-government administration, including mainly communes (it is used in every third commune).

The fact of non-using the electronic documentation management system as the basic method of documenting and resolving cases is caused by low importance of this kind of issues from the point of view of office operation. In addition, in the self-government administration, mainly in communes and districts, attention is largely paid (in 30% of the communes and 26% of the districts) to small number of letters and the fact that not all official letters can be provided in the electronic form (e.g. building permits with a large number of appendices may be a problem).

In this kind of offices quite a significant restriction is also fear of the implementation of technical novelties, which proves a low level of development of digital society at the level of communes and districts. The problem reported by 19% of total offices are also budget restrictions because the implementation of the electronic documentation management system involves investments in equipment, trainings, etc.

As regards the model of operation of IT systems, the dispersed structure is no longer popular in offices. It is dominated by the network system with offline data transfer (54% of the offices). Less common are network systems with interfaces for data exchange at the level of web servers (26%), and relatively least frequently used system is ERP class system (12%). At the same time, basic differences can be seen between the government and self-government administration - the government administration offices more frequently have more advanced network systems – with a possibility of sending data at the level of web

services or ERP class systems. In addition, in the self-government administration offices (mostly in communes) relatively more often than in the case of the state administration (9% and 4%, respectively) we are still dealing with computers operating in the dispersed structure.

For the purpose of maintaining validity with regard to the inventory-taking of hardware and software, above all, traditional, periodical inventory operations are applied, especially in smaller self-government administration offices (i.e. mainly at the level of communes). Less frequently used continuous inventory-taking using dedicated software recording on a regular basis any changes, updates of software, etc. (declared by 14% of all offices) is most widely present in the marshal's offices (45%), as well as in district and state administration offices – approx. in every third office.

In addition, in the offices participating in the survey, IT systems are applied for group work in the form of making available common disks (60%), electronic granting to citizens information requested by them (52%) or budget planning (49%).

Thus, we are dealing with the use of digital technology in two aspects, i.e. both in the process of service and within internal processes taking place in the office. It is worth noting that far more diverse and more complete range of systems is applied in the government administration, where IT systems are used to a significantly greater degree to manage processes within the office. It should be also emphasized that on the opposite pole we can find commune and district offices where the scope of goals of using IT systems is relatively poorest.

Electronic correspondence

The analysis of the declared intervals showing the share of incoming electronic correspondence in total correspondence, leads to a conclusion that we have been dealing with the dominance of the traditional form. More than 80% of all offices declared that the share of electronic correspondence (including by means of electronic inbox) is in 25% of the whole incoming documentation, and 15% of all offices - that is 50%.

In the case of the state administration, we are dealing with a relatively greater, as compared to the self-government administration, percentage of any kind of electronic correspondence. On the other hand, among the self-government administration offices, the largest shares of correspondence incoming electronically are recorded for the communes where every sixth office declared that the percentage of this kind of correspondence was within 26 - 50%.

The analysis of changes taking place over the past two years gives rise to optimism. We are dealing with increasing share of electronic correspondence in full correspondence conducted by the offices. Apart from the marshal's offices, where this share was declared at a similar level in 2014 and 2015, the indications of the interval 26-50% increased significantly (almost twice).

Looking at the intervals declared by the offices, most of outgoing electronic correspondence is still dominated by the traditional, paper form. Almost 90% of total offices declared that the share of electronic correspondence (including sent by means of electronic inbox) is in 25% of the whole incoming documentation, and 10% of all offices - that in 50%. We are dealing at this point with a clear disproportion between kinds of offices – traditional correspondence is expressly more often used by the self-government administration offices. Within it relatively largest shares of correspondence sent electronically

are recorded in the commune offices (in the case of every 10th office electronic correspondence is within 26-50%).

Two main obstacles in limiting or eliminating paper correspondence with other administration units and switching to the electronic form of documents are treating the electronic form of documents as non-equivalent towards the paper version, and restrictions arising from the specific operation of the ePUAP system. It was indicated by 27% of all surveyed offices, and the state offices were indicating slightly more in the first place the issue of the lack of equivalence between the electronic and paper form of documents, and the self-governments were indicating the issue of restrictions of the ePUAP system. In the first case, we are dealing with a remnant of tradition and comprehensive bureaucracy and probably the issue of mentality, attaching giant importance to the paper records towards mistrust to modern solutions. In the second case, the assessment of restrictions of the specific nature of operation of the ePUAP system is more critical in self-government units than state offices that indicated this obstacle in removing the paper form was indicated twice less frequently.

Provision of electronic services

Half of Polish offices provide the electronic services other than based on the so-called model electronic letter. For the state administration, this indicator is 46% and for the self-government administration – 51%. Among the self-government administration offices high values were recorded, especially for the marshal's offices (64%) and district offices (63%).

Once again, in the case of the self-government administration, we are dealing with a situation of decreasing values of indicators depending on the hierarchy of offices – least frequently electronic services are made available at the level of commune offices. At the same time, it is worth noting one significant fact – despite relatively lowest share of electronic services in district and commune offices, the level of this share increased significantly over the past 3 years.

Many offices inform citizens and entrepreneurs about the possibility to use public administration services over the internet and encourage to use this form of handling official matters. For total offices it is 87% (similarly as for the self-government administration), and the value is higher for the state administration – 96%. On the whole, we are dealing with a situation where only a few offices do not undertake this kind of information efforts.

Even at the level of communes and districts, almost 90% of offices take actions aimed to increase the level of using administration services over the internet. At the same time, in the years 2012-2015, small increase is noticeable in the number of offices informing citizens on the possibility to use public administration services over the internet and encouraging to use this form of handling official matters.

The offices use to a small degree the internet to support handling matters of customers:

- tracking progress in the case processing over the internet is enabled only by 1/3 of all offices. Results are similar both for the state administration and for the self-government administration.

- arranging a visit via the internet is enabled only by 12% of all offices nationwide. There is no difference between state offices and self-government offices.

Access to services using trusted profile is made available by most offices – 84% on the scale of the country. What is interesting, a significantly larger percentage in this case is recorded from among local government units -85% than state offices – 63%.

Nearly 7 per 10 offices run active communication with customers by e-mail, sms or phone. These values are the same or very similar for all offices, both for state offices and self-government units.

The offices implement new electronic services – in 2015 half of the examined offices introduced in 2015 a new electronic service or significantly improved the way of its provision by using data communication technologies. More implementations of new solutions were declared by state offices rather than self-government offices (70% and 50%, respectively). From among local administration offices, these indicators are, at the same time, quite diversified. The implementation of new services was declared by 71% of the marshal's offices, and in the case of commune offices this value is much lower – 47%.

Website

More than a half (56%) of offices have a website only in Polish, and 23% have a foreign language version beyond the Polish version. This indicator is unsatisfactory. However, considerable differences in this issue should be noted taking into account the type of office. The state administration is characterized by better results than the self-government units.

More than a half (51.5%) of the state offices have one foreign language versions , whereas for self-government units this percentage is only 21.5%. The local administration offices having only the Polish version of the website account, on the other hand, for as much as 58%. However, it should be emphasized that in the years 2012-2015 the situation related to the number of language versions of websites got improved. The percentage of offices declaring one (beyond the Polish) version of the website increased quite significantly because from 17% to 23%, and the offices declaring additional 2-3 versions increased from 12% to 14%.

Only around one third of websites of the offices underwent tests W3C HTML Validator and W3C CSS Validator. At the same time, these indicators were relatively higher for websites run by the state administration offices.

Websites of the state administration offices, twice more often than of the self-government administration offices (37% and 18%, respectively) meet the recommendations of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.0 <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/> for data communication systems in terms of availability for the disabled, subject to the level AA. For total offices this indicator is 18%.

Less than a half (42%) of the offices have a website adapted to service by means of mobile phones and mobile devices. At various administration levels we can observe significant differences, since as much as 2/3 of the state offices declare to have so adapted website. From among self-government administration this percentage is, on the other hand, only 41%, and the poorest results in this aspect are recorded for websites of communes.

Indicators, which characterize the self-government administration offices should be considered as unsatisfactory, especially towards growing popularity of mobile devices that ensure browsing of websites. A positive signal is, however, that within three years the situation clearly improved and in any type of office we are dealing with growth in percentage of websites adapted to the standards of mobile devices.

According to the information provided by the respondents, the most frequent convenience of the websites is a search engine, folder of services provided by particular offices (supplemented with the option of the so-called FAQ) and the option

of subscribing to the newsletter. The proportions of particular facilities are similar for the government and self-government administration, with the only difference that in the case of the second group the option of frequently asked questions is clearly rare. What is interesting, from among the self-government administration offices, it is not present at all in the marshal's offices, which, as a matter of fact, do not provide direct services for inhabitants, nevertheless, imitating being in a similar situation offices of self-government administration and state administration, could prepare such sets of answers.

Survey findings

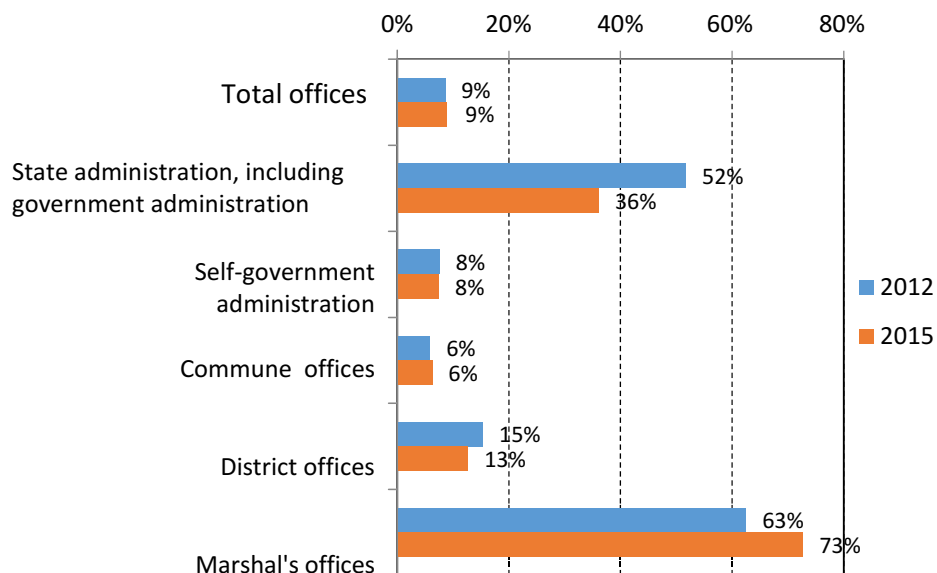
Strategic management in the area of digitalization

Does the office have a strategic document (strategy, plan, program) regarding data communication development (digitalization or IT introduction)?

As shown by the survey findings, only every eleventh office has a strategic document regarding data communication development (digitalization or IT introduction). Additionally, it is worth emphasizing that clearly better situation is in this respect in more centralized and subject to uniform recommendations state administration. In more autonomous and substantially independent hierarchically from the state authorities self-government administration offices, such issues depend probably on unit preferences prevailing in particular types of offices. The analysed issue is also determined by the mere type of office. In the self-government administration the smallest awareness of the need to have such a document is in commune offices.

It is worth emphasizing that in the recent few years the situation has changed irregularly, mainly depending on the type (state administration vs. self-government administration) and the type of office (commune, district or marshal's offices).

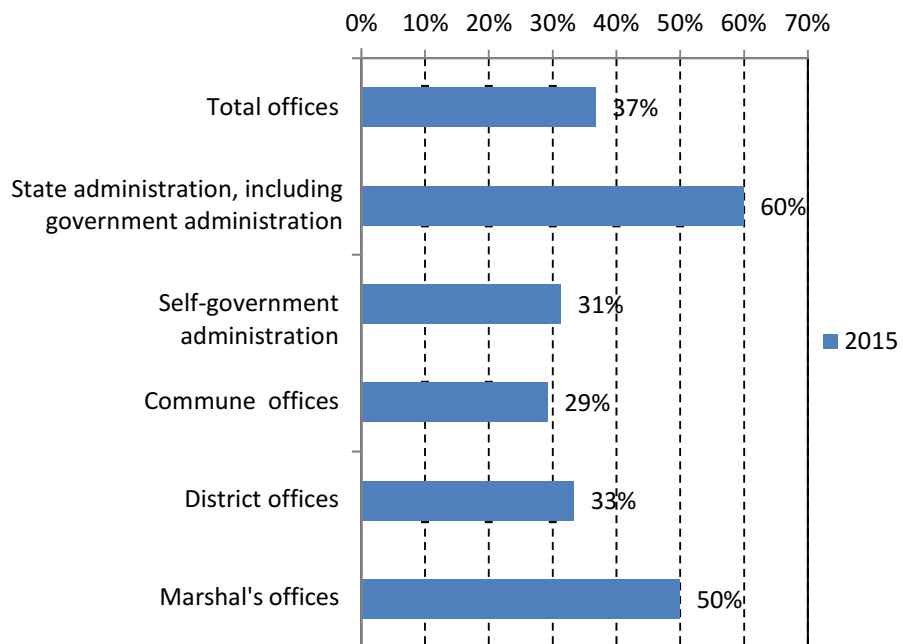
Chart 1. Having a strategic document (strategy, plan, program) regarding data communication development (digitalization or IT introduction) - comparison of the data for the years 2012 and 2015.



Has the implementation of the strategy with regard to data communication development ever been conducted?

The implemented strategies regarding digital development were verified for their effectiveness in little more than every third case. Low level of verification of the implemented strategies was recorded especially in the case of self-government authorities, where, on the one hand, professionalization of the administrative apparatus (in the technocratic sense) is smaller and consequently there is smaller awareness of the principles governing the strategic process management, an element of which is verification of effectiveness of activities. On the other hand, state authorities undertake actions whose effects are to a much larger extent subjected to public evaluation. Among other things, for this reason, steps are taken aiming at verification of their effectiveness.

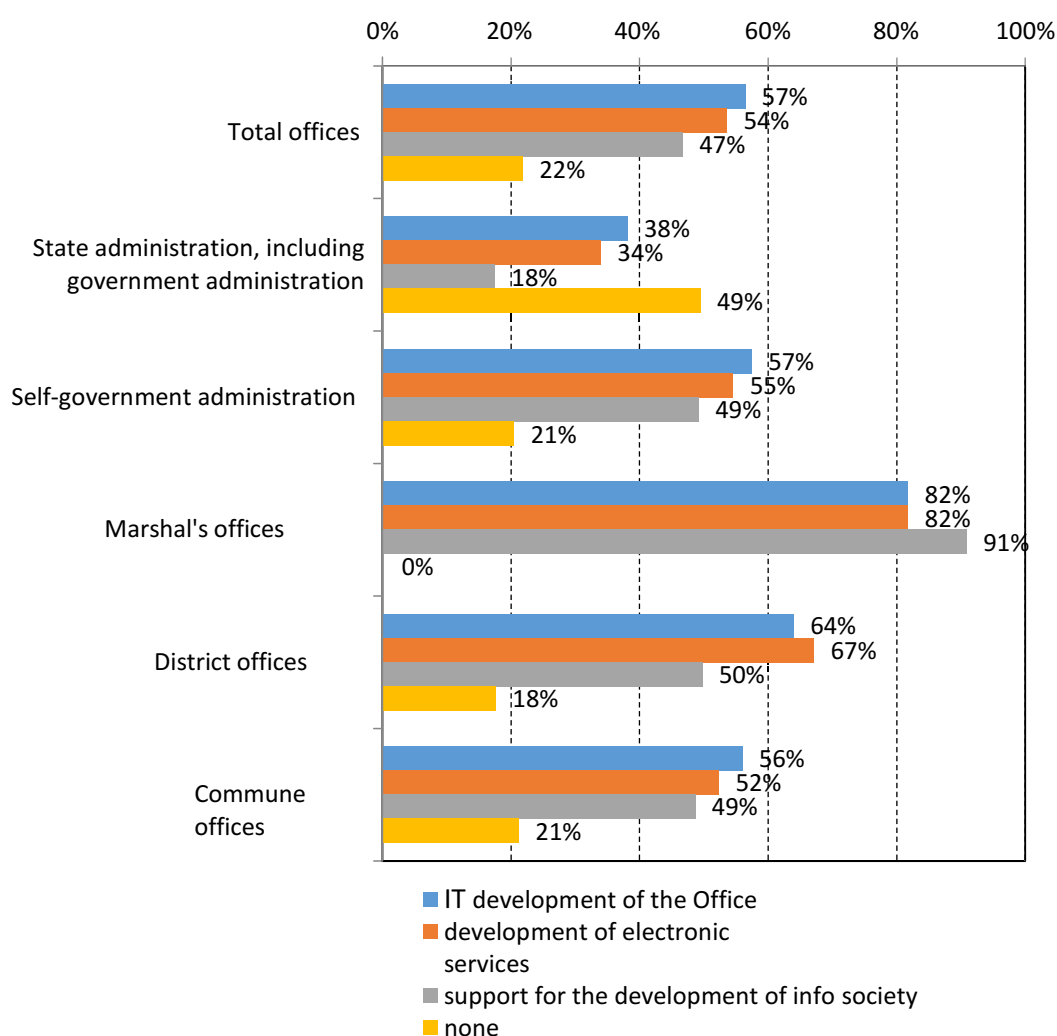
Chart 2. Assessment of the implementation of the strategy with regard to data communication development in 2015 (applies only to the offices that declare having a strategy).



For what purpose, related to digitalization, did the office use or does it currently use EU funds (multiple choice question)?

The EU funds are in Poland a significant pro-development factor, and their right use may cause many advantages at various levels – social, economic or infrastructure levels. They may also be used for the purposes related to digitalization. As it results from the charts, they are used to the greatest extent by self-government authorities: however, they allocate money, first of all, for basic issues related to IT introduction to offices. To the relatively smallest extent actions are undertaken for the benefit of the development of information society. On the one hand, these actions are most difficult, on the other hand, however, spending money in the first place on the IT introduction or development of e-services are undertaking actions, without which the development of information society would not entirely have chances of success.

Chart 3. Purposes related to digitalization, for which offices used or use EU funds in 2015.



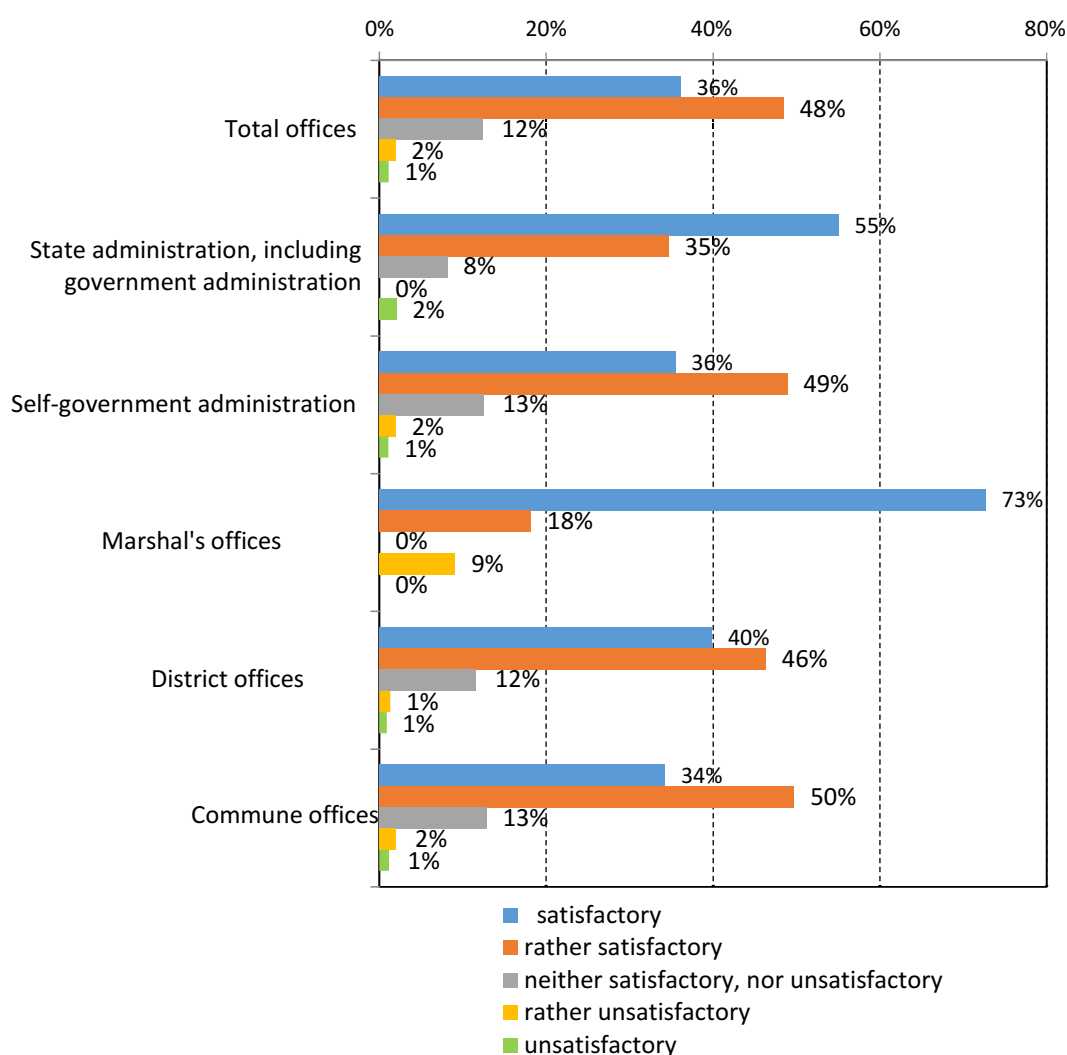
As it seems from the list presented further, the state offices did not use this type of funds to the greatest extent, perhaps because within these offices such are separated that are dedicated to such activities (e.g. the Ministry of Digitalization), therefore others do not overlap their competencies. In the case of the self-government administration, it should be noted that, at the level of communes, the prevailing allocation of funds is for the introduction of information technology, while at the level of districts funds are allocated for actions involving the development

of e-services. Perhaps it is because the basic IT needs could have been satisfied before, which did not happen in the case of commune offices having a relatively smaller financial potential, and thereby smaller investment capacities. Probably attention should be also paid to quality of staff employed in offices, however, there are no grounds to draw any conclusions with regard to potential regularities.

B8. Assessment of results of projects co-financed from EU funds

Effectiveness of activities consisting in financing from the European funds projects related to digitalization was positively assessed. The prevailing assessment express satisfaction, though in the case of the self-government administration clearly positive assessments are relatively less frequent. Firm satisfaction was declared most often by the marshal's offices. It was declared relatively often also by the state administration offices. The reasons for such assessments can be looked for in various areas. This fact may prove that in other cases the project assumptions were not duly perfected, projects were not entirely well completed or expectations of the self-government authorities of the lowest level (because they are mainly concerned parties) were excessive towards these projects.

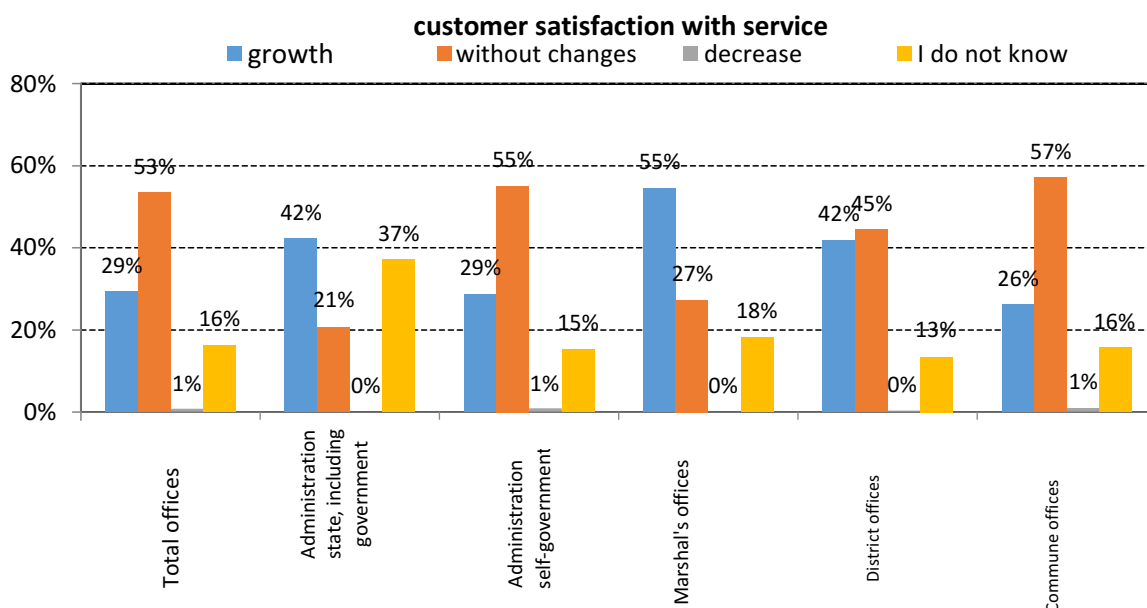
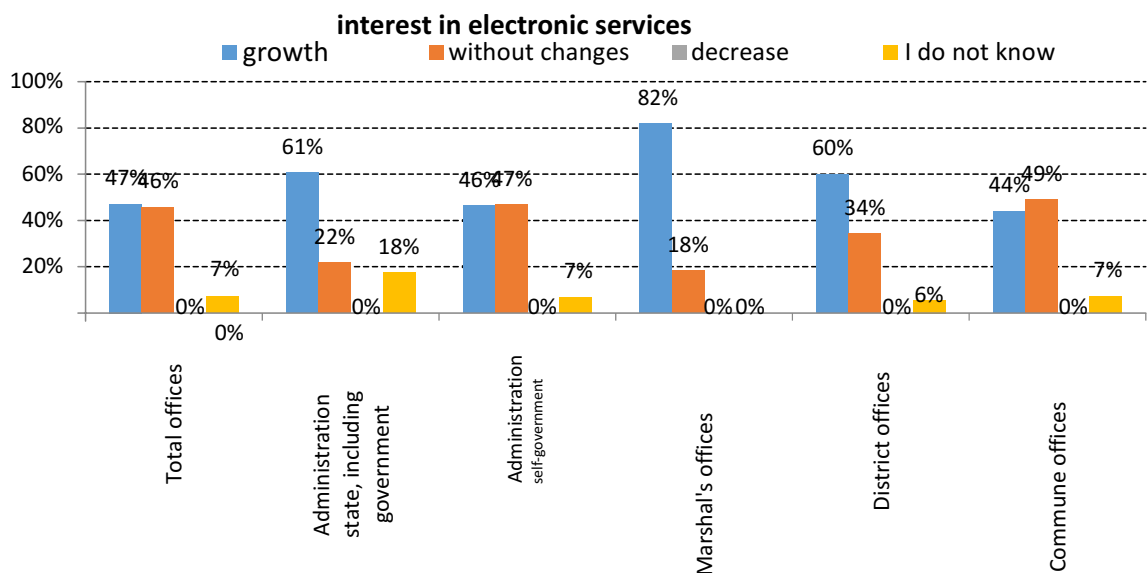
Chart 4. Assessment of results of projects co-financed from EU funds in 2015.

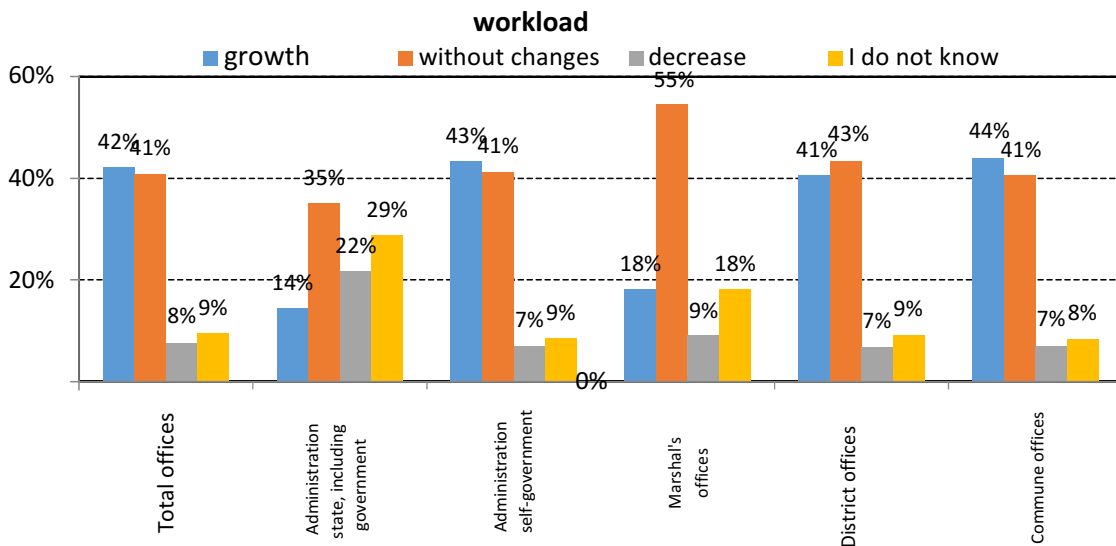
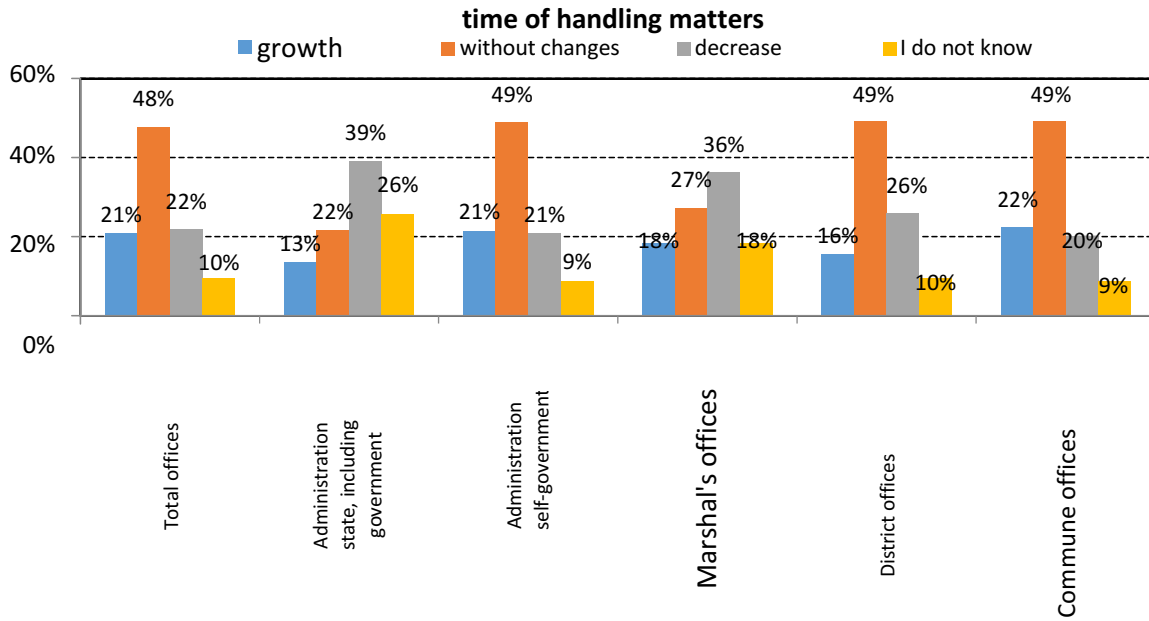
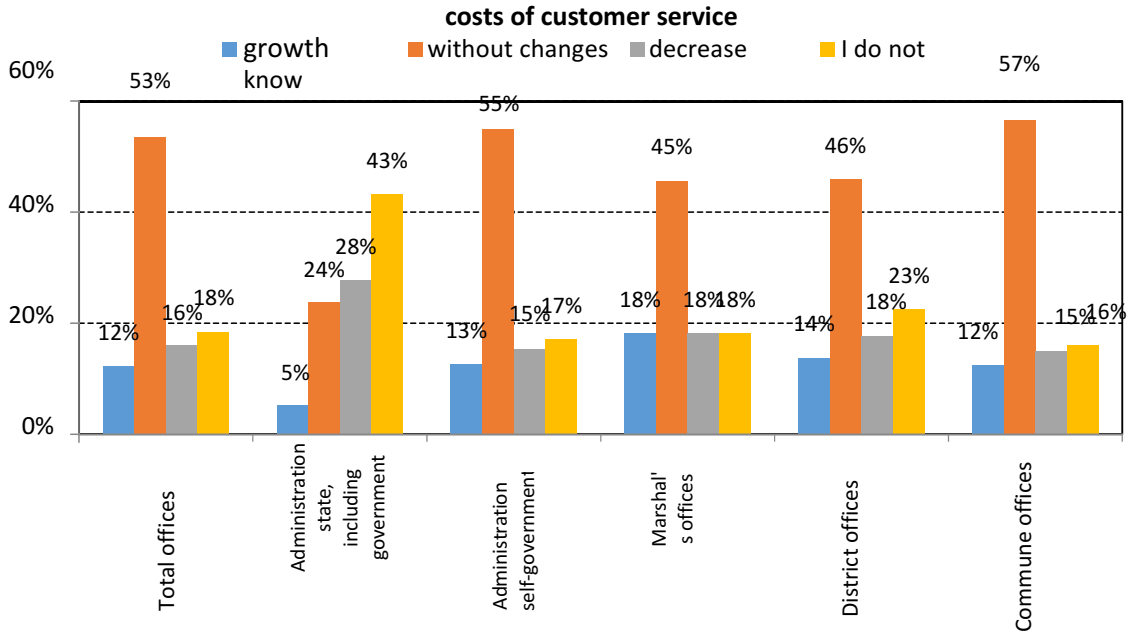


What changes, as a result of the application of data communication technologies in the office, were observed in particular areas?

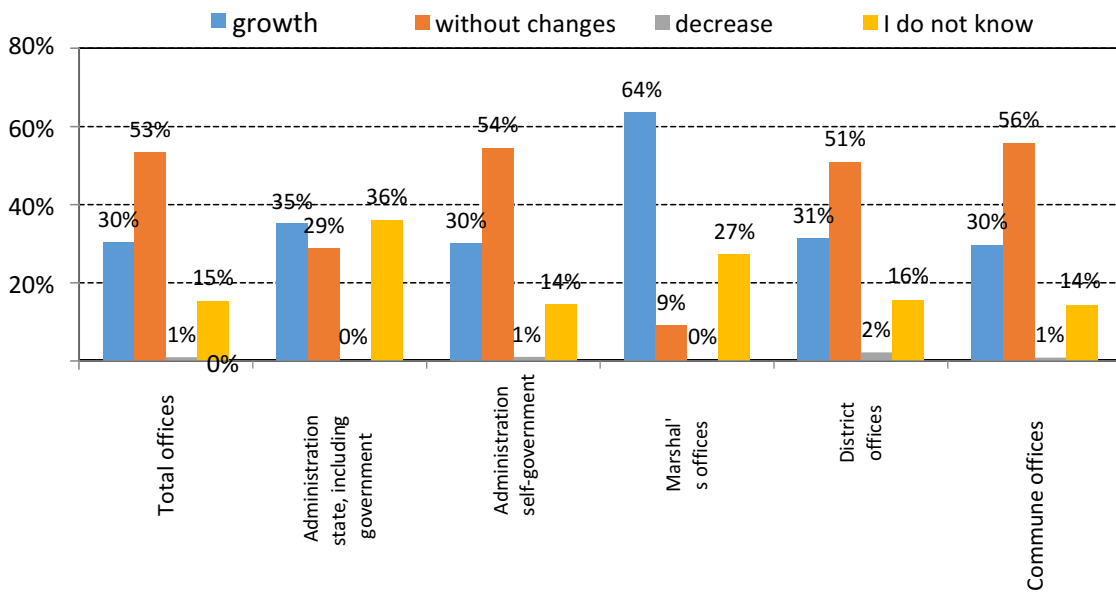
The issue that makes assessments of effectiveness and suitability of projects quite objective is identification of changes taking place in their effect. Looking at the most important part of the presented data, i.e. positive changes, they occur to the largest degree in the area of interest in electronic services and customer satisfaction with service. In other cases, we are dealing rather with the identification by the respondents of the lack of any changes (positive or negative) or attention is paid to increase of workload, which may seem a bit odd taking into account the assumptions of digitalization projects that are to facilitate work. This state of phenomenon is explained slightly by the context of the previously made assessments of results of projects co-financed from EU funds. Only about a third of the assessments were expressing firm satisfaction, which should not be a surprise if clear changes as a result of the application of IT technologies were not noticed.

Charts 5-12. Changes as a result of the application of data communication technologies in offices observed in 2015.

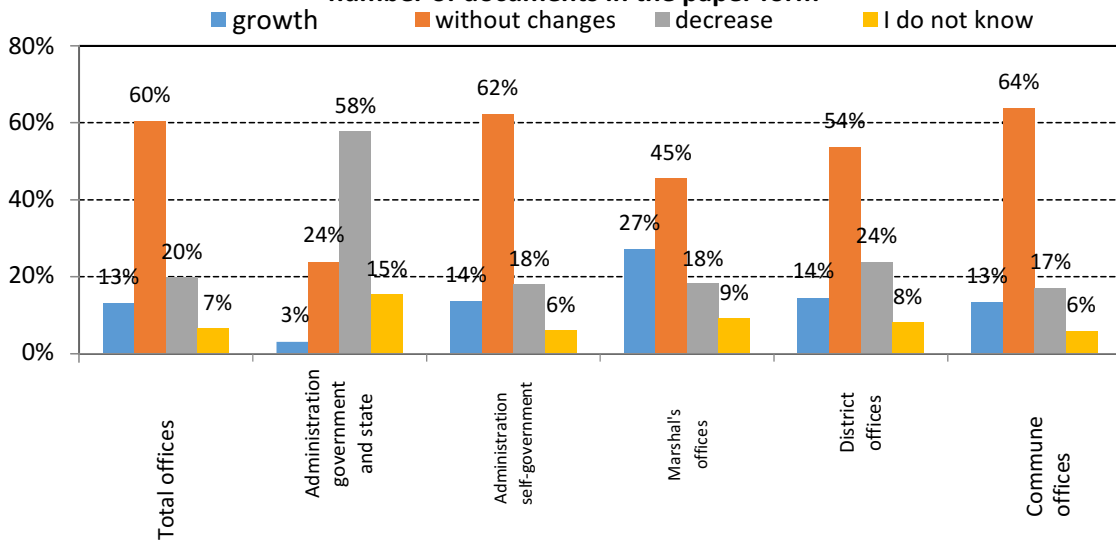




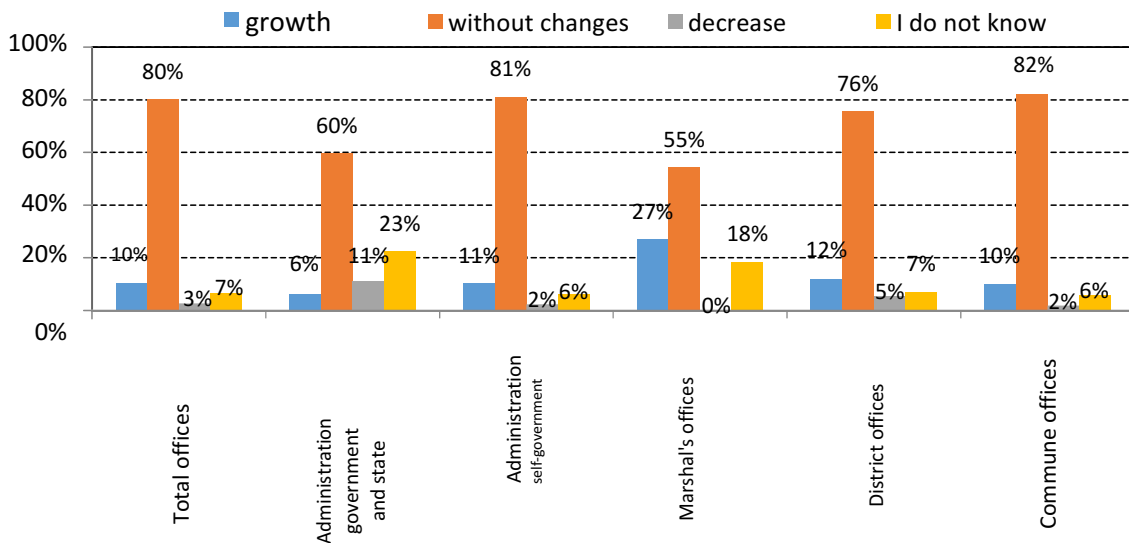
employee innovativeness



number of documents in the paper form



number of employees



Looking at the assessment distribution, taking into account the type of office, it can be seen that:

- the most observations with regard to the increased interest in electronic services came from the representatives of the state administration and, from among self-government units, from representatives of the marshal's offices;
- customer satisfaction with service was assessed well to the greatest extent in the highest level offices, namely offices where citizens in fact handle least cases, and refer first of all to communes or districts;
- reduction in costs of customer service was noticed to the highest extent in the state administration offices, and almost to twice a smaller extent in commune offices;
- time of handling matters decreased only in the case of commune offices with the highest rank in the hierarchy, i.e. state and marshal's offices;
- in the self-government administration offices, especially of the lowest level, workload increased, whose possible cause may be low IT competencies of office employees or the need for keeping simultaneously documentation in the paper and electronic form;
- in this type of administration units, increase in innovation of office employees (in marshal's offices this growth was very strongly noticed) and decrease in the number of documents in the paper form were noticed to the lowest extent;
- significant reduction was observed in the number of documents in the paper version in the state administration offices;
- neutral impact of digitalization projects on the number of employees is noticed.

As regards changes in the assessments of particular effects of the application of data communication technologies over the last few years, certainly we are dealing with slight changes in the assessments, nevertheless they are not clear trends. Certainly, the following should be indicated:

- slight growth in positive assessments as regards customer satisfaction with service as well as slightly, but still increasing interest in electronic services;
- costs drop and time of customer service is reduced;
- employee innovativeness grows;
- the number of documents in the paper form decreases.

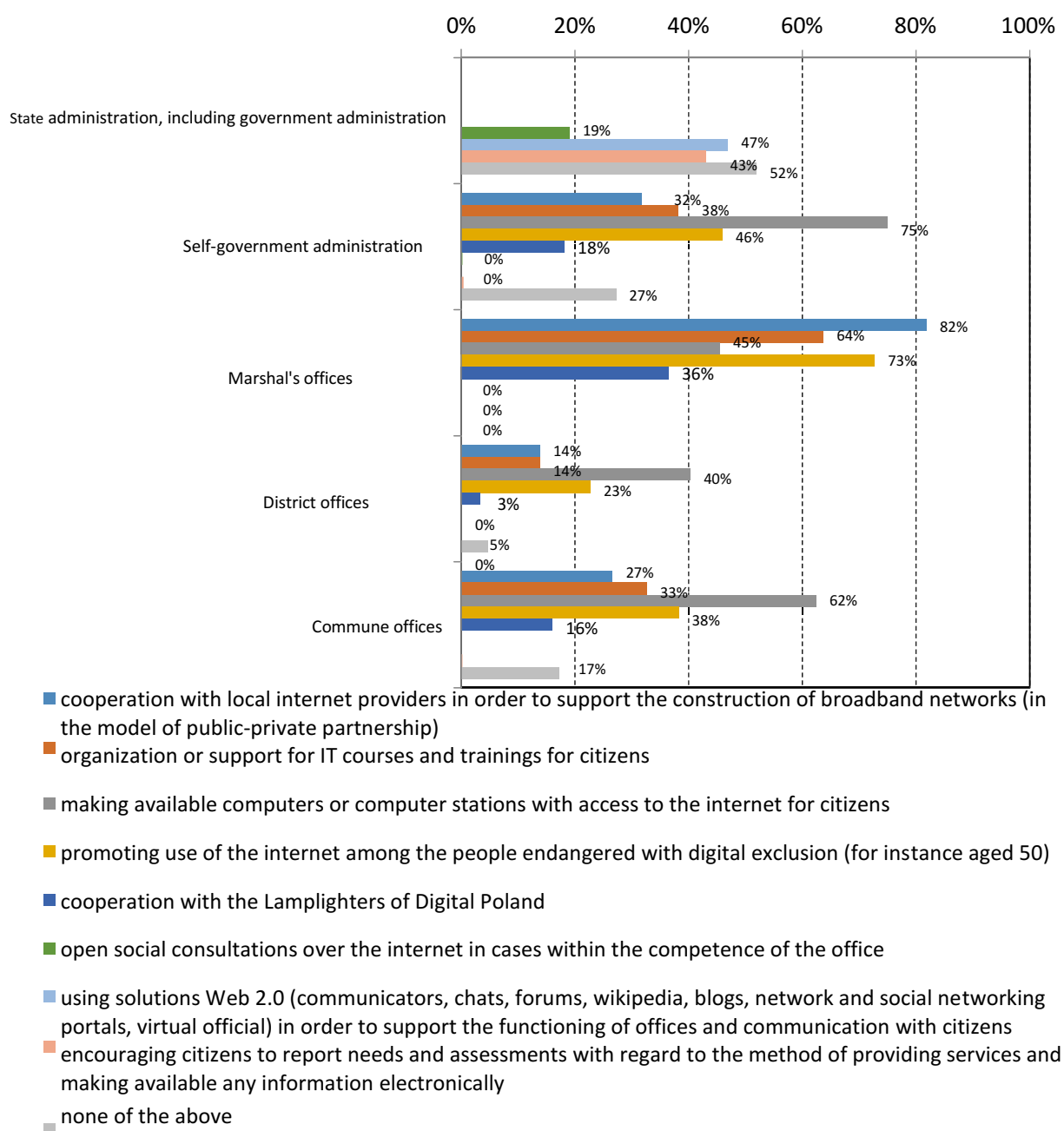
Similar situation is with the distribution of answers of the self-government administration representatives. Similarities can be indicated in the assessments and in most cases the prevailing assessments pay attention to the lack of any changes. Only in the case of workload, the prevailing assessments indicate growth. However, it should be noted that the distribution of assessments is determined by high share of the commune and district self-government representatives.

Information society development

Actions conducted by the office

One of the contemporary challenges of social dev is to build information society in which society particular role and meaning are given to information. Information in such society is used in a wide range in everyday life with the use of various, also modern means of communication and information processing. Different types of offices undertake at their level and in the area of interest various actions aiming at the development of information society. Depending on the type of offices, the prevailing actions largely consist in making available computers or promoting use of the internet (self-government administration), or, in the case of the state administration, various types of actions stimulating communication with the use of web channels.

Chart 13. Actions carried out by the offices in 2015.1



1 The first five options of answers were addressed only to respondents representing the self-government offices. For this reason, the category "Total marshal's offices" was not distinguished.

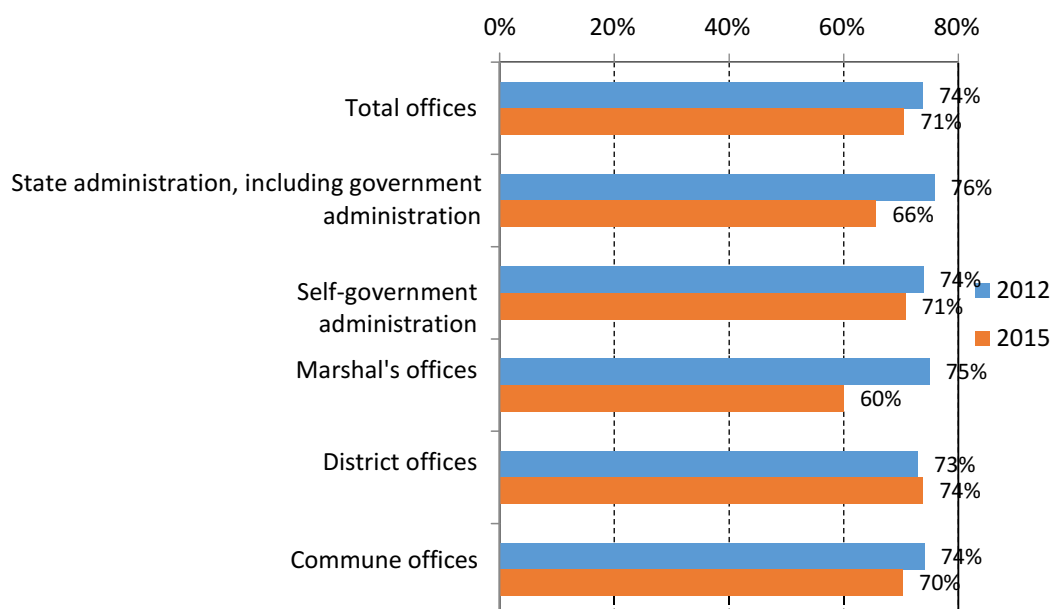
Depending on the level, the self-government administration offices focus on cooperation with internet providers for supporting broadband networks or widely understood digital exclusion counteracting (marshal's offices). On the other hand, district or commune offices focus, apart from promoting the use of the internet, also on making available computer stations. At the same time, it is worth highlighting the fact that the administration is closed to stimuli from the environment, and is not interested in opinions of the society either to a small degree (state administration) or completely (self-government administration). This is proven by a small share of consultations conducted with citizens over the Internet.

IT competencies

Are IT competencies one of the obligatory criteria when hiring employees on substantive positions?

In the previous analyses it has been mentioned that actions of the offices with regard to digitalization are, among other things, a derivative of the organizational culture which consists of employee competencies, and also the way of their verification in the recruitment process. As it turns out, vast majority of the offices declare that require this kind of competencies from new employees. Additionally, such state of affairs is relatively more frequent in commune and district offices, which may result from the fact that among the inhabitants of communes (especially in rural areas) from which office employees are recruited, IT competencies are not so common, in connection with this it is necessary to list them in the folder of desired skills. On the other hand, in the marshal's offices or state administration offices that are located in large cities, IT competencies are in a way an obvious element of competencies and skills of potential and present employees.

Chart 14. Requirements for IT competencies as obligatory criteria when hiring employees to work in the offices on substantive positions in 2012-2015.

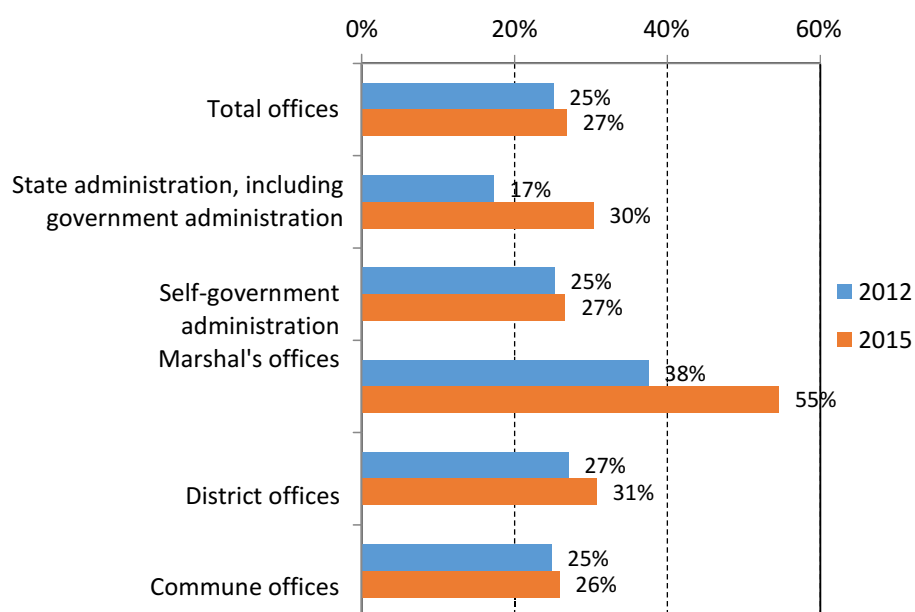


Comparison of indications of office representatives over the past few years did not show significant changes, apart from a small downward trend. It may result from the fact that, in accordance with what has been signalled above, IT competencies start being obvious skills, therefore, they should not be distinguished as a separate qualification required from the job applicant.

Do new office employees undergo mandatory IT training?

Notwithstanding the recruitment process and methods of verification of IT competencies in its course, it is also possible to deliver additional training for people who start work with focus on desired competencies. Only in slightly above one fourth of total offices this kind of practices are applied, slightly more often than in the state administration offices. Among all types of offices, the leaders of using this practice are definitely marshal's offices, in more than a half of which such IT training is delivered. On the one hand, it can result from the consciousness of the essence of this kind of skills, but it is possible, which, in any case, results from the conducted surveys, that the marshal's offices are relatively most advanced when it comes to the use of IT systems whose services are taught to people who begin work. Significant dependencies in the course of the phenomenon over the years 2012-2015 are not confirmed.

Chart 15. New employees undergoing mandatory IT training in 2012-2015.



In which IT introduction area did office employees undergo training in 2015?

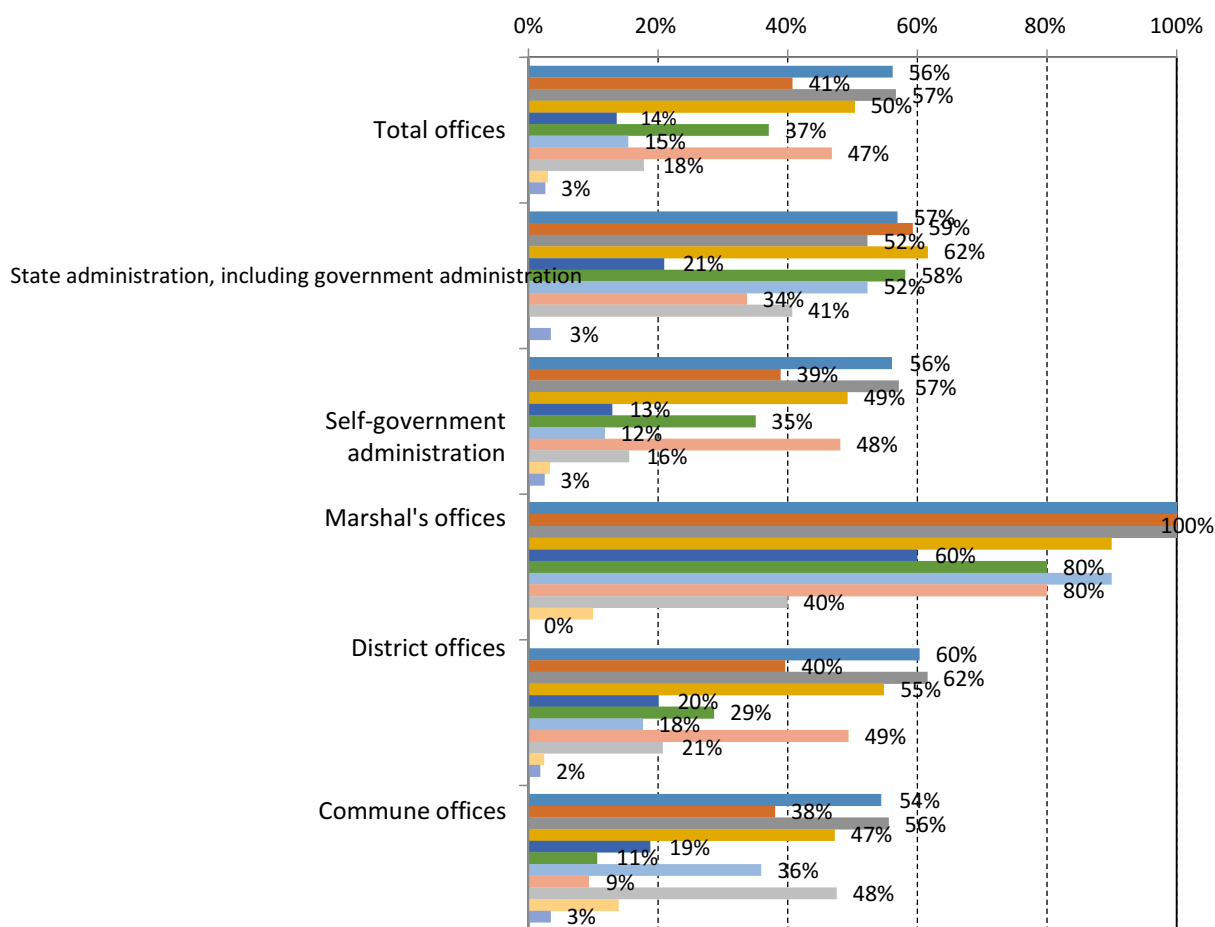
IT trainings delivered by particular offices in 2015 were related mainly to the principles of electronic documentation circulation management or widely understood safety of using IT systems in the context of information processing. In the local administration offices a significant part of training was devoted to the ePUAP system. It is worth indicating that one of the training areas that clearly differentiate the state administration from the self-government administration (in favour of the state administration) are the issues concerning the adaptation of the content of websites to the guidelines WCAG 2.0.

All marshal's offices train employees in information safety, electronic documentation management and management of specialist applications. A considerable part of training applies also to the use of the ePUAP system. In other types of the self-government administration offices, particular kinds of training were delivered by some units. The lowest percentage (3%) opted for training in ECDL e-Urządnik certification, both in the state administration offices and in the self-government administration offices.

Taking account of the territorial distribution of the answers of the self-government administration representatives, in general, it can be stated that in each province the share of particular kinds of training is similar. The proportions of particular kinds of training in each province are, at the same time, dependent on the needs of offices in each of regions. Certainly, at this point attention should be paid to high percentage of training in Podlaskie Province related to electronic documents management. It is probably connected with the implementation of the electronic documentation management system in the province.

Śląskie Province more often than other regions focuses on educating personnel with regard to safety, both in terms of information processing and data communication systems, in addition, it invests more often in certified IT training (databases management, server management, server configuration, virtualization, archiving, ways of use and implementation of electronic services on ePUAP, etc.)

Chart 16. The areas of trainings for office employees related to IT introduction in 2015.



- management of electronic documents in accordance with the requirements imposed by the Code of Administrative Procedure and a new office instruction (electronic official letter - preparation, sending, confirmation of receipt, case sheet and archiving of documentation)
- specialist applications
- information processing safety principles in data communication systems
- safety of IT systems
- standards regarding IT introduction to public entities and interoperability
- office applications
- certified IT training, e.g. database management, server management, server configuration, virtualization, archiving, ways of use and implementation of electronic services on ePUAP,
- ways of use and implementation of the system of electronic services on ePUAP,
- adaptation of a website to the guidelines WCAG 2.0, concerning availability of web content
- preparation for ECDL e-Urzednik certification <https://www.ecdl.pl/e-urzednik>
- none of the above

Use of data communication technologies in the offices

E1. Number of people working in the office which have own e-mail account (namely individual official account) for official use

E2. Number of people working in the office with valid safe electronic signature (verified by an important certificate) for official use

Element of employee IT competencies is, among others, the fact that they use both personalized e-mail accounts and safe electronic signature.

An element worth paying attention is a high disproportion between the government and self-government administration offices, to the disadvantage of the self-government administration where both the number of people having individual e-mail accounts and electronic signatures is relatively lower. In a sense it is obvious that access to individual e-mail accounts is much more common than in the case of electronic signature. It can result even from the fact that this signature is useful, first of all for people representing the office and make decisions that require confirmation.

Referring to the number of people having particular facilitations to the number of people employed in the offices, we can note that the percentage of officials with individual e-mail accounts is smallest in the case of communes. On the other hand, in the case of electronic signature it is inverse, but it can result from the fact that probably substantially such signatures are made available to people who make binding decisions on behalf of particular offices. Number of such people in absolute categories may be similar or vary a bit, however, referring it to the number of employees of a given type of office (and in the commune offices there are a few times less employees than in other offices), we will receive more beneficial indicators.

Table 1. Percentage of employees in offices having in 2015 access to own official e-mail account and valid safe electronic signature.

	Percentage of employees with	
	individual official account	valid safe electronic signature
Total offices	73,7	17,8
State administration, including government	88,1	9,6
Self-government administration	71,9	18,3
Marshal's offices	98,2	14,3
District offices	73,0	11,5
Commune offices	71,8	19,2

Over the years, the average number of officials with individual e-mail accounts significantly increased: having e-mail accounts becomes substantially standard. Similar situation occurs with the users of electronic signature whose relative number increases each year.

Table 2. Percentage of employees in offices having in the years 2013-2015 access to own official e-mail account and valid safe electronic signature.

	2013	2014	2015
Percentage of people who have own e-mail account (that is individual official account) for official use	69,0	71,1	73,7
Percentage of employees with valid safe electronic signature (verified by valid certificate) for official use	15,3	16,2	17,8

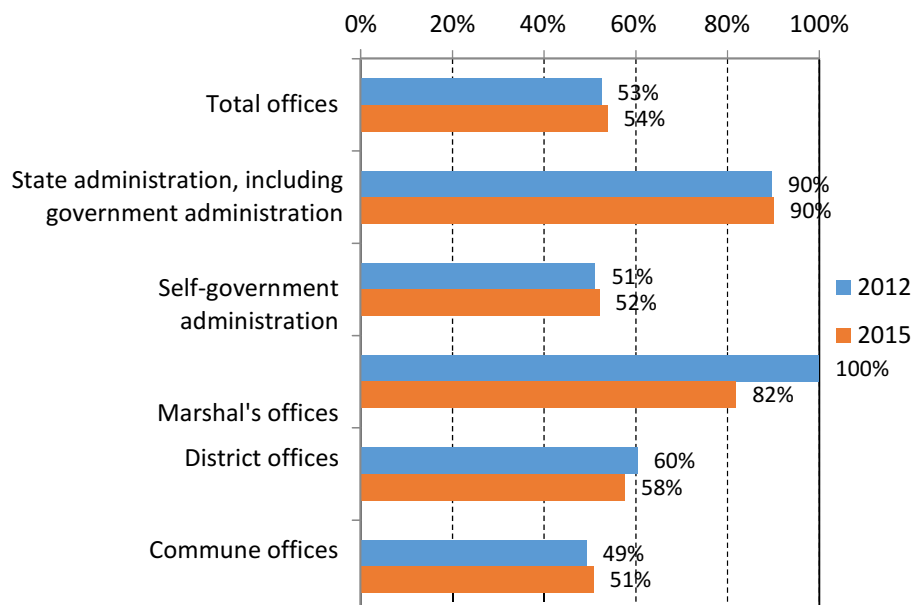
When it comes to the territorial distribution of data, in the case of access to official e-mail accounts, the best situation is in the provinces: Pomorskie, Lubuskie and Małopolskie – in these provinces the ratio of number of employees having such accounts to total number of employees is the most beneficial. On the other hand, the worst situation is Dolnośląskie Province. On the other hand, the largest percentage of employees having valid safe electronic signature is in Małopolska, Podkarpackie and Śląskie Provinces. On the other hand, Lubuskie, Świętokrzyskie, Dolnośląskie and Mazowieckie have the poorest results in this respect.

E3. Does the office provide employees with remote access to e-mail, documents or applications of the office?

Individual e-mail accounts is one of the aspects of using e-mail. Another aspect is the possibility to access e-mail, alike documents or applications of the office, remotely, i.e. from outside the office. At this point a clear disproportion can be seen between the state administration, where almost all offices give such possibility, and the local administration where such possibilities are offered to employees by little more than half of them.

Of course, at this point it should be borne in mind that most are commune offices and district offices. A general principle, seen already in the previous studies, is dependence on rank of the office. In commune offices the percentage of offices that give remote access to e-mail or documents is slightly more than a half. What is important, over the last several years, there were practically no changes in this respect, and these observed changes can largely result from the structure of population, which took part in the current edition of the survey.

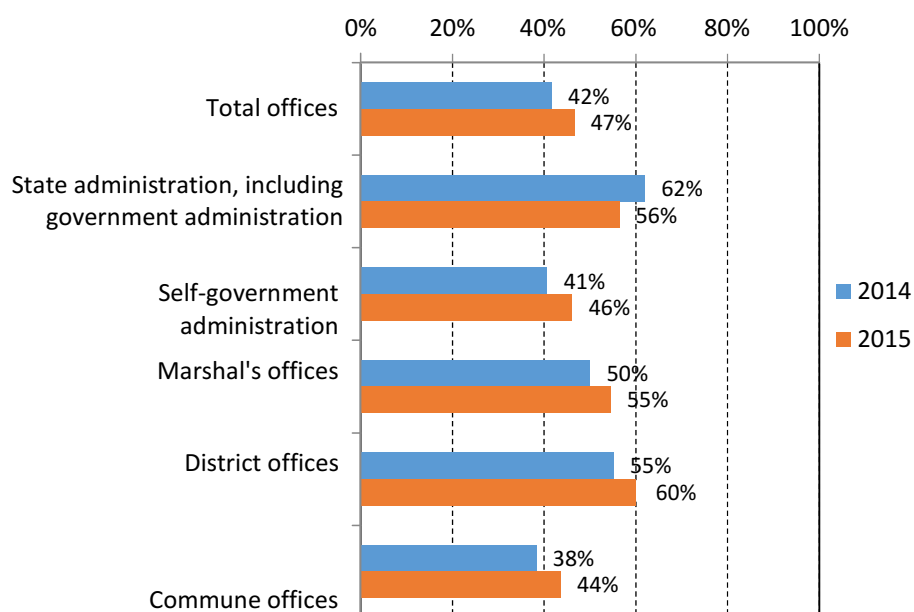
Chart 17. Offices ensuring to employees remote access to the e-mail system, documents or applications of the office in 2012 and 2015.



E4. Does the office use the electronic documentation management system (EZD)?

Limitation in paper documentation as well as traditional circulation of documents may be a factor influencing shortened time of handling official matters as well as may contribute to financial savings (reduction in costs of printouts and deliveries). However, a considerable part of offices, especially of self-government administration, do not make use of such possibility, although it is free. It applies, first of all, to all commune offices because in other types of offices, the electronic documentation management system is certainly used. Upward trends occur in the case of self-government administration, in the case of which this possibility was used by much more offices than a year before. In state administration offices regress is noticeable, however, it probably results from the structure of population of the offices participating in the survey, which involved much more offices than in the previous editions of the survey.

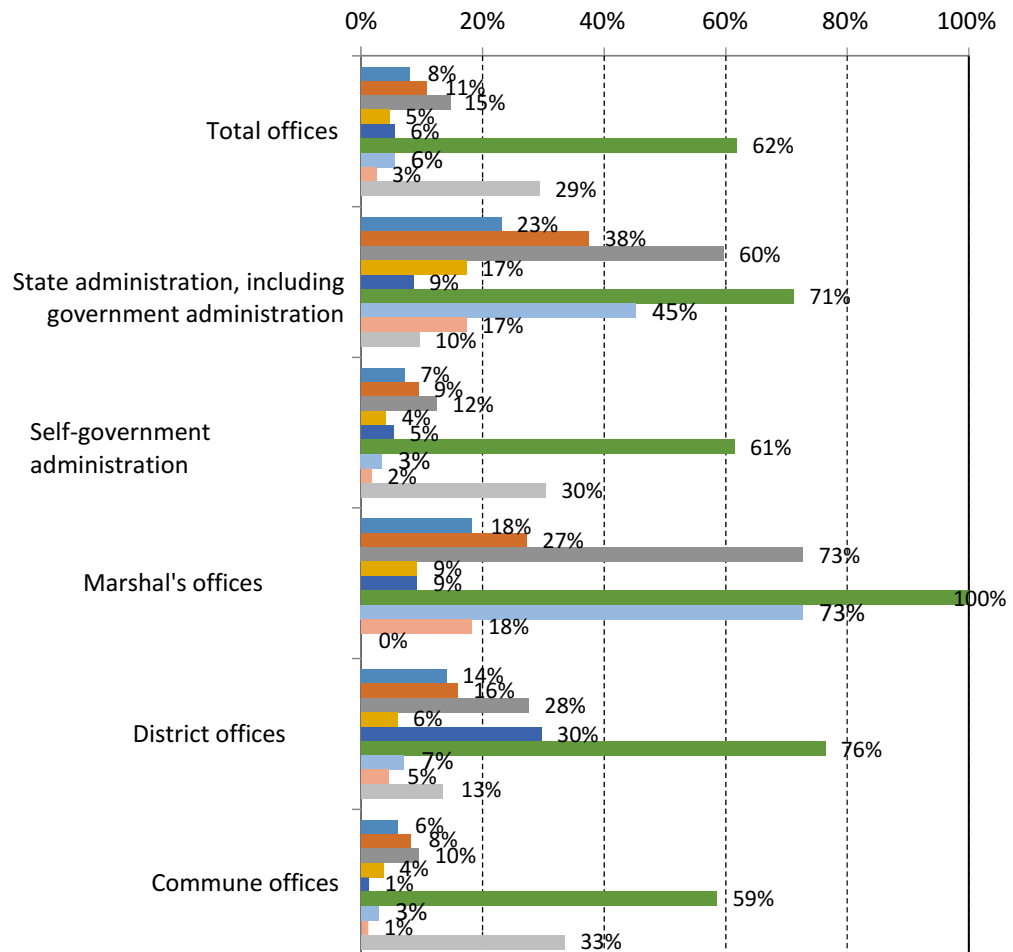
Chart 18. Offices using the electronic documentation management system (EZD) in 2014 and 2015.



Which of the following data communication systems are used by the office?

The basic data communications systems used in offices are these used for managing the content of websites, namely relatively easiest available and being in a way a need towards common application of websites as the present basic information carrier. In addition, systems used for management of internal processes of offices have a relatively big share (for planning resources and helpdesk type).

Chart 19. Data communication systems used in offices in 2015.



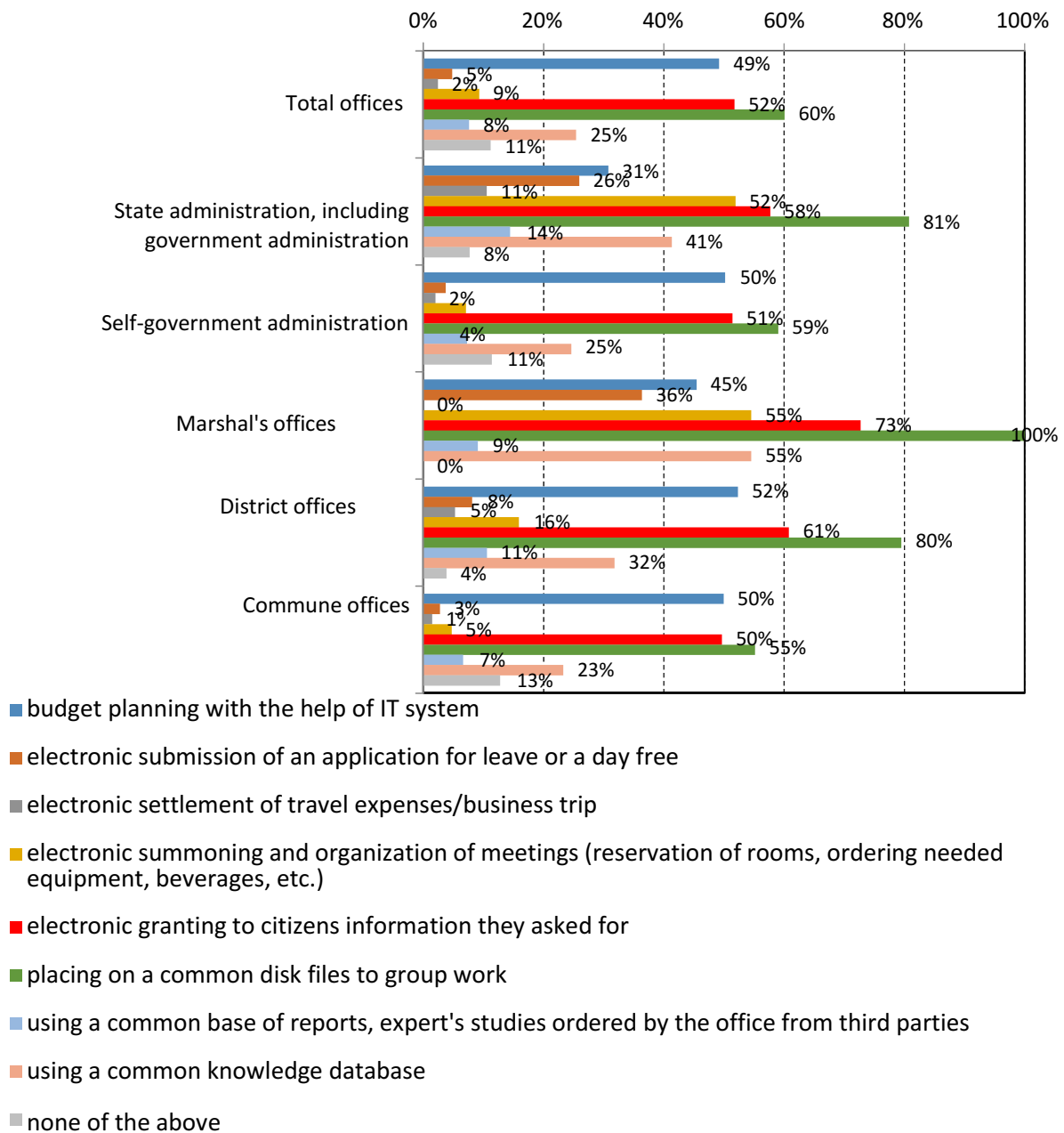
- workflow for effective management of the course of business processes
- ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning: resources such as cash, materials and goods, machines and devices and employees) class systems
- helpdesk type system for employees of the office to report failures and incidents in back-office systems
- helpdesk type system for customers of the office to report failures and incidents in front-office systems
- system for making an appointment in the office (queuing)
- system for managing the content of the website
- system for conducting videoconferences, streamlining communication, distance learning and remote consultations
- system for project management
- none of the above

The state administration offices and marshal's offices quite often use the systems used for conducting videoconferences and streamlining broadly understood telecommunications. The use of data communication systems is least common at the level of commune offices.

Which of the following practices are usually applied in the office?

The use of data communication technologies may considerably streamline works of offices as well as the customer service process. In the surveyed offices, IT systems are used for planning budget, granting to citizens information they requested, but also in the form of common disks to group work. Thus, we are dealing with the use of digital technologies in both aspects, both in the process of service and in the area of internal processes taking place in the office. It is worth noting that far more diverse and more complete range of systems is applied in the state administration, where, IT systems are applied to much greater degree to manage processes within the office. It should be also emphasized that on the opposite pole we can find commune and district offices where the scope of goals of using IT systems is relatively poorest.

Chart 20. Practices in using data communication technologies applied in the offices in 2015.



Electronic correspondence

Please estimate the share/percentage of documents/deliveries received electronically (not only by means of the electronic inbox) in the whole incoming correspondence of the office in the period from 1 January to 30 June 2015

Number of electronic documents received by the offices is diverse. The state administration offices received their definitely – over five times - more than the self-government offices. The average for the state administration offices is 1607.8 and 340.2 for the self-government offices. Among the self-government units, most electronic letters were received in the marshal's offices (715.7), which is a value more than two times greater than the average for the self-government administration offices.

In this group of offices, the number of electronic documents and deliveries drops along with lowering rank of the office – relatively the smallest commune offices receive least electronic deliveries. However, for real assessment of the degree of use of paper form of incoming correspondence, it is necessary to refer to the percentage of electronic deliveries in total incoming correspondence. First, the share of electronic deliveries received by the office in the electronic inbox in the total number of documents is much lower than the share of all electronic documents. The greatest differences (almost 5 times) are recorded in district offices.

Moreover, it should be emphasized that at the level of communes the share of electronic correspondence, both received in the electronic inbox and total, is the highest among all types of self-government administration offices and similar as in the case of the state administration.

Table 3. Electronic documents/deliveries received by the office in the period from 1 January to 30 June 2015

Type of office	Percentage of electronic documents and deliveries received by the office in the electronic inbox in the total number of documents	Percentage of documents/deliveries which were received electronically (not only by means of the electronic inbox) in total incoming
Total offices	9	26
State administration, including government	9	10
Self-government administration	9	27
Marshal's offices	1	-
District offices	5	24
Commune offices	9	28

The analysis of the declared intervals showing the share of incoming electronic correspondence in total correspondence, leads to a conclusion that we have been dealing with the dominance of the traditional form. More than 80% of all offices declared that the share of electronic correspondence (including received by means of the electronic inbox) is in 25% of total incoming documentation, and 15%-that in 50%.

In the case of the state administration, we are dealing with a relatively greater, as compared to the self-government administration, percentage of any kind of electronic correspondence. On the other hand, among the self-government administration offices the biggest shares of correspondence incoming electronically are recorded for communes where, in every sixth office it was declared that the percentage of this kind of correspondence is within 26-50%.

Table 4. The percentage of documents/deliveries, which were received electronically (not only by means of the electronic inbox) in total incoming correspondence of the offices in the period from 1 January to 30 June 2015.

Interval	Total offices	Administration state, including government	Self-government administration	Marshal's offices	District offices	Commune offices
0 to 25%	80%	74%	81%	100%	90%	79%
26 to 50%	15%	16%	15%	0%	7%	16%
51 to 75%	4%	5%	4%	0%	3%	4%
76 to 100%	1%	5%	1%	0%	0%	1%

Analysis of changes taking place over the past two years gives rise to optimism. We are dealing with increasing share of electronic correspondence in total correspondence handled by the offices. Apart from the marshal's offices where, in 2014 and 2015, this share was declared at a similar level, indications to the interval 26-50% increased significantly (almost twice).

Similar changes can be noticed when we take into account the territorial division, though the scale of these changes is not identical. And so, apart from provinces where the percentage of indications to the second interval increased 2 or 3 times to the level of approximately 20% (Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Lubuskie or Podlaskie), there are provinces where not only were increases small, but also the level of share of electronic correspondence in total remained relatively low (Śląskie or Zachodniopomorskie).

Table 5. Percentage of documents/deliveries received electronically (not only with the use of the electronic inbox) in total incoming correspondence of offices in the years 2014-2015

Type of office	0-25%		26-50%		51-75%		76-100%	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Total offices	87%	80%	8%	15%	3%	4%	2%	1%
State administration, including government	81%	74%	9%	16%	6%	5%	4%	5%
Self-government administration	88%	81%	8%	15%	2%	4%	2%	1%
Marshal's offices	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
District offices	92%	90%	5%	7%	2%	3%	1%	0%
Commune offices	87%	79%	9%	16%	3%	4%	2%	1%

Please estimate share/percentage of documents/deliveries sent electronically (not only with the use of the electronic inbox) in total outgoing correspondence of the officio in the period from 1 January to 30 June 2015

In sending documents electronically significant differences between the state administration and the self-government are noticeable. The state administration offices sent by means of ESP many times more documents than in the case of the self-government administration. Hence, it can be seen that the ETC system is much better implemented at the level of the state administration, while the self-government authorities are dominated by traditional attitude to correspondence.

If, in turn, we take into account the whole electronic correspondence (not only sent by means of ESP), then indicators in the case of the self-government administration are much higher. Especially in the case of the commune offices, where almost one fourth of correspondence is sent electronically. Thus, as it can be seen how at the level of the self-government administration offices we are dealing with low use of ESP with simultaneous readiness to use electronic method (as probably cheaper alternative) of correspondence. In the group of the self-government administration offices we are dealing in general with a greater proportion of traditional outgoing correspondence, especially at the level of district and marshal's offices.

Table 6. Electronic documents/deliveries sent by the office in the period from 1 January to 30 June 2015.

Type of office	Percentage of electronic documents and deliveries sent by the office by means of the electronic inbox in total number of documents	Percentage of documents/deliveries sent electronically (not only with the use of the electronic inbox) in total outgoing correspondence of the office
Total offices	6	22
State administration, in government	13	15
Self-government	5	22
Marshal's offices	1	5
District offices	6	7
Commune offices	5	23

Looking at the declared intervals, most outgoing correspondence is still dominated by the traditional paper form. Almost 90% of total offices declared that the share of electronic correspondence (including sent by means of the electronic inbox) is in 25% of total outgoing documentation, and 10% - that in 50%. The situation is more beneficial in the case of the state administration. In turn, within the self-government administration, relatively largest shares of correspondence sent electronically are recorded in the commune offices (in the case of every 10th office electronic correspondence is within 26-50%).

Table 7. Percentage of documents/deliveries, which were sent electronically (not only with the use of the electronic inbox) in total outgoing correspondence of offices in the period from 1 January to 30 June 2015.

Interval	Total offices	State administration, including government	Self-government administration	Marshal's offices	District offices	Commune offices
0 to 25%	87%	66%	89%	100%	93%	88%
26 to 50%	10%	21%	10%	0%	5%	10%

51 to 75%	2%	9%	2%	0%	1%	2%
76 to 100%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Similarly as in the case of incoming correspondence, also at this point we are observing in the years 2014-2015 beneficial changes, though they occur to a slightly less degree. In case of each of type of offices, the level indications of the smallest from the intervals describing the share of electronic correspondence in total outgoing correspondence of offices decreased.

Table 8. Percentage of documents /deliveries outgoing electronically (not only with the use of the electronic inbox) in total incoming correspondence of offices in the years 2014-201 5

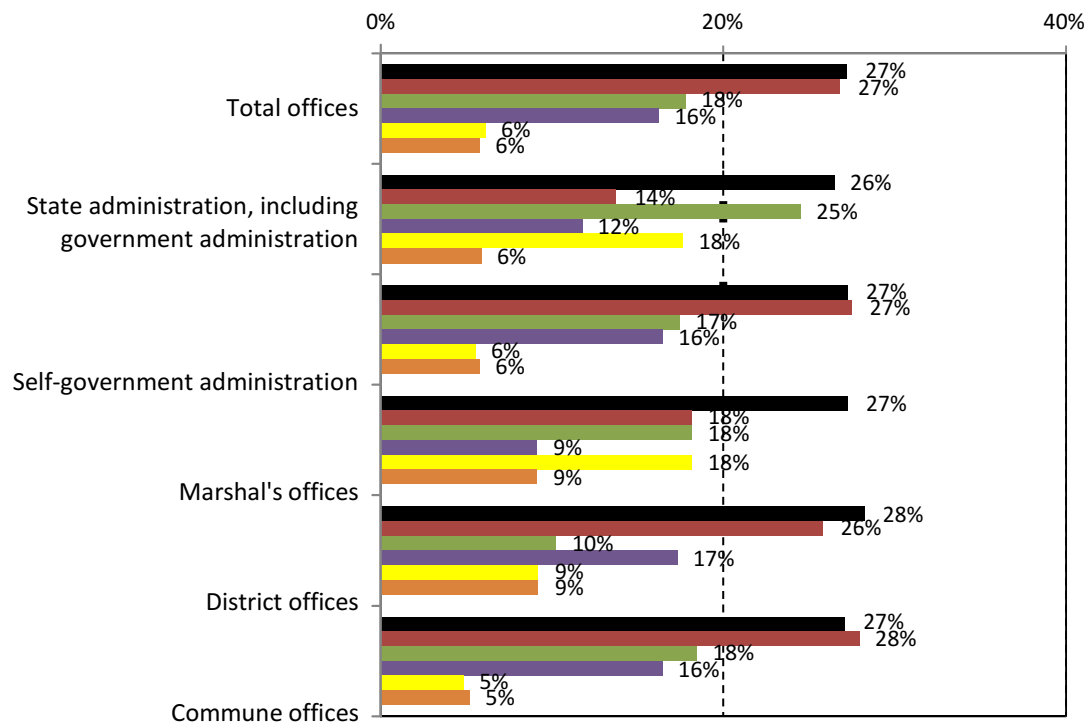
Type of office	0-25%		26-50%		51-75%		76-100%	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Total offices	91%	87%	7%	10%	2%	2%	1%	0%
State administration, including government	80%	66%	13%	21%	4%	9%	3%	4%
Self-government administration	91%	89%	6%	10%	2%	2%	1%	0%
Marshal's offices	93%	100%	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%
District offices	94%	93%	4%	5%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Commune offices	91%	88%	7%	10%	1%	2%	1%	0%

What is the main element hindering restriction or removal of paper from correspondence with other administration units, i.e. basing on the electronic form?

Two main obstacles in limiting or eliminating paper correspondence with other administration units and switching to the electronic form of documents are treating the electronic form of documents as non-equivalent towards the paper version, and restrictions arising from the specific operation of the ePUAP system.

It was indicated by 27% of all surveyed offices, and the state offices were indicating slightly more in the first place the issue of the lack of equivalence between the electronic and paper form of documents, and the self-governments were indicating the issue of restrictions of the ePUAP system. In the first case, we are dealing with a remnant of tradition and comprehensive bureaucracy and probably the issue of mentality, attaching giant importance to the paper records towards mistrust to modern solutions. In the second case, the assessment of restrictions of the specific nature of operation of the ePUAP system is more critical in self-government units than state offices that indicated this obstacle in removing the paper form was indicated twice less frequently.

Chart 32. Main obstacles in restriction or removal of paper from correspondence of offices with other administration units in 2015.



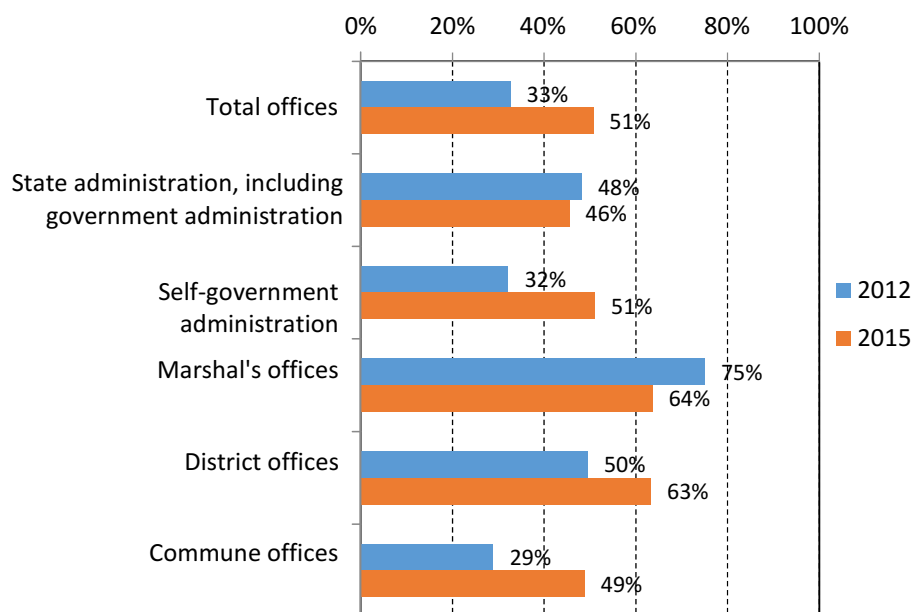
- treating the electronic form of documents as non-equivalent paper
- form restrictions arising from the specific character of ePUAP operation
- formal requirements of other offices
- habit
- other reason
- decision of office management

Provision of electronic services

Does the office make available electronic services other than based on the so-called model general letter (general electronic model)?

Half of Polish offices provide the electronic services other than based on the so-called model electronic letter. For the state administration, this indicator is 46% and for the self-government administration – 51%. Among the self-government administration offices high values were recorded, especially for the marshal's offices (64%) and district offices (63%). Once again, we are dealing with the situation of increasing values of indicators depending on the hierarchy of offices - electronic services are made available least frequently at the level of commune offices. At the same time, it is worth noting one significant fact – despite relatively lowest share of electronic services in district and commune offices, the level of this share significantly increased over the past 3 years.

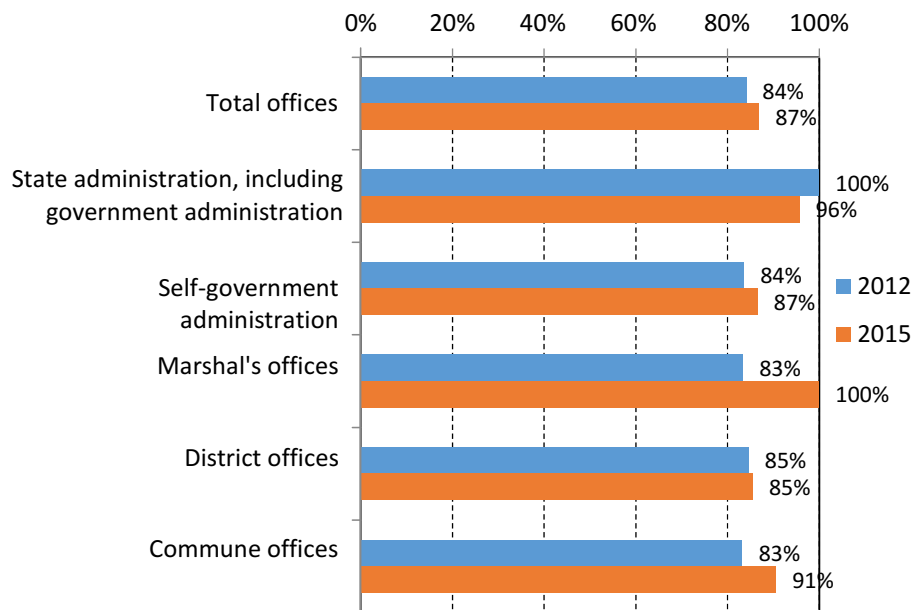
Chart 33. Offices making available in 2012 and 2015 electronic services other than based on the so-called model general letter.



Does the office inform citizens and entrepreneurs about the possibility to use public administration services over the internet and encourage to use this form of handling official matters?

A considerable part of offices inform citizens and entrepreneurs about the possibility to use public administration services over the internet and encourage to use this form of handling official matters. For total offices this value is 87%, like in the case of the self-government administration. Slightly higher indications were recorded by the state offices – 96%. In general, we are dealing with the situation where only a few offices do not undertake this type of information efforts. Even at the level of communes and districts, almost 90% of the offices take actions to increase the level of using administration services over the internet.

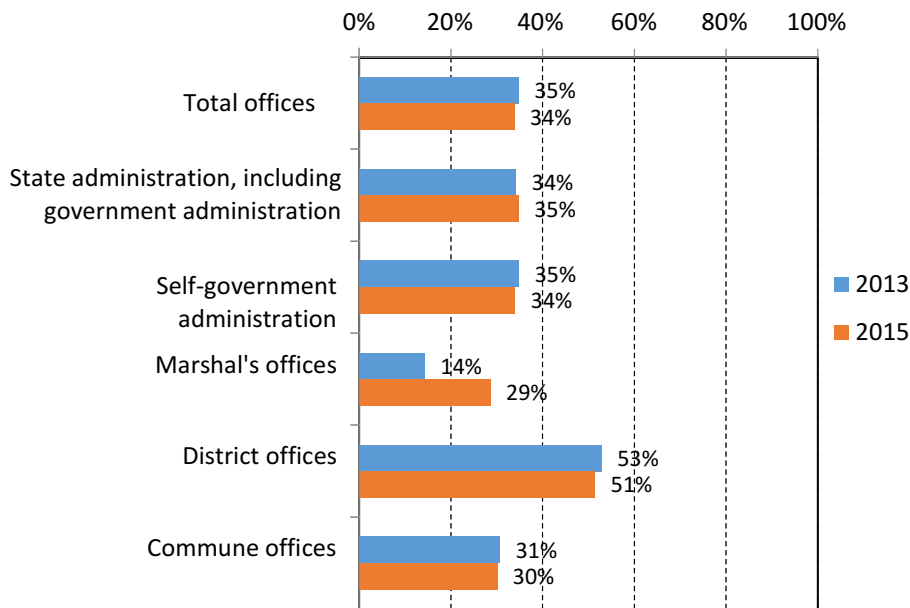
Chart 34. Offices informing citizens and entrepreneurs about the possibility of using by public administration services over the internet in 2012 and 2015.



Does the office enable customers to track progress in processing a case over the internet?

Only 1/3 of total offices enable tracking progress in processing a case over the internet. Results are similar both for the state administration and for the self-government administration. They are 35% and 34%, respectively. Among the self-government administration offices, the largest values in the examined topic were recorded in district offices. Over the past two years, the situation in this aspect practically did not change.

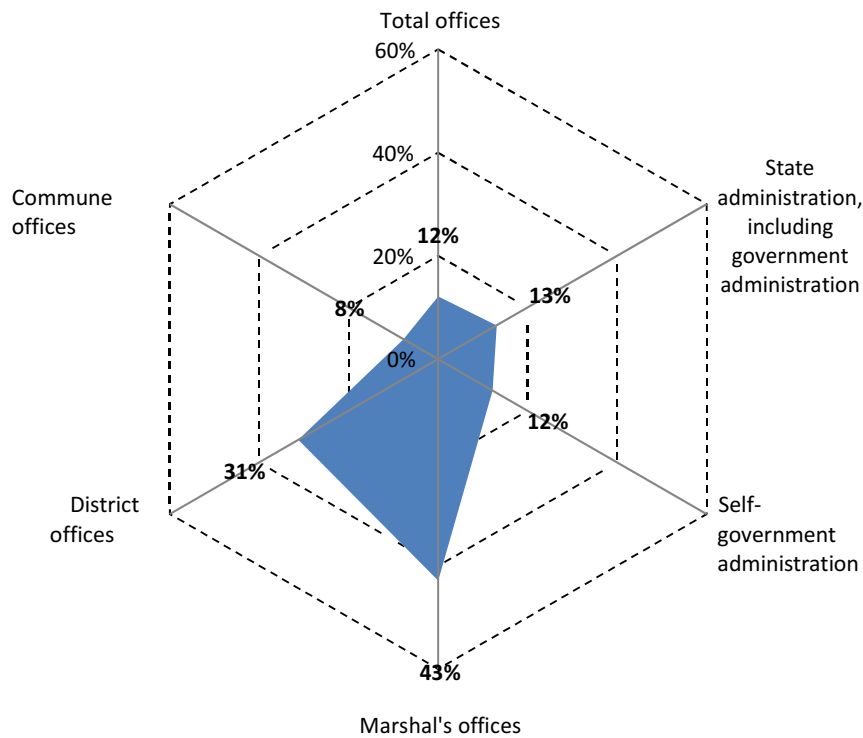
Chart 35. Enabling office customers to track progress in processing the case over the internet in 2013 and 2015.



Does the office enable arranging a visit online?

Percentage of offices that enable arranging a visit on the internet is low and is 12% of total offices nationwide. There is no greater difference between the state offices, and the self-government offices: values are 13% and 12%. Best results among different types of offices were recorded by marshal's offices – 43% , and district offices - 31%. On the other hand, the value which characterizes commune offices is definitely too low – only 8%. We have thus far reaching dependence connected with the hierarchy of offices. Low percentage of commune offices may result, on the one hand, from low level of office digitalization, but also from habits and low IT competencies of local communities, especially in rural areas.

Chart 21. Enabling office customers to arrange a visit online in 2015.



The value of the discussed indicator did not change over the past few years. The year 2015 is characterized by the same value as the year 2013. So either funds allocated for support in this regard proved ineffective, or the discussed issue is not (after all like many from among the discussed issues) priority for self-government authorities, especially at the level of commune.

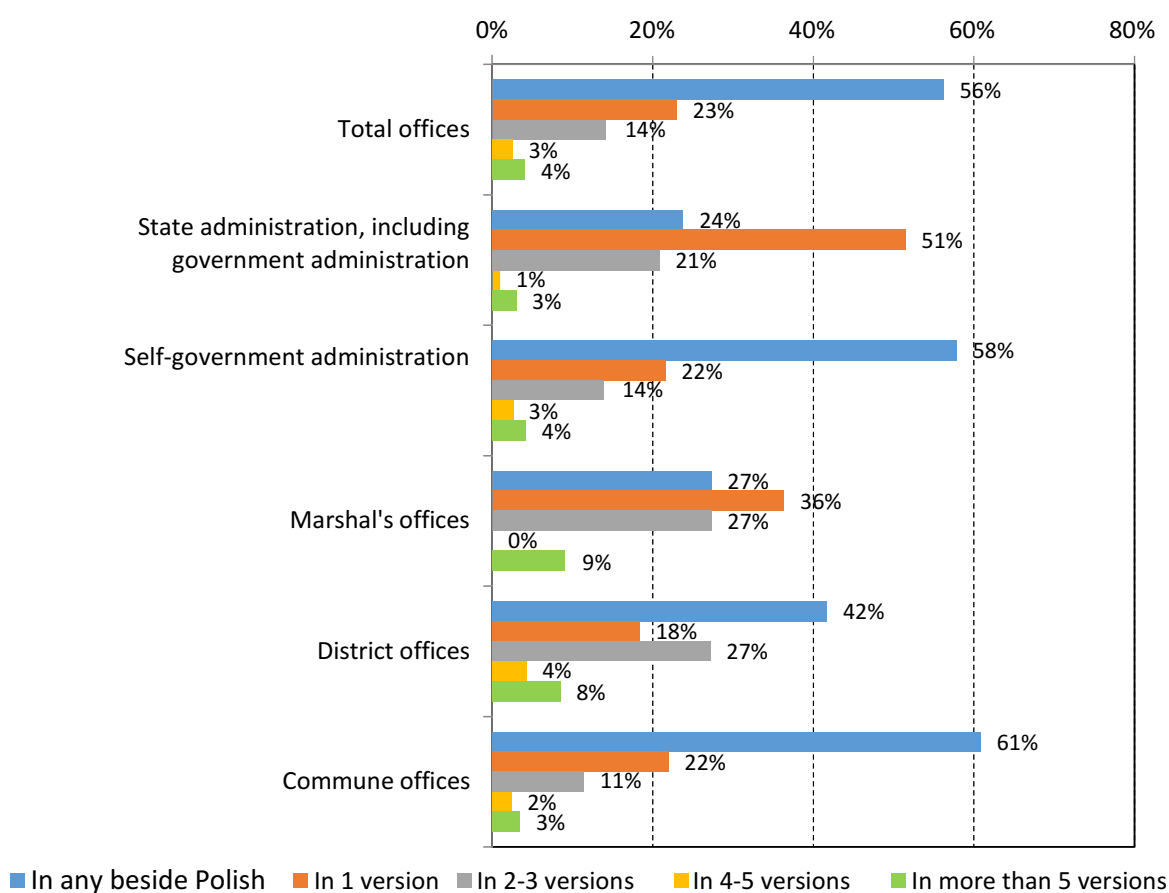
Website

In how many language versions (beyond Polish) is the office website available?

More than a half (56%) of offices have a website only in Polish, and 23% have a foreign language version beyond the Polish version. This indicator is unsatisfactory. However, considerable differences in this issue should be noted taking into account the type of office.

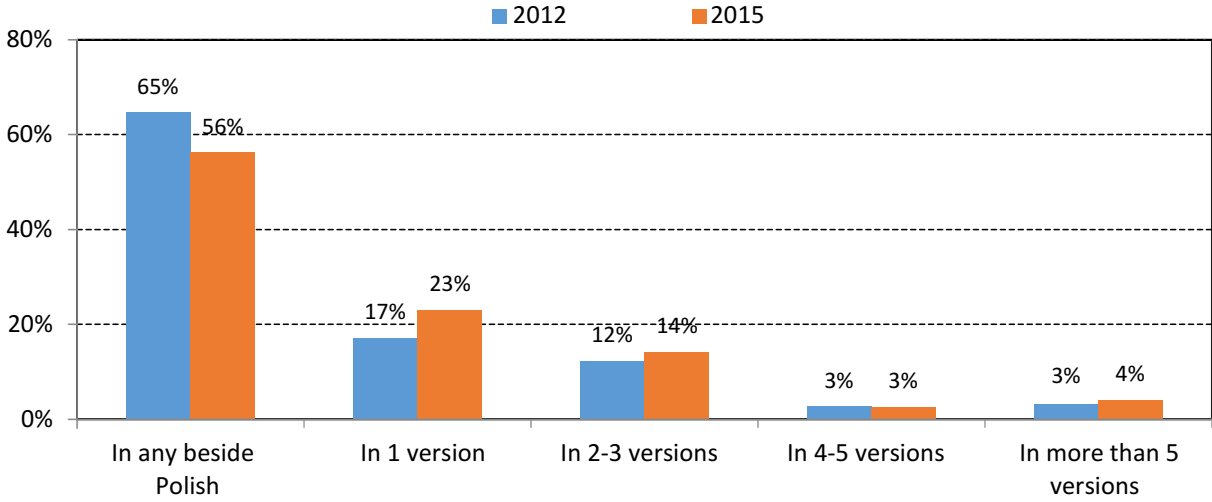
The state administration is characterized by better results than the self-government units. More than a half (51.5%) of the state offices have one foreign language version, whereas for the self-government units this percentage is only 21.5%. On the other hand, as much as 58% of the self-government offices have only a Polish version of the website. The self-government units show the biggest need for changes in this area and actions are necessary aimed to change the present situation.

Chart 22. Number of language versions (beyond Polish) in which websites of the offices were run in 2015.



The situation related to the number of language versions of websites has improved since 2012. Percentage of the offices that declare one (beside Polish) version of the websites increased quite significantly, because from 17% to 23%, and the percentage of the offices that declare additional 2-3 versions increased from 12% to 14%.

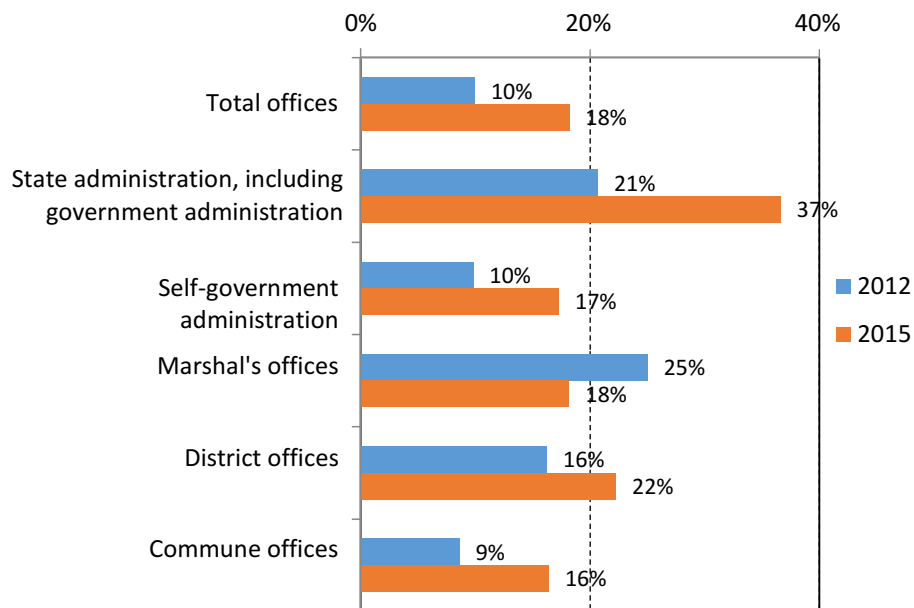
Chart 23. Number of language versions (beyond Polish) in which websites of the offices were run in 2012 and 2015.



Does the office website meet the recommendations of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.0 <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/> for data communication systems in terms of availability for the disabled, subject to the AA level?

The office website meets the recommendations of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.0 (presented at <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/>), for data communication systems in terms of availability for the disabled, subject to the AA level, among 18% of total surveyed offices. Significantly better statistics were recorded by the state administration offices where this percentage is 37%. This value is more than two times higher than for the self-government offices (17%). Once again, among the self-government offices the best results were recorded by websites of the district offices (22%). And once again, in all types of offices beyond the marshal's offices progress was recorded in this respect as compared to 2012.

Chart 24. Percentage of websites of offices which, in the years 2012 and 2015, were meeting the recommendations of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.0 in terms of availability for the disabled.

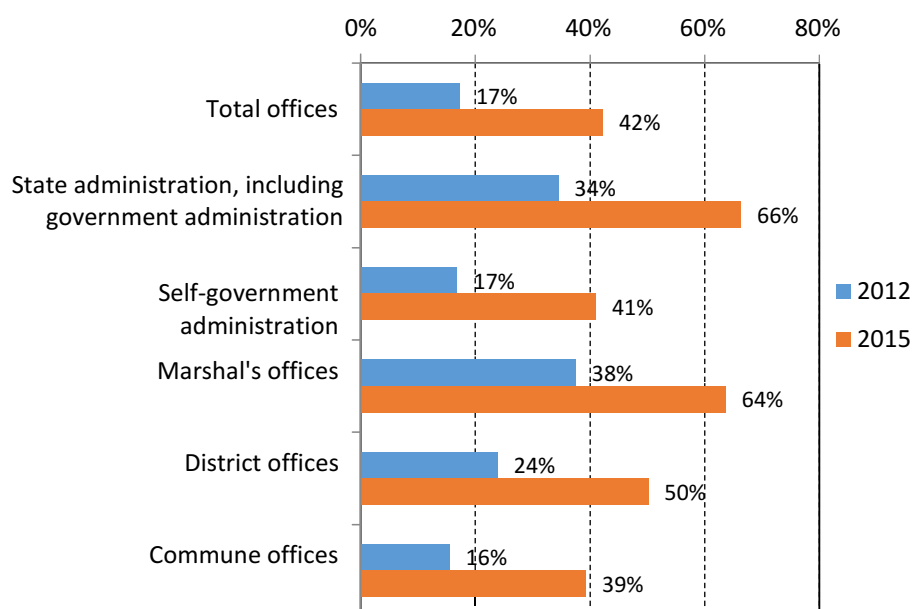


Is the office website adapted to service by means of mobile phones and mobile devices?

Less than a half (42%) of the offices have a website adapted to service by means of mobile phones and mobile devices. At various administration levels we can observe significant differences, since as much as 2/3 of the state offices declare to have so adapted website. From among self-government administration this percentage is, on the other hand, only 41%, and the poorest results in this aspect are recorded for websites of communes.

Indicators, which characterize the self-government administration offices should be considered as unsatisfactory, especially towards growing popularity of mobile devices that ensure browsing of websites. A positive signal is, however, that within three years the situation got clearly improved and in any type of office we are dealing with growth in percentage of websites adapted to the standards of mobile devices. Upward trend is a positive symptom of adjusting means of transfer of information to any emerging trends in communication and technology. Without doubt, it should persist in the future years.

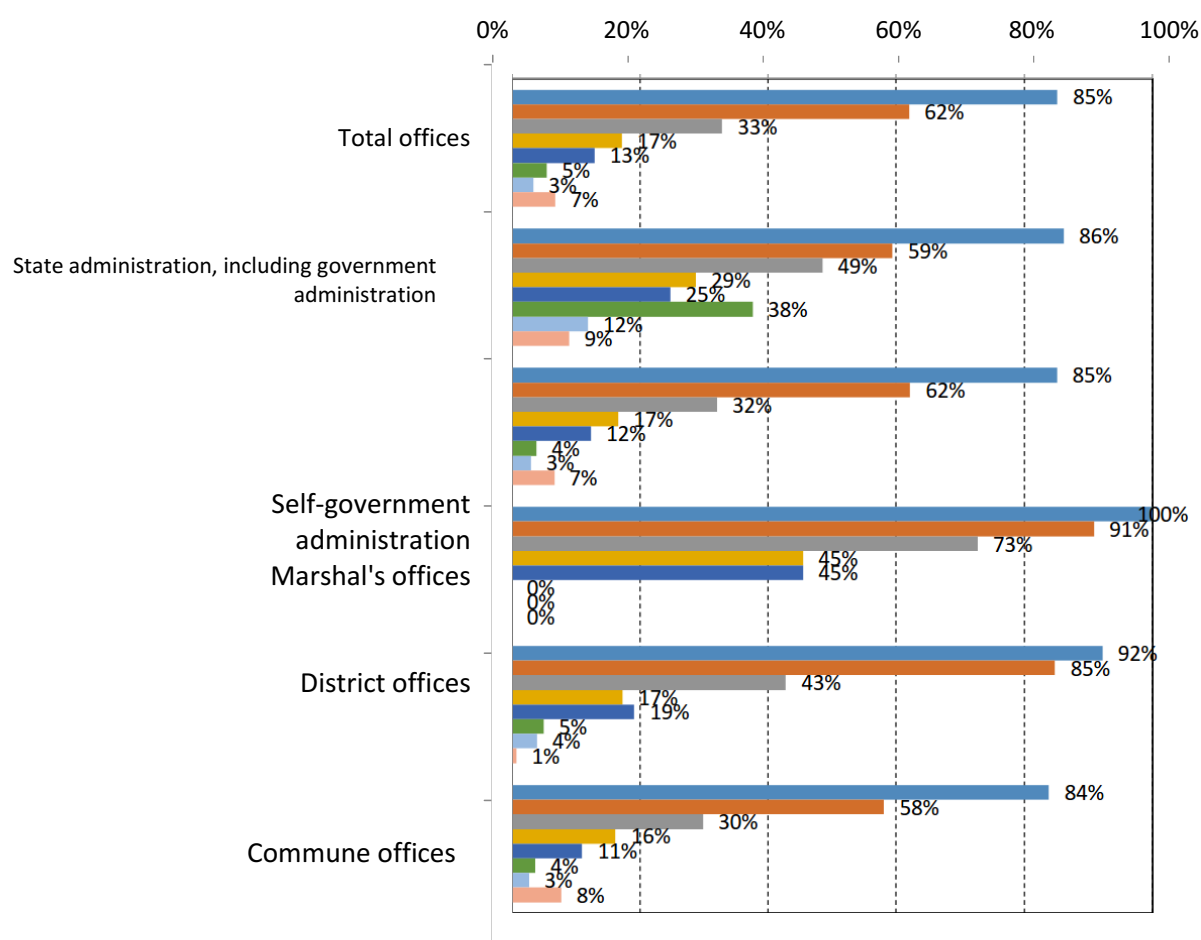
Chart 25. Percentage of office websites which, in the years 2012 and 2015, were adapted to service by means of mobile phones and mobile devices.



Please mark facilitations of the office website.

According to the information provided by the respondents, the most frequent convenience of the websites is a search engine, folder of services provided by particular offices (supplemented with the option of the so-called FAQ) and the option of subscribing to the newsletter. The proportions of particular facilities are similar for the government and self-government administration, with the only difference that in the case of the second group the option of frequently asked questions is clearly rare. What is interesting, among the self-government offices it is not present at all in the marshal's offices, which, as a matter of fact, do not provide direct services for the inhabitants, nevertheless, imitating being in a similar situation state administration offices, would prepare such sets of answers.

Chart 26. Facilitations of the office websites in 2015.



- search engine
- folder of services/matters with the explanation how and where they can be handled
- a possibility of subscribing to the newsletter or sending headings of messages and novelties on the website (special information channel RSS - Really Simple Syndication)
- information about duties and rights of citizens, presented according to the user profile or life events
- information about the way the Office treats normal e- mail messages, and about the way it treats letters sent to the electronic inbox of the Office
- ready answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ)
- possibility of ordering customized (adapted to the user profile) information about activities and services of the office
- none of the above