



DIGICOR

Videocall and Video visitation
Scenario Description

DIGICOR Digital Scenarios

Recognising the marked resistance of European penitentiary services towards technological modernisation, the Digital Scenarios seek to directly influence senior officers and those responsible for the operational management of penitentiary settings by aggregating and disseminating innovative and evidence-based practices in the field of digital readiness in prisons.

Raising these stakeholders' awareness regarding the benefits of well-implemented digital solutions in the prison setting, namely in what concerns inmate rehabilitation, will contribute to enhancing the prison services openness towards modernisation.

Scenarios to be developed:

Inmate communications

- Scenario 1: Telephony
- Scenario 2: Videocall and video visitation
- Scenario 3: Secure e-mail/text messages/digital letters

Education and e-learning

- Scenario 4: e-learning and access to online resources

Digital self-service solutions

- Scenario 5: implementing integrated digital self-service solutions

Training and treatment using Virtual and Augmented reality

- Scenario 6: Inmate's treatment and training using VR
- Scenario 7: Officers training using VR and AR

Videoconference with courts

- Scenario 8: Implementing videoconference systems with courts

Telemedicine

- Scenario 9: Implementing telemedicine

Offender and Case Management Systems

- Scenario 10: Implementing offender and case management systems

Electronic monitoring in prisons and probation

- Scenario 11: Implementing an EM project (RFID and GPS)
- Scenario 12: Implementing an EM project (mobile phone)
- Scenario 13: Implementing an inmate monitoring system in a correctional environment

Smart Prisons and digital transformation in corrections

- Scenario 14: Implementing a "Smart Prison initiative"

Artificial Intelligence in corrections

- Scenario 15: Using AI and xAI in prisons and probation

DIGICOR Digital Scenario Form

Scenario #: 2 Videocall and Video Visitation

Problem/problems that it aims to solve:

Over the past decade, research has consistently shown that regular contact of inmates with their relatives/friends positively affects their behaviours and significantly contributes to social reinsertion and reducing recidivism.

Several studies highlight that incarcerated people who have supportive relationships with their families/friends are more likely to avoid engaging in illegal activities while serving a sentence, end their criminal careers, and are therefore less likely to relapse.

Description of the solution:

Videocalls and Video Visitation in prisons can be solved in several ways:

- Video devices on the landings or in Kiosks that are easily accessible to inmates.
- Video devices as part of a digital solution in the cells for example Tablets, Laptops, Smart TVs, Set-top boxes etc.

Expected benefits:

For the organisation and staff:

- Reduces tensions between inmates and staff.
- In cell video devices reduce the staff's need for accompanying and monitoring inmates while on video calls outside the cell in corridors/yards and reduces the likelihood of flashpoints.
- Staff are freed up to do more high-value duties.

For the inmates:

- Positively affects the behaviours of inmates and significantly contributes to social reinsertion and reduction in recidivism.
- Reduces tensions and conflicts between inmates.
- Allows inmates to maintain relationships with their families/friends
- Reduces the likelihood of engagement in illegal activities while serving a sentence.
- Reduces recidivism.
- Where in cell video devices are installed allows inmates increased privacy and allows for the making of video calls at a time convenient to the inmate and his/her family/friends.

Evidence of effectiveness:

Empirical evidence shows that increased availability of secure communication has positive impacts on prison security, reducing tensions and conflicts, reducing the number of illegal

devices and their attempted entry - often generating corruption, debt, violence, and extortions inside and outside the prison environment (Bredin, S., 2018). Several studies highlight that incarcerated people who have supportive relationships with their families/friends are more likely to avoid engaging in illegal activities while serving a sentence, end their criminal careers, and are therefore less likely to relapse (Glaze, L. & Maruschak, L., 2008; Shinkfield, A. & Graham, 2009; Duwe, 2021).

Key phases of the implementation:

Phases of implementation will vary depending on the extent of the project undertaken. The list below outlines some of the key phases for a successful implementation.

- Extensive market soundings are undertaken to ensure best-of-breed solutions.
- Consideration is given to having a Proof of Concept and/or Pilot Phase to ensure that the requirements are fully understood and agreed upon.
- Funding for the project will be dependent on the option chosen for example:
 - Will the provider develop an end-to-end solution and recoup the costs from the inmates/family? Note that where the provider is required to provide an end-to-end solution this may impact the tender duration.
 - Will the jurisdiction provide part of the solution for example the infrastructure and equipment?
- A comprehensive tender process is undertaken once the requirements are agreed upon.
- Buy in is obtained from Senior Management, Staff and Staff representatives through extensive engagement.
- Communication to ensure the benefits are understood by management, staff and inmates.
- A change management exercise is undertaken and local champions of change are put in place.
- Where the inmates will be charged for the video calls that a cost benefit exercise is undertaken to ensure the chosen solution will both pay for itself and be fair to the inmates and their families in terms of the price to utilise the system.
- The project is carefully planned and managed from start to finish.
- Clear and agreed objectives are outlined so it is understood what success means.
- Post project reviews are undertaken.

Key success factors:

It is recommended that before undertaking any project of this type that:

- Extensive market soundings are undertaken to ensure best-of-breed solutions.
- Consideration is given to having a Proof of Concept and/or Pilot Phase to ensure that the requirements are fully understood and agreed upon.
- Funding for the project will be dependent on the option chosen for example:

- Will the provider develop an end-to-end solution and recoup the costs from the inmates/family? Note that where the provider is required to provide an end-to-end solution this may impact the tender duration.
 - Will the jurisdiction provide part of the solution for example the infrastructure and equipment?
- A comprehensive tender process is undertaken once the requirements are agreed upon.
- Buy in is obtained from Senior Management, Staff and Staff representatives through extensive engagement with all interested parties.
- A change management exercise is undertaken and local champions of change are put in place.
- The project is carefully planned and managed from start to finish.
- Clear and agreed objectives are outlined so it is understood what success means.
- Where the inmates will be charged for the video calls that a cost benefit exercise is undertaken to ensure the chosen solution will both pay for itself and be fair to the inmates and their families in terms of the price to utilise the system.
- Engagement to ensure the benefits are understood by management, staff and inmates.
- Post project reviews are undertaken.

Key risk factors:

Key risks to note are:

- No proof of concept and/or Pilot Phase to ensure that the requirements are fully understood and agreed upon.
- Depending on the option chosen the funding requirements for the project are not agreed upon or understood. Will the provider fund the project and recoup the costs over time from the inmates/family or will the jurisdiction fund or part fund the project?
- If the inmates and/or their family/friends are to pay for the video calls no consideration is given to the rates to be charged resulting in overcharging.
- No clear understanding of the market options available that potentially lead to a poorly tendered solution.
- Lack of buy-in from Senior Management, Staff and Staff representatives.
- No change management and/or local champions of change.
- Systems are not properly secured leading to abuse by inmates.
- Lack of proper project planning.
- Insufficient engagement to ensure the benefits are understood by management, staff and inmates.
- No clear and agreed objectives for the project.

Jurisdictions in which it has been implemented:

The Covid-19 pandemic dramatically increased the need for Video visitation for inmates as a key response to the pandemic and given the restrictions imposed on

in-person visits. For example, countries like Serbia, Luxembourg, Ireland, Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom, France and Spain have all implemented Video Visits. Among the solutions that have been rolled out are Skype and Viber as well as more proprietary solutions.

Specific Regulations to consider:

These will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction it is therefore recommended that an exercise to consider the specific regulations in your jurisdiction is undertaken as part of the pre-project planning phase.

For example, is the recording of video calls allowed?

Estimated implementation period:

This will vary depending on the extent and complexities of the project undertaken. It is recommended that a detailed project plan is developed and agreed upon in conjunction with the selected service provider.

Estimated cost

This will vary depending on the option chosen. Will the provider fund the project and recoup the costs over time from the inmates/family or will the jurisdiction fund or part fund the project? It is recommended that detailed market soundings are undertaken in advance of tender commencement to gain an understanding of potential solutions that best suit the requirements of the jurisdiction. The tender process itself will also serve to ensure the most economic and advantageous solution is obtained.

Useful resources:

Purple Visits

<https://www.purplevisits.com/news/supplying-secure-video-calls-across-the-prison-estate/>

Kolaković-Bojović 2021 -

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356436263_INFORMATION_AND_COMMUNICATIONS_TECHNOLOGY_AS_A_TOOL_TO_SUBSTITUTE_IN-PERSON_VISITS_IN_THE_SERBIAN_PRISON_SYSTEM_DURING_THE_COVID-19_RESTRICTIVE_MEASURES/link/61b112e90c4bfb6751780af0/download

Main suppliers:

There are several suppliers in the market. The following list serves to give examples of some of the European service providers. It is recommended that jurisdictions carry out detailed market soundings in advance of project commencement to gain an understanding of the market suppliers in their area.

- **Telio**

- **Unilink**
- **Cisco**
- **Purple Visits**



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