

# GET STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN

Any effective rehabilitation measure in prison starts with an understanding of the needs of the staff and prisoners to ensure that the services and resources planned are the best way to increase social inclusion and decrease likelihood of recidivism. Gaining an understanding of these needs takes time and it's important that staff are given working hours to cover this effectively.

Here's a step-by-step guide to setting up a stakeholder group:

- 
- Have an overall digital strategy or mission: What specific digital aims do you have for your prison and prisoners in 1 year? In 5 years?
- Have a central coordination team comprised of a person from IT plus staff members working with the resource or service. Write your mission statement with your team and keep checking back regularly – are you on track?
- Get prison management on board and meet regularly with them just to update/ get feedback.
- Use a focus group/ exchange network to find out the needs of the prisoners and/or staff when you implement this new digital resource or service.
- This focus group can take in perspectives from outside of the prison e.g. hospitals, local substance misuse or job centers.



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- Use existing resources to make sure your team is aware of possible ethical and/ or human rights issues. Could you write an ethical statement that all your stakeholders will agree with? See Factsheet #3 for tips on things you should think about.
- Make sure your stakeholders have buy-in and control – have they used the technology themselves? Have they discussed the digital reintegration needs and benefits?
- How are you framing the reasons for digital change? What language, metaphors and stories you are using? Frame digital change in terms of reintegration right from the beginning. Listen for positive reframing possibilities and read the [FrameWorks Reframing Toolkit](#).
- What training do staff/ prisoners need, based on the outcome of focus group. How could you most effectively deliver this? See Factsheet #2 for tips on mixed methodology training.
- Roll out as a pilot first. Evaluate and learn! See Factsheet #2 for tips on evaluation.

## QUICK RESOURCE TIP:

DIGITAL CHANGE IS HAPPENING QUICKLY, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PRISON. HAVE YOU EVALUATED THE RESULTS OF TOOLS AND SYSTEMS THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY IMPLEMENTED? HAVE YOU MADE CHANGES BASED ON THIS EVALUATION? BUILD YOUR BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF EVALUATION THROUGH TRAINING – NETWORKS LIKE EU-CAP PROVIDE GOOD TRAINING RESOURCES:

[HTTPS://EU-CAP-NETWORK.EC.EUROPA.EU/TRAINING/EVALUATION-LEARNING-PORTAL\\_EN](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/training/evaluation-learning-portal_en)

“IN PLANNING FOR DIGITAL REHABILITATION, IT IS NECESSARY TO MOVE BEYOND ONLY THINKING ABOUT TECHNOLOGIES (TABLETS, VIDEO-CONFERENCING PLATFORMS, LAPTOPS) AND CONSIDER THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR USERS, AND THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION THEY CREATE.”

[UNICRI DIGITAL REHABILITATION IN PRISONS \(MARCH 2024\)](#)

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# CHALLENGE DIGITAL INEQUITY AND ADDRESS DIGITAL DIVERSITY

Just as there's no single technological device that suits all prisons, there's no one person with the same needs and abilities using that tool. Adapting to these differences in advance will help your digital resource or service be more popular, and support social inclusion post release.



## Challenge digital inequality

Whether it is from high phone call charges or lack of access to the internet, prisoners disproportionately experience digital inequality. Recognise where your plan treats staff, prisoners or other stakeholders differently. Does your project provide fair opportunities for all users? If not, is there anything you can do about it? Digital rehabilitation needs to be based on clearly stated ethical principles and “with an understanding that digital initiatives can do good but also have the potential to create or exacerbate various forms of digital inequality and harm”.

[1] <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/reports/un-e-government-survey-2022>

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# QUICK CASE STUDY

THE ESTONIAN MINISTRY OF JUSTICE DECLARED THAT "INFORMATION EXCHANGE BASED ON PAPER DOCUMENTS IS UNREASONABLY RESOURCE INTENSIVE FOR ALL PARTIES – INMATES, RELATED AUTHORITIES, AND THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM." BASED ON THIS, THEY BUILT A DIGITAL PLATFORM ACCESSIBLE BY ALL PRISONERS. THIS UNIQUE SYSTEM ENABLES DIGITAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE, REAL-TIME MONEY TRANSACTIONS AND PAPERLESS COURT PROCEEDINGS.

[HTTPS://INNOVATIONINPOLITICS.EU/SHOWROOM/PROJECT/E-JUSTICE-PORTAL-FOR-INMATES/](https://innovationinpolitics.eu/showroom/project/e-justice-portal-for-inmates/)

## Recognise and accommodate different training and learning styles

Research indicates that 1 in 3 prisoners and a higher-than-average percentage of the prison workforce would benefit from Neuro Inclusive approaches to training:

- Get some advice on how to effectively write protocols and instructions for use for a neurodiverse audience, such as using audio, diagrams, bullet points and flowcharts.



- Mixed methodology for training and learning e.g. produce an audio file of long text documents; develop an e-learning course plus follow up dialogue with a trainer.
- Use Ambassadors or local peers to implement new digital resources or services. These people are present as soon as frustrations arise, and can give informal help and advice. Support your local ambassadors with additional monthly training meet ups and bring them together in a virtual network so they can learn from each other.

Finland's Smart Prison concept, which leverages digital services like personal laptops to create a rehabilitative learning environment and emphasizes improving prisoners' rights through versatile digital learning tools, including limited internet access

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# REMEMBER! THINGS TO CONSIDER ACROSS DIFFERENT TASKS AND JOB ROLES

There is no 'right way' to introduce digital resources and services into prisons. Each prison is a unique ecosystem, and the individuals within it have specific needs. However, our working groups came across specific actions and considerations that should be thought about every time prisons move a resource or service to a digital platform. Here's our checklist of what to think about before, during and after implementing digital resources or tools:

1

Learn from previous work and align with existing standards: Such as the Council of Europe. (2019). Guidelines Regarding Recruitment, Selection, Education, Training And Professional Development Of Prison And Probation Staff (Council of Europe) and the EU Digital Competences Framework (DigComp 2.2)

2

Ensure your user has a voice: Whether your device or service is intended for use by staff or prisoners or both, make sure that you ask them how they think social inclusion and digital inclusion needs are best addressed by your project, and make sure they test the device in a pilot launch. See Factsheet #1 for practical tips on involving stakeholders.

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3

**Ensure accessibility and equity for foreign prisoners:** New, offline simultaneous translating devices are excellent to keep in contact with someone's daily needs, but try to also find another prisoner, or a contact person in your local community that can speak the same language and build bridges between the prisoner and his new location.

4

**Neurodiversity and diversity informed training methods:** For everyone to adapt quickly and easily to a new digital tool or service, think about workplace assessments for neurodiversity, and speak to prison educators about how prisoners learn best. See Factsheet #2 for practical tips on digital diversity.

5

**Fair and ethical data management:** With the help of a few resources, your project can benefit from high quality, ethical data management: all EU member states are working towards fair and ethical data management[1] as part of a broader Digital Decade[2] strategy to ensure everyone can participate in digital opportunities, and no one is left behind.

**Be transparent about data use and data access** Use standardised tools and resources via the [European Data Protection Board Guidelines and Recommendations, as these refer to police and justice.](#)

6

**National principles of normalisation in detention:** Consider what your digital initiative does to support normalisation legislation in your country, and to align with The European prison rules (EPR)[3]. EPR are based on two main principles: the principle of normalisation which aims to organise life in prison in order to bring it as close as possible to life outside the prison walls, and the principle of responsabilisation, or giving prisoners the opportunity to have personal responsibilities in the everyday life of the prison.

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