

The Single Government Service Telephone Number 115

From the D115 Project to the 115 Service



Bundesministerium
des Innern



IHRE BEHÖRDENUMMER

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The 115 Service

1. The single government service telephone number

The aim of the D115 project is to set up one central telephone number to give businesses and private individuals a direct line to public administration. They can get direct information about public administration services by dialling 115. Callers no longer have to figure out which level of government, which agency or office is responsible for their specific concern. The new telephone number 115 thus opens up a new dimension of service in public administration.



How does D115 benefit citizens and businesses?

Benefits of introducing a single government service telephone number

The D115 project is geared to the requirements of the general public and the private sector when making enquiries about government services.

Benefits for the general public and the private sector

Irrespective of local remits and responsibilities, callers can obtain rapid answers and reliable information on one easily memorized number. Straightforward and dependable, 115 saves time:

- Callers no longer need to spend time checking which office is responsible for the matter in hand and looking up the correct telephone number.
- Callers obtain coherent and reliable information without needing a detailed understanding of the complex workings of public administration.
- Targeted information provided in advance helps avoid unnecessary errands to administrative offices.
- 115 makes the response “That’s not our responsibility” a thing of the past.
- The public administration is always available at standard times.
- Most enquiries can be resolved on the first telephone call.
- D115 service centre staff are responsible partners able to offer professional advice to each and every caller.
- The D115 project regards itself as a learning organization, applying experience gained to continually improve its services.



Benefits for policy-makers and public administration

With 115 policy-makers have created an up-to-date telephone information service for citizens, providing opportunities to be more responsive to public needs and to simplify administrative processes. The public administration benefits from the 115 telephone number as processes are being optimized, innovations brought in, and structures modernized. D115 is helping government agencies become more service-oriented.

How does 115 benefit policy-makers and administrations?

- **115 is THE new telephone information service:**
The only telephone information service with a three-digit number, a cross-level service and a standardized service commitment.
- **115 makes public administration more responsive to public needs:**
The direct line to information about administrative services increases the service orientation of the public administration.
- **115 relieves burdens on the public administration:**
Specialists spend less time giving general information because most enquiries are dealt with by the first point of contact. This optimizes administrative processes and leads directly to cost savings.
- **115 is improving services offered by the service centres:**
The introduction of the 115 number is helping improve and professionalize the network infrastructure and processes, such as call channelling, range of services, systematic complaints and case management right through to a central knowledge management system.
- **As a new service, 115 is a brand standing for high quality:**
Participation in the D115 network will be a “seal of quality” for public administration.
- **115 acts as an indicator of public needs:**
Objective data about enquiries indicate the general public’s current concerns. Information is provided and updated through the D115 knowledge management swiftly for each service centre. D115 is an important tool for participation and quality management.
- **115 encourages cooperation and experience-sharing between different levels of government**
The project starts at local level and works its way up; federal, state and local governments are working together on the D115 project. The project is based on areas of common ground, reciprocity and close involvement of all concerned. Expertise and experiences are shared and harnessed for mutual benefit.

Who is involved in the pilot project?

Pilot regions

The D115 single government service telephone number project is coordinated by a project group set up by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the state of Hesse. The D115 project group is taking care of the necessary technical, organizational and legal measures and liaising closely with the regions selected for the pilot of the 115 single government service telephone number.

In late October 2007 Berlin, Hamburg, Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate signalled their interest and confirmed their willingness to participate in the D115 project, with their designated municipal authorities, area associations, regional commissioners' offices and other state organizations. Saarland, Saxony-Anhalt, the cities of Oldenburg and Wuppertal and federal authorities have since joined the scheme, constantly increasing the number of pilot areas.

Participants in the D115 pilot

The 115 pilot started in the first pilot regions on 24 March 2009: Several cities and administrative districts in North Rhine-Westphalia, including Cologne, Bonn, Leverkusen, Düsseldorf, Duisburg and Dortmund, the city states of Berlin and Hamburg, the Main-Taunus district in Hesse and the city of Oldenburg in Lower Saxony agreed to participate in the 115 pilot so that some 10 million people are able test the new information service. In addition, 14 federal authorities are taking part. During the two-year pilot phase, more municipalities, regions, state and federal authorities will gradually join in.

Participating municipalities

Berlin

Hamburg

in Lower Saxony

- Oldenburg

in Baden-Württemberg

- Bodensee district

in Hesse

- Frankfurt am Main
- Main-Taunus district including all municipalities
- Offenbach

in North Rhine-Westphalia

- Aachen
- Arnsberg
- Bielefeld
- Bonn
- Dinslaken
- Dortmund
- Düsseldorf
- Duisburg
- Hürth
- Cologne
- Leverkusen
- Mülheim/Ruhr
- Münster
- Neuss
- Wuppertal
- Remscheid
- Lippe district; Bad Salzuflen
- Rhein-Erft-district (Hürth, Frechen)
- Rheinisch-Bergischer Kreis (Bergisch Gladbach)
- Landschaftsverband Rheinland

Participating states

Berlin

Hamburg

Hesse

- Darmstadt Regional Commissioner's Office
- Gießen Regional Commissioner's Office
- Kassel Regional Commissioner's Office

North Rhine-Westphalia

The states

The states have a twofold function in the D115 project, namely to support – together with the D115 project group – the local authorities in their state participating in the D115 network and to recruit other local authorities to join the D115 network. They are also participants in the D115 network themselves. They provide information concerning frequently needed services at the relevant level of authority and accept complex enquiries either electronically or via telephone.



The federal administration

The federal administration is involved in the D115 pilot scheme. The participating federal ministries and their subordinate agencies have identified the services which are most frequently requested. It is intended that all federal ministries which currently deal with a heavy volume of telephone enquiries will gradually join the D115 network, which is also supported by the Federal Government Coalition Agreement of the 17th legislative term.

Participating federal authorities:

- Federal Chancellery
- Federal Press and Information Office
- Federal Foreign Office
- Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs
- Federal Ministry of the Interior
- Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
- Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
- Federal Ministry of Defence
- Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology
- Deutsche Rentenversicherung Bund
- Customs' Information and Knowledge Management
- Federal Statistical Office
- Tax information centre
- Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

During the pilot scheme aimed at testing the 115 single government service telephone number, the service is available to over 10 million citizens; at the same time, further pilot regions are setting up service structures and preparing to join the pilot scheme. The pilot will be an important source of experience for federal, state and local cooperation and will give impetus to further federal modernization.

2. Service commitment and call quality

The service commitment defines the “D115 brand”. The quality of the services offered will determine whether the general public and the private sector permanently accept and use D115. Initially, the 115 service started with a basic service commitment in the pilot phase. The service commitment will continue to be developed based on experience gathered during the trial of the single government service telephone number. The D115 service commitment covers the following aspects which are of critical importance for callers:

- Service times
- Service level
- Service depth
- Call quality and standards.

The amount of effort required by the service centres participating in the D115 network also depends on the scope of the service commitment.

Service times

During the pilot scheme the government service number 115 is available **Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 18:00 hrs.**

Existing service centres report low levels of demand at the start and end of weekdays, e.g. from 6:00 to 8:00 hrs or from 18:00 to 20:00 hrs, at weekends and on public holidays. The pilot scheme will assess the extent to which these calls might be routed to a few service centres and the feasibility of bundling the calls at regional or national level.

Service level

The quality of a service centre is also defined by how quickly incoming calls are answered. The term used in the relevant literature, “standard service level”, defines a service level of 80/20, meaning that 80 percent of calls are taken within 20 seconds. This is only a guide, however, as the availability of a service centre also depends on its main task, among other things.

What can D115 do?

When will the 115 lines be open?

How long will it take for a D115 caller to get through to someone?

The 115 service started the pilot run with a **service level of 75/30**, i.e. 75 percent of all calls to be taken within 30 seconds by an operator in a D115 service centre. This level was calculated based on a survey of monthly averages. In the long term, the D115 network will aim for a standard service level of 80/20.

Is one call enough?
When should D115
callers expect to
have their calls
transferred?

Service depth

The aim of D115 is also to finalize as many enquiries as possible with the first telephone call. Finalizing the enquiry means that the service centre operator gives sufficient information to fully meet the caller's needs so that he or she need not contact the public administration a second time regarding the same issue. The enquiry is also regarded as finalized if the caller is put through to a specific person in the administration if this is the caller's wish.

For the beginning of the pilot scheme, the D115 network set a rate of **55 percent** of calls to be finalized on initial contact with all service centres at the first level. The goal by the end of 2009 is 65 percent. The long-term aim of the D115 network is a rate of 75 percent.

What might the
D115 caller expect
on the other end
of the line?

Call quality and standard

After a short welcome message, 115 calls are directly put through to a service centre operator. The focus is on person-to-person communication and personal service. In special situations such as emergencies, callers are guided through an interactive voice response menu to better handle their request.

The D115 service centres have a uniform answering scheme for incoming calls. The 115 service uses a uniform greeting and hold music, for which a unique acoustic environment has been created.

Key criteria determining the quality of the D115 network are the friendliness and courtesy of service centre employees when answering, conducting and ending calls. Training is compulsory for all employees speaking to customers over the telephone in order to guarantee call quality.

In the regions which do not yet offer the 115 service there is a recorded message as a temporary measure stating that this region has not yet been linked up to D115. Initially, D115 will only be offered in German. A decision is to be taken after the pilot scheme as to whether other languages will be offered.

Information

3. Information and advice scenarios

Regarding citizen enquiries, the D115 network must meet two requirements:

- Information about government services must be available in a standardized format for all network participants.
- As many enquiries as possible are to be resolved on the first call.

In order to be able to meet these requirements, the D115 service centres initially concentrate their resources on frequently asked questions. During the pilot the portfolio will be gradually extended. In addition to the mandatory top 100 services, participants at local level may provide other services within their area of responsibility. The number of customer enquiries will serve as a guide for the gradual increase of service information.

The caller's first point of contact is the local 115 service centre responsible for a certain area. The local service centres are able to deal quickly and efficiently with enquiries relating to areas of responsibility, opening hours, requisite documents and charges. The D115 service centres are also the link between callers and government agencies or departments responsible for specific subjects; they do not replace the administrative processes carried out by the competent agencies.

How will the D115 caller obtain reliable information?



When will D115 callers be transferred?

Forwarding calls in the D115 network

If the D115 service centre cannot resolve an enquiry at the first level then the call is transferred or forwarded as an electronic message. Individual enquiries regarding matters dealt with at federal or state level – for example special applications for child benefit – are referred to central contact points or to contact points of specific federal or state ministries (second level). If the state or federal contact point at the second level cannot resolve the matter either, then the enquiry is referred to the competent agency or organizational unit at federal, state or local level (third level). Figure 3 illustrates the interaction between the first, second and third levels in the D115 network.

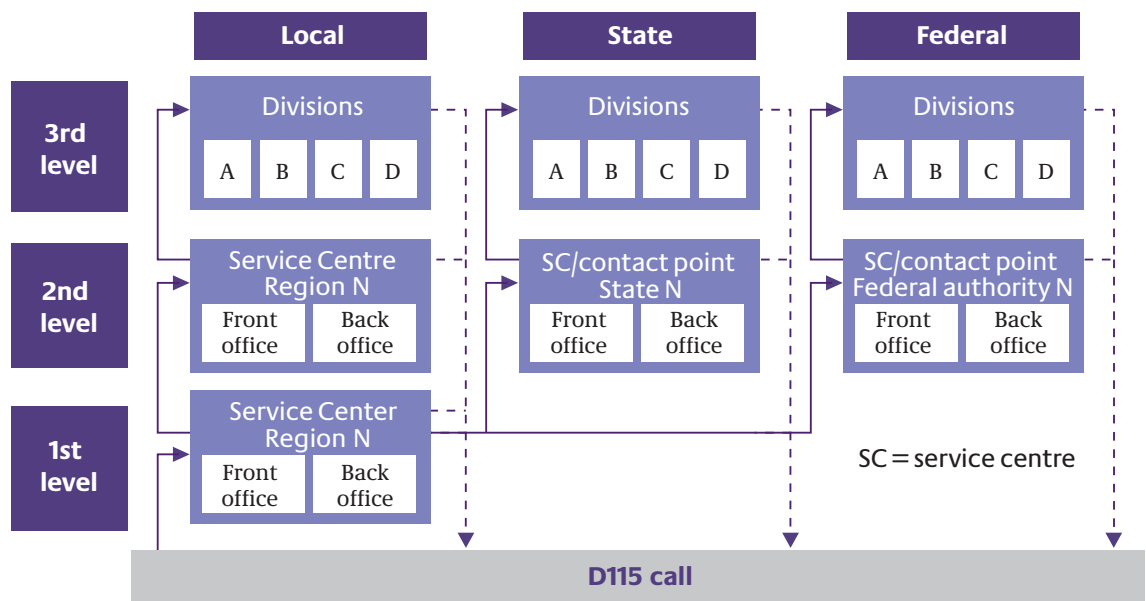


Fig. 2: D115 service structure

Putting calls through to a D115 service centre or a central contact point at state or federal level ensures that they are efficiently answered and managed. Calls are to be forwarded to the specialist level of another administration only in exceptional cases. The caller decides whether the enquiry is forwarded by telephone or electronically. If callers are not satisfied with any of these options, they may be given general contact information of the responsible administration.

Electronic messages are relayed with as little technical complexity as possible while still ensuring that data protection requirements are met. Customer data are recorded in a structured format and forwarded to the relevant service centre in the form of a standardized XML document so that these data can be processed with uniformity and consistency in the D115 network. Callers specify whether the response is to be sent by post or e-mail, or whether they prefer to be contacted by telephone. Each D115 service centre is responsible for ensuring that the XML document is entered into the processing, ticket or workflow systems in use.

In the beginning of the pilot phase it is not yet possible to directly put callers through to specific contact persons in other participating administrations. This is only possible after the caller has been put through to the responsible service centre.

The service centres are not intended to function as a single point of contact for all government telephone enquiries. Members of the public will still be able to contact the relevant office directly, especially if calling about an ongoing matter or an issue being dealt with at specialist level. Existing central telephone numbers of the individual agencies can also remain in use, although it will be up to the individual D115 participants to decide whether to keep them.

Scenario for resolving enquiries

Calls placed using landlines, mobiles or Internet-based services (Voice over IP) are forwarded via the network infrastructure to the nearest service centre (local authority service centre, first level) if the providers allow dialling 115.

The D115 service centre operator takes the call and quickly identifies the nature of the enquiry by applying questioning techniques acquired in training sessions.

The operator enters the requested service and the location as search terms into the D115 knowledge search. The search algorithm accesses the D115 knowledge pool which covers all levels of public administration. The search results are displayed as a list of hits sorted by local, state and federal level.

Information displayed in a uniform structure and design help the D115 service centre operator provide efficient and cross-level information on services of D115 participants. If the desired information is available, then the operator will give the caller this information.

Knowledge

4. Knowledge organization within the D115 network

What form does the source of information for D115 take?

Apart from certain specialized tasks, administrative tasks in a federal state system basically take a similar form. But these tasks are dealt with and assigned to organizational units differently in different parts of the country. Moreover, regional and socio-cultural language norms – both within the administration and as used by callers – influence terms for administrative services. An important element of the structure of administrative services in Germany is the service catalogue (LeiKa). In cooperation with the LeiKa editors the catalogue was adapted to the needs of 115 and is now being used successfully in the D115 project. Hence, the use of LeiKa by D115 significantly promotes harmonization of terms within the public administration, and the compilation of synonyms from all over Germany facilitates an efficient D115 search.

What information is most frequently requested?

At the same time, however, there is an obvious need to ensure that information is of a similar quality. The D115 project ensures that information about the services in the federal administrative structure in Germany is presented in an appropriate and intelligible way for the general public and the private sector. The D115 project sets a standard for describing services so that all participants in the D115 network can access the same quality of information on government services.

D115 services at local, state and federal level

Analyses conducted in existing local authority service centres and telephone exchanges show that callers very frequently ask about the same few services and are far less likely to ask about other more specialized services. The D115 network therefore initially concentrates on the local, state and federal services most frequently requested. Since most enquiries are for information about local services, a list of the top 100 services was compiled which each participating municipality must provide and maintain as a minimum requirement. The number of services on this list is to be gradually increased already during the pilot.

The aim of the pilot scheme is to be able to resolve these top enquiries in the D115 network at the first level – whether these services are provided on behalf of the caller's own local authority or on behalf of other local, state or federal administrations participating in D115.

Many callers to local authority service centres associate legally independent organizational units (e.g. independent companies supplying refuse collection services, gas, water, etc.) with their local government. They often call the local authority as the first point of contact. At the same time, many local authorities taking part in D115 offer assistance with such enquiries as a matter of course, willingly providing basic information, telephone numbers, addresses, etc.

Participating service centres make all information for the D115 knowledge pool available to the D115 network. Every public administration participating in D115 is responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date information.

If possible, information should be provided from existing data sources such as websites, local knowledge management systems or state directories. On the one hand, reusing existing content saves money when participating in the D115 network, and on the other hand the quality of the original data sources is improved by applying the D115 quality standards.

The service portfolio entered by the D115 participants into the D115 knowledge pool is not restricted. However, to define a minimum standard within the D115 network, each D115 participant is obliged to provide the most frequently requested services. These services were compiled in the top 100 list for local participants. Participants at state and federal level define their own top services.

Network participants respond to enquiries by accessing these services in their standardized formats through the D115 knowledge search and passing on the information requested by callers. To deliver the best and most efficient response, the D115 knowledge management system is designed to link a search in the D115 knowledge pool with a search in local knowledge sources. At the beginning, it will not be possible for all network participants to access local registers or specialized procedures.

How are the D115 information resources organized?

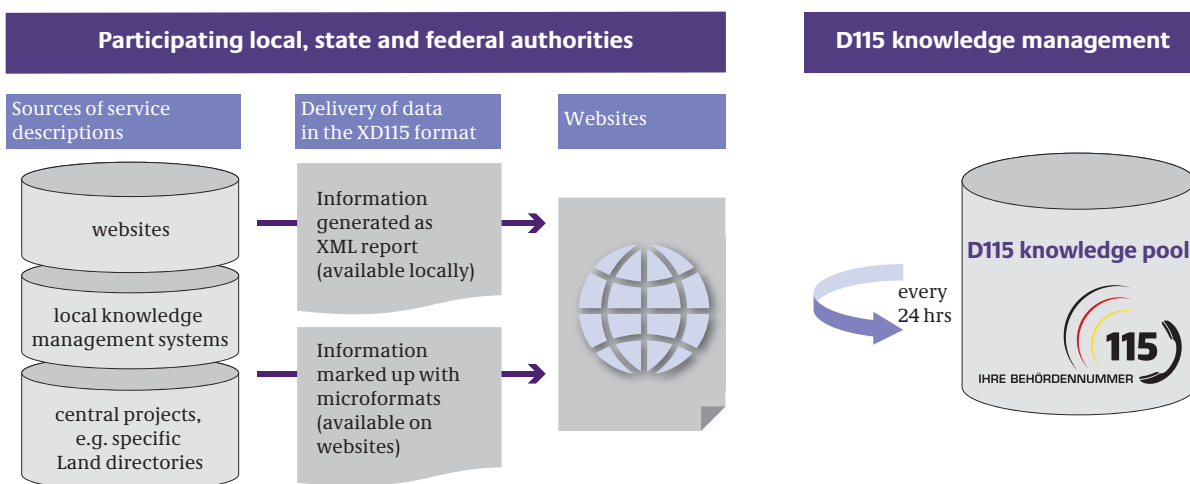


Fig. 3: D115 information retrieval

Technology

5. Technical implementation of D115 knowledge management

What technical measures are used to provide D115 information?

Participants at federal, state and local level use different knowledge management systems to provide information. They might, for example, use content management systems, specific databases or their own websites. The aim of all these systems is to make the necessary information available to service centre operators quickly and clearly so that they can advise callers rapidly and competently.

There are also many different search applications in use to find the relevant information. The service centres participating in D115 use solutions developed by different vendors and, in some cases, customized programs. One thing which almost all search applications have in common is that search terms, synonyms or key words are entered into a search box and a full text search is used.

Network-wide knowledge management is the key to success of D115, and the pilot scheme has the task of testing its technical underpinnings in practice. The knowledge management solution must be independent and non-proprietary so that service centre software vendors can easily build on the approaches to knowledge management and integrate them into their platforms through standardized interfaces without unreasonable effort. This will ensure that any future developments can be subject to competition and thus to market terms and conditions.

Solutions for the D115 knowledge base and knowledge access

All regions participating in the D115 network provide the agreed most frequently requested services from their area of responsibility on the basis of a standardized pattern of content. The descriptions of the relevant services will be issued on the basis of the locally available and constantly updated data sources. The data are provided for knowledge access either as an XML report or by the semantic display of web pages. The format for both options is the XÖV standard XD115. Not only the format but also the quality of the service descriptions must meet certain requirements. These requirements are specified for the entire network in a list of quality criteria.

The D115 knowledge management system retrieves the service description every 24 hours or additionally if needed, processes the information and includes them in the D115 knowledge pool. The D115 knowledge search accesses the knowledge pool and allows a cross-level search. Participants have two possibilities of accessing the search application. They may either search via an internal network website, which is a cost-effective way of using the D115 search. Or service centres may include the D115 search in the local knowledge management system through an XML-based web service interface. In both cases, the service descriptions of all D115 participants are aligned both visually and structurally so that service centre operators may easily view the information. In this way, all the D115 service centres are able to resolve enquiries about frequently requested services on behalf of every other participating public administration.

How do the pilot regions provide access to their knowledge?

How do they access the knowledge of others?

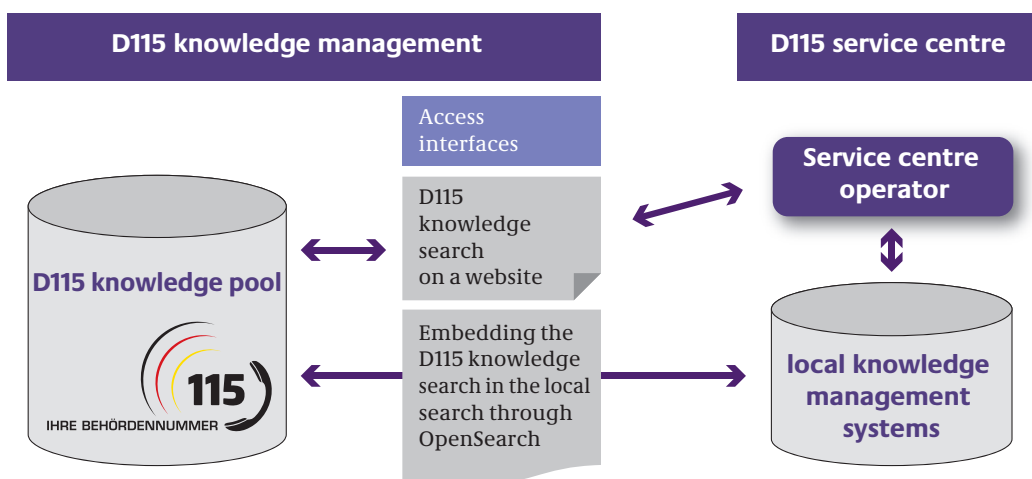


Fig. 4: D115 information search

Network

6. Network installation and introduction of the 115 telephone number

Which D115 calls will go where?

The Federal Network Agency assigned the 115 telephone number to the Federal Ministry of the Interior on 5 December 2007. This telephone number needs to be installed in all networks, i.e. landlines, mobile networks and Internet-based services, so that 115 can actually be called in Germany.

One particular challenge is putting D115 callers through to the nearest D115 service centre because mobile phone masts, fixed network installations and Internet telephony are not oriented along the same lines as public administrations. The D115 knowledge management system allows operators to resolve as many enquiries as possible, even those from callers living outside the service centre's area of responsibility.

The network also allows a new form of collaboration: At off-peak times such as Friday afternoons, calls can be routed to a few service centre workstations and split between the service centres, allowing cost-effective operation.

If individual D115 service centres are very busy or have too many calls to handle at certain times while others have fewer calls, this imbalance can also be managed by putting callers in the queue through to another D115 service centre.

Setting charges for 115 calls

Call charges are another important issue. Calls to the 115 telephone number are not free of charge. The D115 network infrastructure costs will be financed by a small surcharge per minute to the prices of the respective telecommunications provider. The required surcharge is set at 0.03 euros/minute during the pilot. It may be possible to reduce this amount after the pilot depending on the volume of calls. The charges for 115 calls are determined by competition among the telecommunications providers. With the start of the pilot, most landline providers are charging 0.07 euros/minute. As a rule, between 0.17 and 0.20 euros/minute are charged for 115 calls from mobile phones. A list of the current 115 rates can be found at www.d115.de.

How much does a D115 call cost?

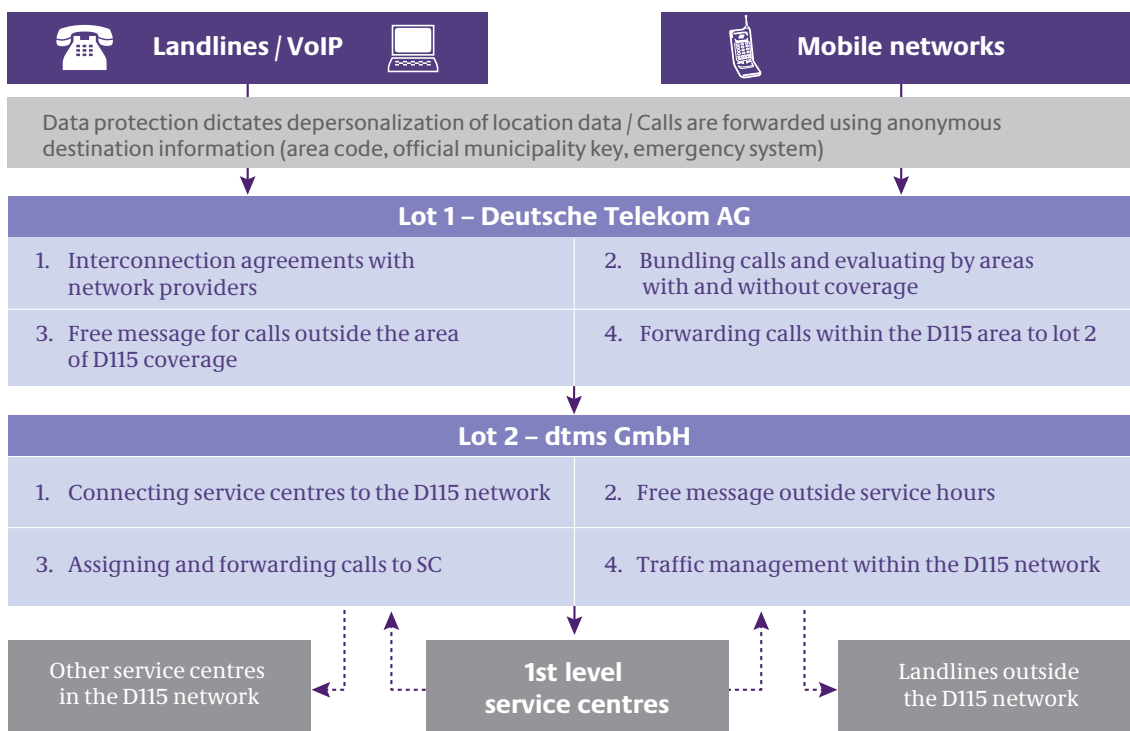


Fig. 5: D115 network operation

Quality

7. D115 quality management

What about the quality of D115?

The aim of D115 is for all D115 services to be rendered effectively and at consistent levels of quality. The D115 quality management system covers all the measures put in place to maintain and improve the D115 range of services. Permanently ensuring the quality of the D115 services for the general public and the private sector is an ongoing process. The D115 project group and representatives of the participating pilot regions are responsible for setting up and operating a quality management system which effectively monitors compliance during the pilot phase with the standards set.

How is the quality of D115 measured?

Quality management spanning all levels of the D115 network

An overarching system of monitoring is a vital aspect of quality management and is based on key indicators which refer to the service commitment defined jointly with the D115 network participants. Network operations are a major source of data for indicators. Another pool of indicators comes from local service centre infrastructures.

In addition, new and existing D115 network participants are trained and regular coaching is established to ensure uniform standards and processes within the D115 network.

What happens if the quality of D115 slips?

Quality assurance and controlling

The quality and capacity of the entire D115 service are influenced by every part of the D115 network, i.e. by every service centre and the staff who work there. Thus, each service centre contributes to the quality of the D115 network. If quality declines in one place, this means that quality will decline across the entire D115 network. In order to avoid this, predefined measures are put in place to safeguard quality.

How is the quality of D115 being enhanced and developed?

Benchmarking in the D115 network

The monthly indicators submitted by the service centres are depersonalized and collated in a standard report and held fully confidential. The evaluations including proposals for improvement are submitted to all participating service centres.

Aspects

8. Cross-level central aspects of the D115 network

The D115 project touches on a number of broad technical, legal and organizational issues, such as accessibility, aspects of co-determination and employment protection, and economic feasibility considerations. These are dealt with at length in the detailed strategy. A few selected issues are covered below.

Data protection

If a member of the public contacts a government agency, then that person's name, address, contact details (telephone, e-mail, fax) and the nature of the enquiry – which often allows quite specific inferences to be made about the caller's personal circumstances – are regarded as personal data under data privacy laws. These data are to be protected from unauthorized access and use.

Within the D115 network, information is forwarded in compliance with data protection legislation for the purposes of processing enquiries. Personal data may be collected and forwarded by the service centre only if the caller has given prior consent. The caller must be informed about the relevant issues by the service centre before volunteering consent.

Distinguishing 115 from the emergency telephone numbers 110/112

The 115 single government service telephone number is similar to the familiar and well-established emergency telephone numbers 110 and 112. It is therefore essential to clarify the purpose of D115 and how it differs from the emergency numbers. This requires special public information efforts.

How are the data of D115 callers protected?

What can be done to prevent 115 being used for emergency calls?

110 Police

- Risk of death or injury to oneself or others
- Witness or victim of an accident
- Witness or victim of a crime, 'tip-offs'
- Observations of suspicious actions, for police investigation

112 Fire brigade

- Fire, accident or other emergency
- Life-threatening state of health
- "My cellar is flooded!"
- "The tree's about to fall!"



- For general questions for the public administration, opening hours, etc.
- Information related to public safety (defective traffic lights)
- Questions on areas of responsibility

Fig. 6: Different profiles of 115 and emergency call numbers

How does the system deal with misdirected calls?

Dealing with misdirected calls (emergency calls)

In order to respond without delay to emergency calls made to the 115 number, measures were put in place to ensure that such calls are directly transferred to the relevant emergency call centre. The service centre will answer calls to the 115 number and determine the reason for the call; if it turns out to be an emergency, the call will be transferred to the relevant police or non-police emergency management control centre. By contrast, non-emergency calls made to the emergency numbers are not transferred to D115 service centres.

States

9. Involvement of the states in the D115 network

The success of the D115 project heavily depends on the involvement of the state governments. It is important to integrate not only the ministries themselves but also the state agencies which the public sees as relevant. States participating in the D115 network are responsible for creating the organizational and substantive framework conditions in their sphere of responsibility and to help optimize the network. Standardized and well-maintained state-level services will also benefit local authorities at the first level, enabling local authorities as the first point of contact within the D115 network to answer questions on state services.

Without the participation of the respective state, information-gathering would be time-consuming, redundant and incoherent. However, through the participation of the state administration in the D115 network, enquiries about state services can be dealt with far more efficiently.

As a general principle, the first level is supposed to refer matters to a central point in the state (second level) where pending questions can be answered via access to internal databases. Enquiries beyond their remit will be referred from this point to the third level, the agencies and departments responsible for specific subject areas. If state agencies offer a specialized and frequently requested information service, e.g. state statistical offices, calls may be referred directly to them from the first level.

What is the task of the states in D115?

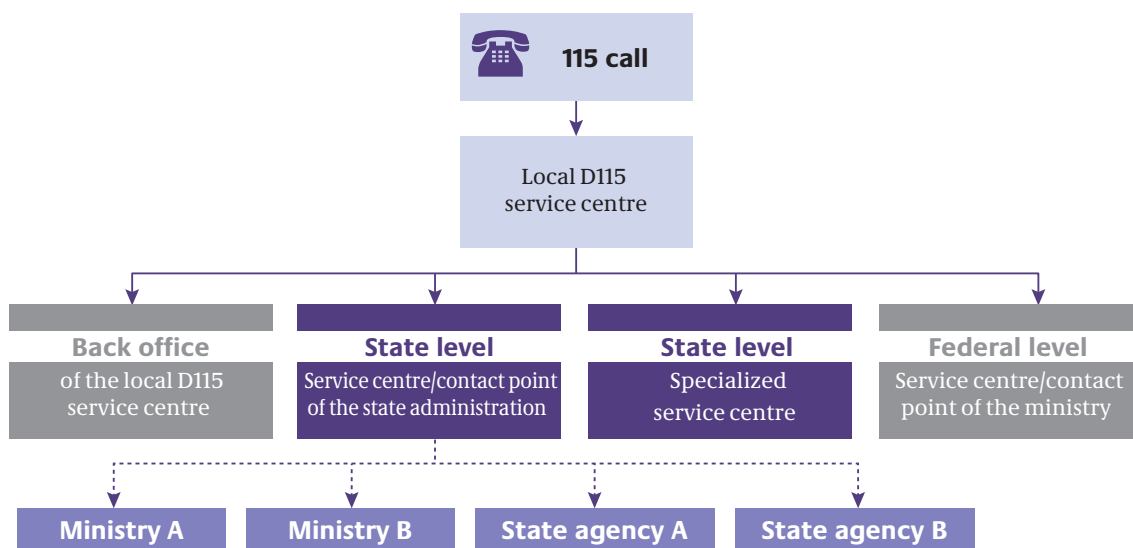


Fig. 7: State level in the D115 network

Federation

10. Federal involvement in the D115 network

What are the federal tasks in D115?

The federal administration and its most frequently requested services are also systematically integrated into the D115 network. On the one hand, this relieves the pressure on the federal administration because relevant enquiries will be answered by the local authorities at the first level. On the other hand, participating communities are spared from a redundant and uncoordinated gathering of information on services of participating federal authorities. The only enquiries which are not initially covered by the system are those directed to the European government institutions.

The federal ministries decide which of their subordinate agencies should be included in the D115 network on the basis of their relevance to the public. The federal ministries and subordinate agencies are required to name D115 contact persons as a first step. Each ministry should have an organizational unit to coordinate the D115 activities for the ministry and the agencies within its remit.

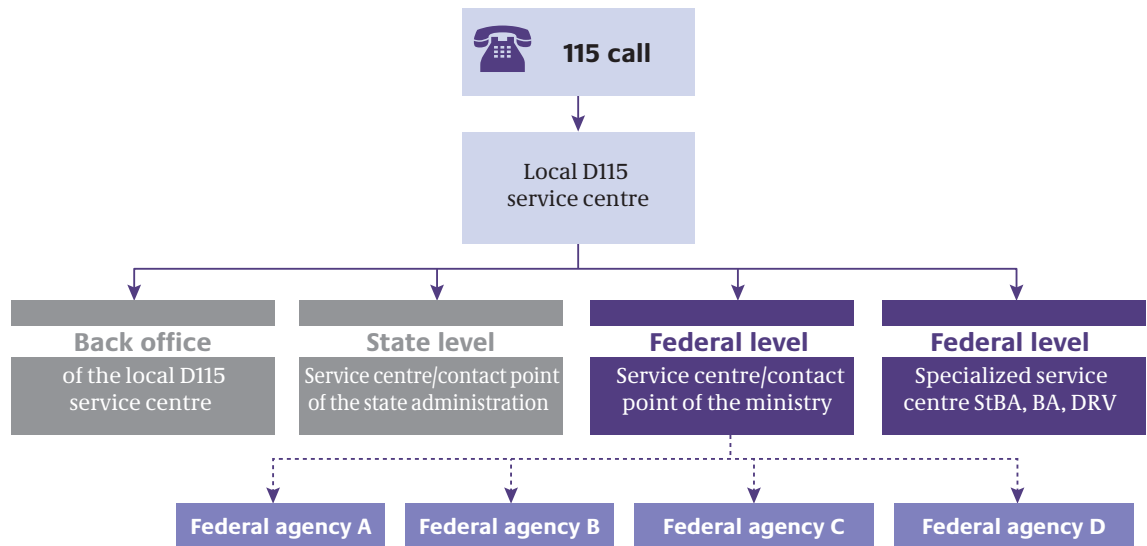


Fig. 8: Federal level in the D115 network

Participation

11. Participating in D115 as a new partner

Participation in the D115 network is voluntary and open to all public administrations in Germany. In order to participate in D115, local authorities need either their own service centre or access to an existing service centre. As a rule, it is not a major hurdle for large cities to set up a service centre. However, it may not be cost-effective for relatively small and medium-sized local authorities to set up a separate service centre, so these organizations might choose to pool their combined resources and set up a service centre jointly with other local authorities, the district authority or through inter-municipal cooperation with several administrative districts or to connect to existing service centres. This might involve physically moving workstations to one or more central administrative offices or it might be a virtual process of creating the technical and organizational infrastructure.

Which options for participation in D115 are there?

Setting up a service centre / information service oneself (Option A)	Joining an existing service centre / information service (Option B)	Service centre / information service already exists (Option C)
Decision to set up a service centre	Concluding an agreement with the existing local service centre	Declaration of intent to participate in D115
Project work according to D115 handbook "Setup"	Project work according to D115 handbook "Integration"	Project work according to D115 handbook "Integration"
Running the service centre	Joining D115 partner service centre	Training, test and authorization procedure
Switching to option C	Joining D115	Joining D115
Time needed 7 – 12 months	Time needed 3 – 4 months	Time needed 3 – 6 months

Fig. 9: Options for municipalities to participate in the D115 network

The D115 project group supports both the creation of new service structures and the development and integration of existing service structures in the D115 network. The project group draws up an individual project plan with the new participant to organize the process as efficiently as possible. The project plan's schedule is oriented on one of the quarterly connection dates.

In addition, handbooks specifying and updating the detailed strategy for the D115 project provide guidance for setting up D115 services and integrating in the D115 network.

Given its extensive knowledge in the field of telephone information services, the D115 network may provide valuable support in particular in setting up service centres, so that less time is needed for planning, decision-making and implementation. Knowledge-sharing is a central element of the D115 network.

Service centres which join the D115 network are required to go through a test phase after completing preparations and before entering the pilot scheme to demonstrate that the service centre is fit for purpose and to verify its capacity to fulfil the D115 service commitment.



Outlook

12. Pilot and outlook

On 24 March 2009 the 115 pilot phase kicked off. Since then some 10 million citizens in the pilot regions have had a direct line to the public administration. The pilot scheme will gradually expand in terms of both content and geography. More and more municipalities and authorities will be added to the D115 scheme, and the number of services offered will steadily grow.

Six months into the pilot phase, the cross-level D115 project won the first prize in the 2009 eGovernment competition in the category “Innovation”. The jury in particular commended the uniform service commitment to citizens, giving them a direct line to a service-oriented and responsive administration. The single government service telephone number 115 is the first telephone information service with a measurable service commitment which dares to shift from bureaucratic thinking to service orientation. The first indicators from the ongoing pilot show that the service commitment has been fulfilled. More than 80 percent of calls are taken within 30 seconds and more than 70 percent of all enquiries can be resolved during the initial contact.

The following objectives are now being pursued:

- continuing the pilot and further stabilizing and improving the 115 service and the central infrastructure;
- finding new partners and expanding coverage: attracting further local, state and federal authorities to the D115 network so that as many citizens as possible can use the telephone information service;
- establishing an umbrella organization: Ultimately, the current pilot should move to regular operations. To this end, an umbrella organization and a business model are being developed so that the 115 service can be offered and permanently maintained.

What is the status of the pilot phase?

**The pilot of 115
is successful and
stable. What comes
next?**

The Coalition Agreement for the 17th legislative term expressly mentions the 115 service and seeks operation across Germany by 2013: “The single government service telephone number 115 improves service for all citizens. All federal authorities will participate by 2011, and by 2013 the telephone number 115 will be available across Germany.”

The idea of the new 115 service will become more firmly established. The pilot will demonstrate the potential of the new telephone information service both to the public administration and the customers, namely our citizens and businesses. A recent public survey confirms that, next to visits in person, the most frequently used form of contact with public administration is by telephone. About 80 percent of respondents consider the idea of a single government service number sensible and helpful.

We invite you to learn more about the new 115 service and to talk with us about how your administration can participate. Just give us a call ...

**For more information on the
D115 single government service
telephone number project
please visit**

www.d115.de

Imprint

Published by

The Federal Ministry of the Interior
Project D115
Alt-Moabit 101D, D-10559 Berlin
Telephone +49 30 18681-2535
www.d115.de

Design: WerbeAtelier Theißen, Lohfelden

English translation by the Translation Service
of the Federal Ministry of the Interior

Printed by: Silber Druck, Niestetal

As at: March 2010

Order number: BMI08324

