

# The City of Amsterdam Shortens Its Mailroom Processing Time by 91%

## Overview

It is estimated that the Work, Participation and Income department of the [City of Amsterdam](#) has to process between 800,000 and 1,000,000 pieces of mail per year. It is very important for citizens that these applications are handled and processed quickly and adequately. Ephesoft's partner, [OSN Nederland](#), was asked to help them shorten the mail processing.

Where previously all mail came in via its own portal, the process of manual sorting and distribution then took at least a week. To shorten this, very fast scanners and Ephesoft, a smart recognition software system, were implemented to automatically process documents based on artificial intelligence and automation. Now the Work, Participation and Income department can automatically qualify more than 250 different document types and subsequently extract and validate substantive data. The objective has therefore been achieved: mail processing is now 30 times faster than before, so that citizens can quickly know where their application is in the process.

**“In 2017, we processed all mail completely manual. It took 16 minutes to open the envelope and put the letter in the correct compartment. Now it takes 90 seconds.”**

– Macha Huele-Quesnel, Team Manager, Digital Customer Post, City of Amsterdam



## City of Amsterdam

### Customer

City of Amsterdam

### Industry

Government

### Use Case

Mailroom

### Partner

OSN Nederland

### Results

- Receiving about 2,000+ pieces of mail daily, up to 1 million per year
- 250 document types to process
- Decrease in errors and a reduction in the number of tasks
- 91% decreased time for each letter: 16 minutes to 90 seconds
- 30 times faster process
- Increase in efficiency
- Less space is needed for files

## The Challenge

The core task of the Income Provision department is to ensure the lawful implementation of the Participation Act and the resulting activities. The 40,000 households in Amsterdam who are entitled to this are provided with an income by this department. The associated activities include assessing income applications and processing changes.

In addition, the Work, Participation and Income department is responsible for digitizing all incoming mail. Each year, the department concerned receives between 800,000 and 1,000,000 mail items, which amounts to an average of more than 2,000 per day.

Previously, customer mail was processed completely manually on regular multifunctional office equipment. All applications, documents and other forms were received by post or digitally. These were manually sorted and distributed by scanning on one of the eight multifunctional devices. Once with the appropriate practitioner, the document was opened, renamed, reviewed or classified and validated. Finally, the document was manually processed into the final work order. This process took up to a week and more than seventy full time employees (FTEs).

## The Solution

Processing this incoming structured and often unstructured communication was a big job. That is why the City of Amsterdam chose to work together with OSN Netherlands on a solution to optimize this process. The first step was

understanding the large inventory of the hundreds of types of documents and versions. An investigation into the unstructured mail also followed. Which documents come in, how many variants are similar, how should these documents be processed in the process and then the different handlers and the case systems were mapped out.

OSN Nederland inventoried 250 different document types and used artificial intelligence capabilities in Ephesoft's software to understand them. These documents are then automatically classified. From these 250 different documents, the software recognizes the metadata. This data, including any enriching data, is extracted. After the automatic validation of the data, it is converted to the case systems of the City of Amsterdam and a work order is automatically generated.

The scanning solutions mean faster processing for citizens. In addition, the process for the employees of the Work, Participation and Income department is now much more efficient. There is a strong decrease in the number of errors and a reduction in the number of tasks. The staff is thus deployed in a more efficient manner. Finally, less space is needed in the filing cabinets and there is always a clear picture of where a document is in the scanning process. This process has many advantages for the City of Amsterdam.





## Collaboration with the City of Amsterdam

Eighteen months after the start of the project, more and more processes are connected to the facility. Mutual trust is high and cooperation runs very smoothly operationally, tactically and strategically. This gives confidence to also optimize the processes within other departments of the municipality, together with OSN Nederland.

As an organization we are very proud of the impact that we have jointly realized at this department within the City of Amsterdam,” said Anneke Petersen, Commercial Director, OSN Nederland. “With a well-organized team, we have seized the challenges with both hands and achieved an unbelievably good result. As an organization we have of course also learned a lot, because despite a very thorough inventory you sometimes find yourself in unexpected situations. Added to this was the Corona crisis during the rollout, which made implementation and adoption difficult. Together, however, we succeeded, which makes for extra pride.”

Day in, day out, the solution with Ephesoft offered by OSN Nederland makes a large impact for the citizens of Amsterdam.

