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GSP II Reflection Learning Sharing

Compliance Support

Digitalisation of the Municipal Audit Support Programme – e MASP

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the South African government promote digitalization and the introduction of ICT tools as effective instruments to improve outreach, responsiveness, transparency and accountability in service delivery and citizen engagement. To support the digitalization objectives of local governments, the GSP II promotes innovative digital solutions as part of the reform processes at partner municipalities and beyond.

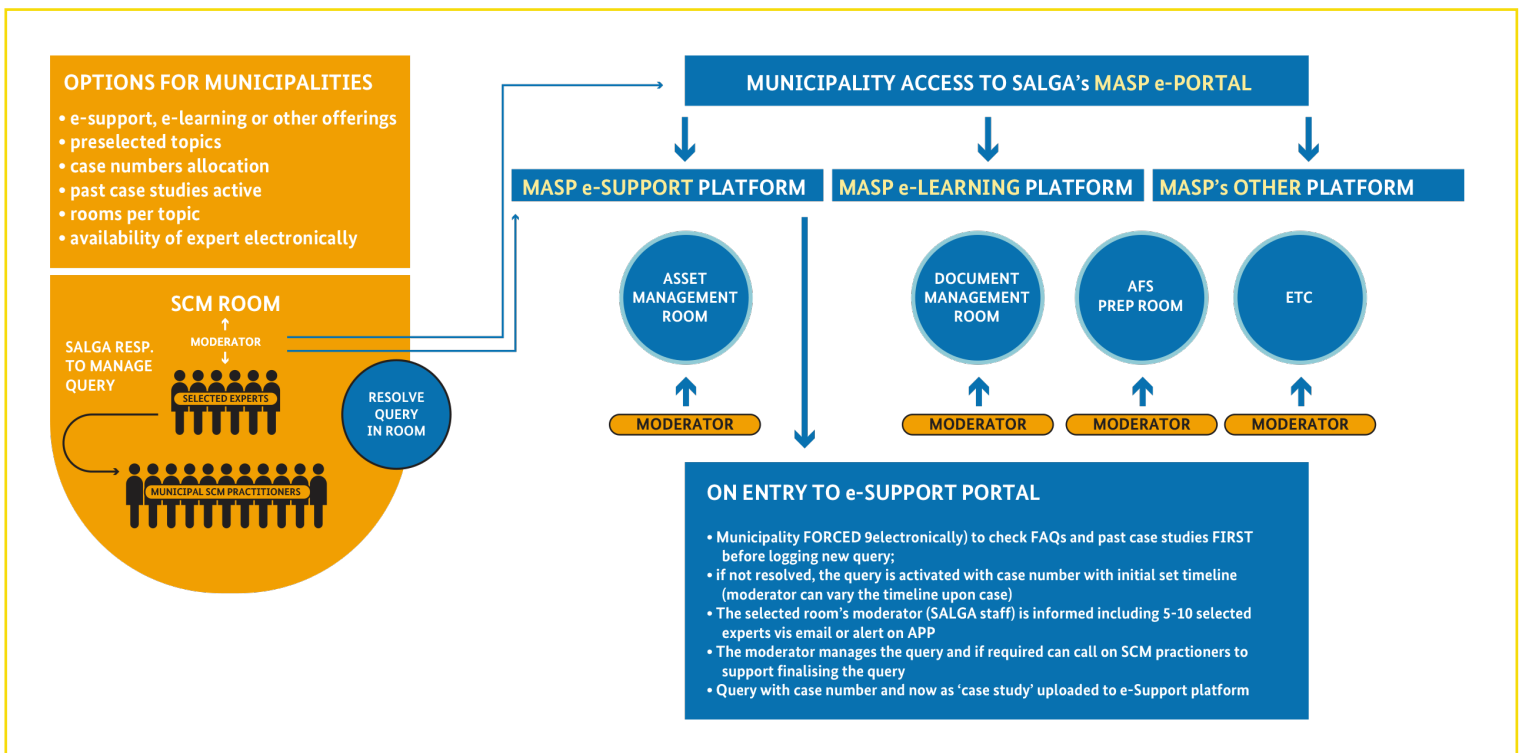
The Municipal Audit Support Programme (MASP) was launched on 31 July 2014 with the specific focus on municipalities who have adverse or disclaimer audit outcomes and those whose audits are not finalized in the legislated timeframes (red zone municipalities) to improve their audit outcomes incrementally and sustainably. In line with the objectives of the MASP programme, there is a need for a quick response support mechanism that can assist municipalities. In achieving the proposition, a prototype development was recommended to determine the prospects which

sets out the design principles that establishes a standardized look and feel articulating the electronic means of engagement, support and feedback to its target audience viz. end users from local government (municipalities). The challenge was how can SALGA engage municipalities on a modern digital platform in alignment with its strategy to support and improve audit outcomes. The concept below illustrates the intent and approach in supporting an electronic approach to a support mechanism by SALGA:

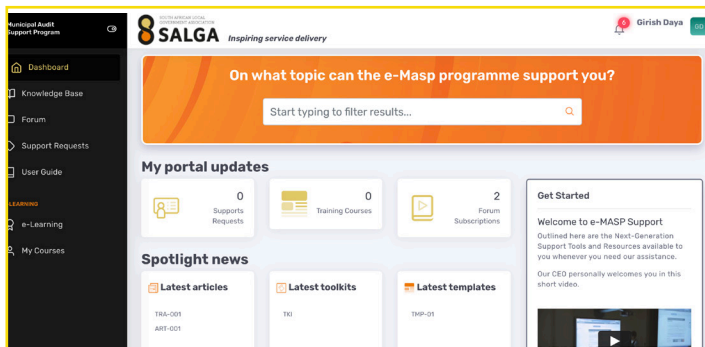
Objectives

a. A. Development of an electronic prototype to facilitate the MASP programme electronically

The concept was to build a prototype for an online support portal that enables SALGA to provide quick responses to queries and host peer-learning and conversation portals. The prototype included, features such as, user management (user and SALGA), differentiated role players such as general users, super users (experts), moderators in forums, platform managers, content providers.



Furthermore, other features included safety and anonymity features, e-Learning, self-paced learning (without video), custom classes for One-to-One learning, Knowledge Management, FAQ's, forum functionality, Subject rooms: Thematic topics where the users will be able to respond and this will facilitate peer discussion, peer learning and peer assistance. A ticketing system, case number allocation, automated tracking of turnaround time, etc. were added features. The diagram below shows the development of a prototype for eMASP in its initial phase.



b. Development and implementation of a functional eMasp on SALGA's website

Leading from the prototype, which was approved by the CEO of SALGA, the next stage was to further develop the prototype into an effective live online digital portal incorporating minimum functionalities such as dashboards, knowledge management database, discussion platforms, support management system and e-learning platform. And to develop backend accessibility, user guides and a dynamic built-in analytical reporting functionality which is downloadable in different formats. Furthermore, to develop a member registration and operational functionality incorporating all 257 municipalities in the country, allowing for anonymous users in special circumstances, such as requesting for support or advise of irregular activity.

Approach

A web application UI was used as best practices during the design and build of the e-MASP prototype. This covered the following design aspects of the prototype:

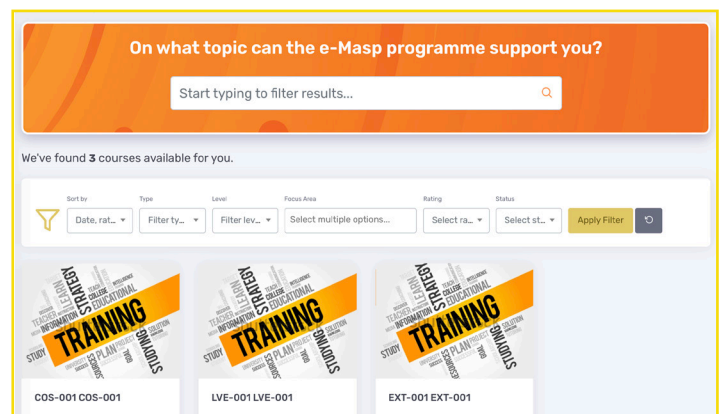
- Website navigation
- Menu navigation
- Search bar
- Spacing

- Typography
- Element hierarchy
- Adaptive/responsive design

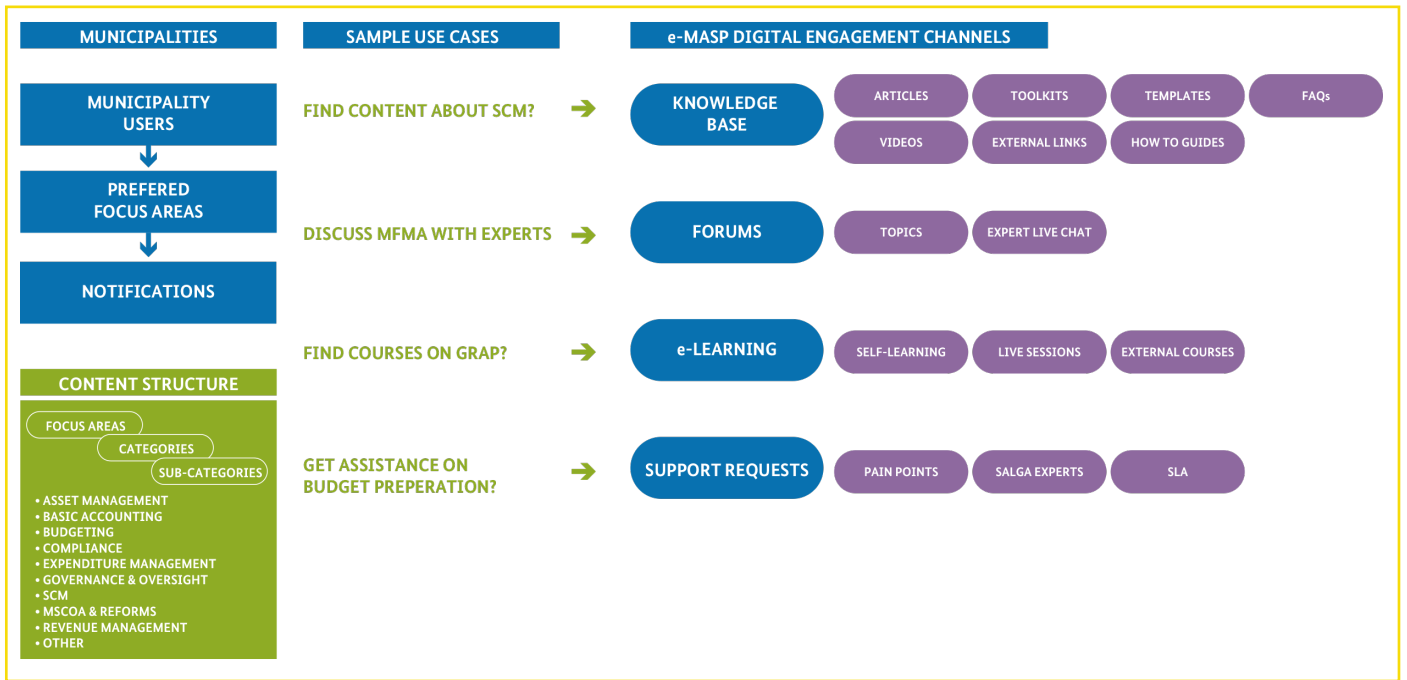
This ensured optimum layout of the content and related navigation between relevant screens.

Final Concept and Rationale

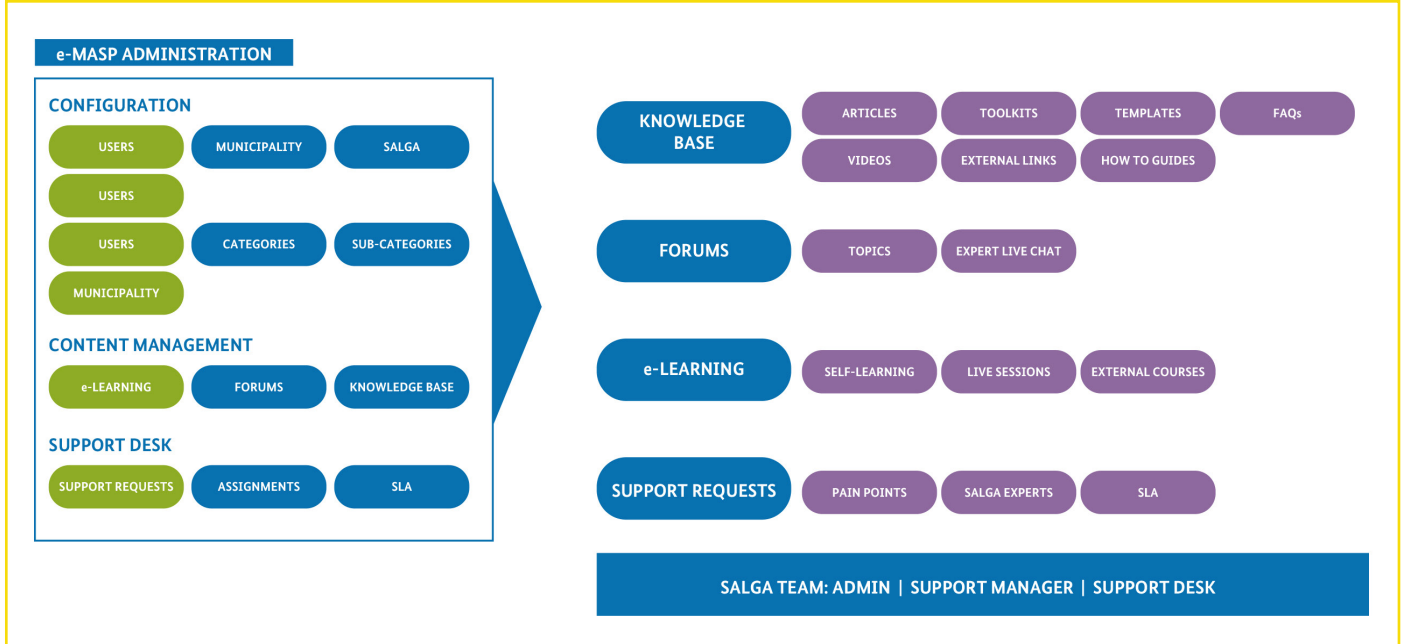
- Goals: Homepage/Dashboard with quick access to all functions. Ability to quickly search and access content. After login, the user is directed to their central homepage/dashboard.
- The portal offers the following end user functionality:
 - Search box to locate content.
 - Receive updates based on their support requests, courses, and forum subscriptions.
 - Receive content news updates based on their preferred focus areas.
 - Welcome video.
 - Request support.
 - Access to knowledge center.
 - Access and subscribe to forums.
 - Post anonymously to forums.
 - Access to e-Learning catalog.
 - Submit anonymous information without login.
 - Manage preferred focus areas.



The following diagrams portray functionalities from both user and admin perspectives.



Municipality Perspective



SALGA Administrative Perspective

What was achieved

The e-MASP platform created a user-friendly manageable Support mechanism / site that incorporated: Knowledge Management, FAQ's, interactive peer exchange and online training. The benefits of the system include:

- An approved, and easily manageable by practitioners.
- Training modules in place.
- Faster responses to queries.
- Sound bases for improved financial reporting.

The Governance Support Programme (GSP II) is a Technical Cooperation programme co-steered at national level in a partnership between the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG), the National Treasury (NT), the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the latter responsible for the implementation of the German development contributions on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The programme was co-financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID).

The GSP II provided technical, policy and process advice to support the South African public sector. The programme strengthened capacity for local government planning, financial management and oversight and was executed in the Provinces of Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape.

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