

INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF
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Local Government Participation in the Open Government Partnership (OGP)

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Summary

The first chapter of this report presents the commitments included in the action plans of Open Government Partnership (OGP)¹ member states for the representative and executive bodies of their local governments. The second chapter discusses the issues of local government included in the Open Government Guide.² Finally, the report presents success stories from several self-governing cities.

The report identifies five major findings:

- (1) One third of OGP member states have already involved their local governments in the implementation of OGP principles in various forms. Most notable examples include France, United States, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Uruguay, Colombia and the Philippines.
- (2) OGP action plan commitments for local governments include: involvement of citizens in identifying budget priorities (participatory budgeting); openness of information, such as meeting agendas and protocols of local government representative bodies and funding allocated to organizations; promoting citizen participation in local government and conducting relevant trainings for public servants and other stakeholders.
- (3) OGP member states give special importance to introducing e-technologies on the local level, used to identify existing problems and increase citizen participation.
- (4) Non-governmental organizations play an important role in supporting the central and local authorities of territorial units in fulfilling their obligations.
- (5) The OGP and its member states are interested in the growing role and involvement of local governments in the initiative.

¹ Open Government Partnership, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

² Open Government Guide, <http://www.opengovguide.com/local-government/>



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 5 |
| 1. Local Government Commitments of OGP Member States..... | 7 |
| 1.1. Albania..... | 7 |
| 1.2. United States of America | 7 |
| 1.2.1. The Second OGP Action Plan for the US | 7 |
| 1.2.2. The Third OGP Action Plan for the US..... | 7 |
| 1.3. Argentina..... | 8 |
| 1.4. Brazil..... | 9 |
| 1.5. Guatemala..... | 10 |
| 1.6. Denmark..... | 10 |
| 1.7. Dominican Republic | 11 |
| 1.8. Estonia | 12 |
| 1.9. Ireland..... | 12 |
| 1.10. Italy..... | 13 |
| 1.11. Colombia..... | 13 |
| 1.12. Macedonia | 14 |
| 1.12.1. Macedonia's First Action Plan..... | 14 |
| 1.12.2. Macedonia's Second Action Plan | 15 |
| 1.13. Norway | 15 |
| 1.14. France | 16 |
| 1.15. Serbia | 19 |
| 1.16. Armenia | 19 |
| 1.16.1. Armenia's First OGP Action Plan | 20 |
| 1.16.2. Armenia's Second OGP Action Plan..... | 20 |
| 1.17. Hungary | 21 |
| 1.18. Uruguay | 22 |
| 1.19. Philippines..... | 22 |



| | |
|--|----|
| 1.20. Finland | 23 |
| 1.20.1. Finland's First OGP Action Plan | 23 |
| 1.20.2. Finland's Second OGP Action Plan..... | 24 |
| 1.21. Croatia..... | 26 |
| 1.21.1. Croatia's First OGP Action Plan..... | 26 |
| 1.21.2. Croatia's Second OGP Action Plan | 26 |
| 2. Open Government Guide on Engaging Local Government with the OGP | 27 |
| 3. Successful Examples of Local Government Openness..... | 28 |
| 3.1. Amsterdam | 29 |
| 3.2. New Orleans..... | 29 |
| 3.3. Mexico City | 30 |
| 3.4. New York..... | 31 |
| 3.5. Porto Alegre | 31 |
| 3.6. Chicago | 32 |
| 4. IDFI's Recommendations on Engaging Local Government in the OGP..... | 33 |



Introduction

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) was launched by the US President Barack Obama in 2011. This international initiative aims to promote transparency in governance, strengthen the accountability of different branches of government, raise public awareness and increase citizen participation in the process of governance. The action plans prepared by OGP member states are aimed at overcoming the following challenges: improving public services, increasing citizen participation, improving the management of public resources, creating a safe environment and increasing corporate accountability.

Georgia joined the OGP in 2011, and has already developed its second action plan through the OGP Georgia Forum,³ which includes representatives of the government, non-governmental and international organizations.⁴ The OGP Georgia Forum is recognized as one of the best mechanisms for developing OGP action plans.⁵

Originally, the OGP initiative only involved executive governments; however, the necessity and importance of including other branches of government soon became clear. For example, one of the newer directions is legislative openness and parliamentary involvement in the OGP.

Georgia is one of the first few OGP member states that have developed Open Parliament Action Plans.⁶ The Georgian action plan,⁷ specifically, is recognized as one of the best so far. The Inter-Factional Group of the Georgian Parliament, which developed the action plan together with the civil society working group, was awarded the OGP Government Champions Award in 2015.⁸

The Open Government Partnership eventually realized the importance of extending its commitments to local government in order to ensure that each citizen can benefit from the initiative's principles.⁹ Only through active involvement of local government will it be possible to raise citizen awareness and implement OGP goals.¹⁰

Even though the addition of local government to the OGP initiative is new, individual member states had already included commitments for local government in their action plans. These commitments were mostly related to the transparency of central budget funds allocated for the local government, participatory budgeting, creation of a safe environment on the local level, and increasing citizen

³ Ministry of Justice, <http://www.justice.gov.ge/Ministry/Index/379>

⁴ Ministry of Justice, <http://www.justice.gov.ge/Ministry/Index/348>

⁵ IDFI, OGP Global Summit 2015 took place in Mexico, <https://idfi.ge/en/ogp-global-summit-2015-in-mexico>

⁶ The Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan (2015-2016) was developed within the framework on the EU and UNDP funded project - Supporting Parliament of Georgia Involvement in Open Government Partnership Initiative, implemented by the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI),

<https://idfi.ge/en/supporting-parliament-of-georgia-involvement-in-ogp>

⁷ Open Parliament Georgia Action Plan (2015-2016),

https://idfi.ge/public/upload/IDFI/Parlament_Action_Plan_GEO.pdf

⁸ IDFI, OGP Global Summit 2015 took place in Mexico, <https://idfi.ge/en/ogp-global-summit-2015-in-mexico>

⁹ Subnational Government Pilot Program, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/subnational-government-pilot-program#3>

¹⁰ Ibid.



participation. This report presents the experience and practices of local governments of OGP member states that are in line with OGP principles and aim to achieve OGP goals.

In order to engage local governments in the OGP, the partnership announced a pilot program for subnational governments of its member states. The program aims to enable them to share best practices of transparency, accountability and citizen awareness.¹¹ Subnational governments need to have a minimum population of 250,000 people in order to be eligible.¹²

This report aims to present the commitments undertaken by OGP member states in relation to their local governments, analyze their best practices and OGP's policy on engaging local government in the initiative.

The report mainly relies on the action plans of OGP member states,¹³ the Open Government Guide,¹⁴ OGP official website and related internet sources.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² K. von Bertele, Calling All Subnational Performers, Open Government Partnership Blog, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/kitty-von-bertele/2015/12/15/calling-all-subnational-reformers>, accessed on January 5, 2016.

¹³ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/countries>

¹⁴ Open Government Guide, <http://www.opengovguide.com/about-this-guide/>



1. Local Government Commitments of OGP Member States

1.1. Albania

Albania's OGP Action Plan for 2014-2016 requires increased involvement of municipalities in the OGP through promotion of open government principles.¹⁵

According to commitment 1.4 of the action plan, the Albanian Minister of State for Innovation and Public Administration in cooperation with the Minister of Local Affairs and the open government partnership coalition of civil society organizations undertook the commitment to promote and engage local authorities in OGP values. This commitment was initiated by the civil society with the goal to strengthen citizen participation and open governance at the local level.¹⁶

1.2. United States of America

The second and third OGP Action Plans for the United States include commitments of promoting active citizen participation in local government.

1.2.1. The Second OGP Action Plan for the US

The goal of the 7th commitment of the second action plan is to encourage citizen participation in local budget spending. The commitment stresses the importance of citizen participation in identifying priorities. The action plan mentions Chicago, New York and San Francisco as successful examples of participatory budgeting.¹⁷

1.2.2. The Third OGP Action Plan for the US

The third action plan includes a chapter with four different commitments aimed at supporting open governance at the subnational level.¹⁸

The first commitment highlights the importance of openness of data, including access to data at the federal level, for improving public service delivery at the municipal level. As an example of data openness, the action plan mentions the online map published by the White House Administration in 2015 that helps citizens, researchers, journalists and other stakeholders to keep track of ongoing projects. The Administration plans to keep the map up to date in the future.

¹⁵ The Open Government Partnership Second Open Government National Action Plan for Albania 2014-2016, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/PLAN%20VEPRIMI%20OGP%20eng%20june%202015.pdf>

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 6

¹⁷ The Open Government Partnership Second Open Government National Action Plan For the United States of America, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/US%20National%20Action%20Plan.pdf>, p. 10

¹⁸ The Open Government Partnership Third Open Government National Action Plan For the United States of America, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/final_us_open_government_national_action_plan_3_0.pdf, p. 17-18



The second commitment emphasizes the necessity to introduce a municipal data network. The network will process data and strengthen cooperation between local authorities through data exchange.

The third commitment deals with the improvement of data systems, specifically, improving access to municipal data on crime statistics, transportation, and availability of fresh food. The commitment also includes the development of innovative e-programs that will enable local authorities to work more closely with citizens and combine their data with that of the federal government.

The fourth commitment is aimed at extending data-driven governance at the local level. The commitment is directed towards strengthening the institutional capacity of municipalities.

The third action plan also includes participatory budgeting as part of its fiscal transparency section. The US government is committed to work with the local government, non-profit organizations and other partners to develop new commitments of fiscal transparency that will improve citizen participation in the budgeting process.¹⁹

1.3. Argentina

Argentina's first OGP Action Plan emphasizes the projects already implemented by the Argentinian government in relation to its local government.²⁰

First, the Argentinian government set up a web portal www.gobiernolocal.gob.ar in order to improve management in local government. The portal is designed to facilitate information exchange between Argentina's 2,000 municipalities, and provide them with updated information on trainings, statistics and other topics of interest to public servants that will enable municipalities to improve their employees' professionalism. The web portal is designed for public use and aims to promote citizen participation in local governance.

Second, the action plan highlights the Community Integration Centers (CIC) set up by the Argentinian government.²¹ The CICs are described as municipal public spaces that act as the unifying link between the national, regional and local governments, and aim to ensure civil society and citizen participation local governance.

The Community Integration Centers include Local Management Boards where local stakeholders collectively work towards: Coordination of social and health care policies; Care and support to the most vulnerable; Integration of community institutions and organizations that promote networking; Promotion of cultural, recreational and popular education activities.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 16

²⁰ Open Government Partnership Argentina Action Plan 2013, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Action%20Plan%20ARGENTINA.pdf>, p. 10-15

²¹ Ibid, p. 11



The CICs, located in the most vulnerable areas of the country, are built by cooperatives of local residents. This strategy represents a model of governance that involves the coordination of primary health care and social development policies in a municipal common ground.

Argentina's first action plan requires the local government to participate in the implementation of open government commitments. For example, one of the commitments is to develop a Manual of Open Government Right Procedures that will contain basic standards for every level of government (national, regional and local) related to openness, transparency and accountability towards citizens.²²

Finally, the action plan also includes a commitment to organize an Open Government National Event with the participation of various branches of government. The event will also involve municipalities sharing their experiences of introducing good governance practices.²³

1.4. Brazil

In order to improve public services, commitment 1.13 of the second OGP Action Plan for Brazil calls on the federal districts and municipalities to share OGP principles and implement them in their activities.²⁴

Commitment 2.12 of this action plan involves promoting the culture of openness of public information in local government, and raising the awareness of municipal bodies about the importance of open data.²⁵

Brazil's action plan states that the implementation of commitment 3.3 titled Brazil Transparent requires holding seminars, workshops, and trainings on access to public information for the employees of federal districts' municipal bodies. The commitment also includes public awareness-raising campaigns and the development of Transparency Portals and Citizen Information System (e-SIC) to be refined and used on the local government level.²⁶

Digital Cities Project is another commitment (3.5) included in the Brazil action plan. The project aims to develop internet infrastructure in municipalities, in order to connect various public agencies. The project will foster the use of electronic government tools in municipal public management.²⁷

The fifth commitment of the Brazil action plan is Creating Safer Communities.²⁸ To this end, the commitment lists a number of measures. These include the development and implementation of a methodology for monitoring food safety for the purpose of enhancing the accountability of

²² Ibid, p. 17-18

²³ Ibid, p. 19

²⁴ Brazil's Second OGP Action Plan, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/brazil/action-plan>, p. 14

²⁵ Ibid, p. 17

²⁶ Ibid, p. 20

²⁷ Ibid, p. 21

²⁸ Ibid, p. 23-24



government actions; and the development of a system for collecting and storing standardized information on public policies related to the Maria da Penha Law (a law on domestic violence).

Finally, in order to create safer communities, the fifth commitment of the Brazil action plan also considers it necessary to ensure the participation of indigenous population in the process of local governance.

1.5. Guatemala

Guatemala's OGP Action Plan includes a commitment for local government bodies to ensure transparency of resources allocated for covering the damages caused by natural disasters.²⁹

The action plan also involves setting up a system of development councils that will ensure citizen participation, data collection, and creation of maps for communities with the most urgent problems.³⁰

Finally, the action plan includes a commitment to reform the Local Government Portal by improving the contents and structure of municipal budget data.³¹

1.6. Denmark

The Danish National Action Plan for 2013-2014 requires local governments take active part in the implementation of action plan commitments.

The first commitment of the action plan emphasizes the importance of citizen participation in local government activities, specifically, through citizen consultations. The main purpose of these local government consultations is to strengthen the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process in order to ensure that their rights are not being violated. The commitment also involves setting up a special government committee to research the possible ways for strengthening citizen participation.³²

The action plan discusses the importance of citizens casting their votes during elections, which serves as an indication whether they accept the existing political system. As an example, the action plan mentions a survey conducted by the Danish government in municipalities in order to gather citizen suggestions about possible changes to the local government.³³

²⁹ Second Open Government National Action Plan, Guatemala, 2014-2016, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Plan_de_Acción_de_Gobierno_Abierto_Guatemala_2014-2016_%20INGLES.pdf, p. 22

³⁰ Ibid, p. 26

³¹ Ibid, p. 30

³² Open Government National Action Plan 2013-2014, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Denmark_Open%20Government%20Action%20Plan%202013-2014_ENG_1-sided_print.pdf, p. 5

³³ Ibid, p. 5-6



Low turnout among first-time voters in local government elections is another issue discussed in the action plan. In order to combat this problem, the action plan presents an initiative to send letters of invitation to first-time voters urging them to vote and explaining the importance of their participation in the upcoming elections.³⁴

The action plan emphasizes the importance of full digital communication and calls on national and local governments to join efforts in creating a more digital public sector. The commitment also involves making more active use of digital self-service for citizens.³⁵

One of the commitments of the action plan is seeking new forms of collaboration and involvement on all levels of government, specifically, through more active involvement of the business sector and civil society in the process of public service delivery. The action plan stresses the importance of improving public services through modernization and innovative approaches. To this end, the action plan presents an initiative called Smart Aarhus – a communication platform between citizens, and the public and private sectors. Smart Aarhus was developed through a partnership between the Municipality of Aarhus, Central Denmark Region, the Alexandra Institute, and Aarhus University. The objective is to create 10 innovation systems where citizens, companies, civil society organizations and the public sector work together on demographic, environmental, energy resource management and company competitiveness challenges.³⁶

The above commitment also includes broadening of the so-called Free Municipality pilot projects, which are part of the Danish government's efforts to modernize the public sector. Lessons learned from the projects will contribute to the public sector reform with a focus on trust, professionalism, leadership and deregulation. Currently, there are nine free municipalities in Denmark, meaning that they have been granted exemption from government rules and documentation requirements for the purpose of testing new ways of doing things. The objective is to find smarter, more resource-efficient and less bureaucratic solutions.³⁷

1.7. Dominican Republic

The second OGP Action Plan for the Dominican Republic includes a commitment to create an Open City Council System. The system will promote participatory budgeting and citizen participation in public policy issues.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid, p. 6-7

³⁵ Ibid, p. 7-9

³⁶ Open Government National Action Plan 2013-2014, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Denmark_Open%20Government%20Action%20Plan%202013-2014_ENG_1-sided_print.pdf, p. 9-10

³⁷ Ibid, p. 10

³⁸ Second Action Plan, Dominican Republic, 2014-2016, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/211014_ingles_2nd_DR%20Action%20Plan%20OG%20e_n_P.pdf, p. 14



The council system will make use of ICT mechanisms (sending SMS messages to cell phones) as well as public discussions and consultations to increase citizen participation. The system will also raise citizen awareness about their rights and how to enforce them, and ensure better communication between local government and the public.

1.8. Estonia

Estonia's second OGP Action Plan does not include separate commitments for municipalities. Instead, it requires both central and local government bodies to fulfill specific commitments (2 and 4 of the action plan).^{39 40}

The goal of the second commitment is to strengthen citizen participation in the initial stages of the decision and policymaking processes. The commitment must be fulfilled by state organizations as well as municipal bodies. A part of the commitment is to set up an online discussion platform that will enable citizens to create, support and send initiatives to state and municipal bodies.

The fourth commitment of the action plan involves issues of budget and financial management transparency. According to the action plan, citizens do not have access to detailed financial information. The financial information made public by municipal authorities does not include the identities of their transaction partners (companies, NGOs or foundations) outside the government sector. Also, there is no monitoring of the funding given to non-governmental organizations.

Municipal authorities in Estonia are required to fulfill the above commitment, which is aimed at promoting transparency in public spending and preventing corruption through effective oversight over transaction partners.

1.9. Ireland

Ireland's OGP Action Plan aims to increase citizen participation in local government by setting up Public Participation Networks (PPN) in each municipality. These networks will enable citizens to take active part in the local government decision-making process as well as monitor municipal activities.⁴¹

The action plan also involves the development of regulations and guidelines for promoting citizen participation in local governance.

³⁹ Estonia's Action Plan in Participating in the Open Government Partnership, 2014-2016, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Estonia%202014-2016_EN.pdf, p. 10-11

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 13-14

⁴¹ Open Government Partnership Ireland National Action Plan 2014-2016, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP%20National%20Action%20Plan.pdf>, p. 19-20



Ireland's action plan emphasizes the direct responsibility of elected municipal officials to promote citizen participation in the budgeting process, and requests local government authorities to conduct feasibility studies in this area.

1.10. Italy

Italy's second OGP Action Plan (commitment 5) involves the creation of a web-platform to enable citizens to monitor budget expenditures and participate in identifying budget priorities (Follow the Money).⁴² The executive bodies of both central and local governments are required to fulfill this commitment.

The action plan notes that fiscal transparency is the cornerstone of the pact between governments and citizens, and governments of different countries at the international level. The law already requires information about budget planning and expenditures to be open, however, this information needs to be published online more comprehensively and in more detail.

For the purpose of implementing the fifth commitment, the action plan obligates executive bodies to take awareness-raising measures, publish data in open formats, and create a web platform for monitoring the financial information on the budgets, expenditures and contracts of public institutions. The platform must include an open database with display charts of budget expenditures, and an option for citizens to ask questions to the central and local government representatives related to budget spending.

1.11. Colombia

Colombia's first OGP Action Plan includes commitments for introducing open government principles on the local government level. These include the development of pilot programs for municipalities, supporting municipal activities and strengthening their transparency, accountability and citizen participation.⁴³

Even more interesting in terms of engagement with the OGP is Colombia's second action plan, which is titled Open Government for Social and Regional Inclusion.⁴⁴

⁴² Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2014-2016, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Second%20OGP%20National%20Action%20Plan.pdf>, p. 11

⁴³ Action Plan of the Government of Colombia, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/legacy_files/country_action_plans/action%20plan%20Colombia%20OGP_1.pdf, p. 9

⁴⁴ Open Government for Social and Regional Inclusion, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/colombia/action-plan>



The ninth commitment of this action plan involves promoting the transparency of one of Colombia's regions - Antioquia. The action plan states that even though Antioquia holds first place among the country's regions in terms of transparency, its municipalities still need to raise their transparency and accountability levels. The commitment involves holding public meetings for 12,000 citizens in 125 municipalities of Antioquia regarding local government accountability, public agreements signed between municipality heads and the regional governor, and the regional development plan.⁴⁵

The tenth commitment of the second action plan involves increasing citizen participation in municipal activities. The commitment consists of four stages: The first stage involves the creation of the Bank of Initiatives for citizen participation. The second stage involves a dialogue with citizens on strengthening municipal accountability. The third stage involves the development and introduction of the national participation route. Finally, the fourth stage involves ensuring the participation of native populations in municipal activities.⁴⁶

The purpose of the Bank of Initiatives is to provide financial support for strengthening social responsibility, regional organizations and citizen oversight, and increasing the participation of women, young people and people with disabilities.

The twelfth commitment of Colombia's second action plan involves increasing transparency and accountability for the purpose of better territorial management. The goal is to deepen the decentralization by improving the managerial, institutional and technical skills of both central and local government officials. For this purpose, technical support will be provided to 50 territorial entities, and a special accountability manual will be distributed to 60 territorial entities, through the action plans developed in each municipality. The commitment also aims to promote the openness of financial, budgetary and contractual information of municipalities.⁴⁷

1.12. Macedonia

Both of Macedonia's OGP Action Plans include commitments for the local government. These commitments are mostly related to the openness of information.

1.12.1. Macedonia's First Action Plan

The eighth commitment of the first action plan requires municipalities to open their information. The first part of the commitment states that the openness of information should encourage competitiveness among municipalities (better schools, living environment, safety of living, etc). The second part involves training of municipal staff in order to ensure better implementation of the Law

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 9-10

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 10-11

⁴⁷ Open Government for Social and Regional Inclusion,
<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/colombia/action-plan>, p. 12



on Free Access to Public Information. The third part of the commitment involves the introduction of integrity systems and the use of open information for their benefit in 10 municipalities.⁴⁸

1.12.2. Macedonia's Second Action Plan

The second action plan also requires openness of information on the local level, however, provides for different measures to this end. The sixth commitment of the action plan aims to promote the development of new mechanisms for proactive communication with citizens through: establishing an e-platform for public service delivery; establishing institutional forms of cooperation between municipal authorities and citizens; transforming a part of municipal services into e-services and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery; introducing new methods of conducting consultations with citizens.

The commitment lists the following indicators to be used for performance assessment: developing a training program (curriculum and training materials) for municipalities and conducting trainings for trainers; creating a program guide; preparing a model of Municipal Internal Act on Transparency (which will include a list of information that must be made public together with the rules of disclosure, for example, agendas of municipal council meetings, list of NGOs and projects funded by the municipality, etc.); analysis of municipal services and their delivery through mobile phone applications.⁴⁹

1.13. Norway

Norway's OGP Action Plan states that municipalities play an important role in the democratic process and public service delivery. The municipal sector manages a considerable share of Norway's financial resources. The municipal sector's income in 2012 amounted to 18% of Norway's GDP. In addition, one out of five employed persons in Norway works for the municipal sector. Therefore, budget management by municipal bodies is especially important for Norway. The municipal sector in this country is heavily involved in preschool and primary education, and healthcare issues.⁵⁰

The action plans sets high standards for the municipal sector and states that transparency is the surest way of improving quality. Among other commitments, the action plan provides for more openness and accessibility to information on schools (strategy, action plan and results).

⁴⁸ Action Plan on Open Government Partnership, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/legacy_files/country_action_plans/Macedonia_OGP_AP_1.pdf, p. 16-17

⁴⁹ Action Plan For Open Government Partnership 2014-2016, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Macedonia%20OGP%20ACTION%20PLAN%202014-2016.pdf>, p. 10-13

⁵⁰ Norway's Second Action Plan on Open Government Partnership (OGP), <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP-NORWAY-ACTION%20PLAN%202020-final.pdf>, p. 46-47



1.14. France

France's OGP Action Plan for 2015-2017 includes a variety of commitment for engaging local and regional authorities. The first, tenth and fifteenth commitments are specifically related to municipal authorities.⁵¹

The first commitment involves improving citizen access to the financial information of local and regional authorities.⁵²

This commitment is composed of three components, the first of which is increasing the openness of data held by regional and municipal authorities. Specifically, it is stated that in order to meet the citizens' legitimate expectations and considering the large proportion of public funds spent by local and regional authorities, the financial transparency of these local authorities must be improved.

The action plan states that numerous local and regional authorities have begun using digital tools to account for their financial management and to increase budgetary transparency. The government plans to support and encourage this movement through adopting a bill on the new territorial organization of the Republic (NOTRe). The new law will provide the legislative framework necessary to pursue the openness policy, particularly regarding financial data. Currently, all documents that are attached to the budgets and accounts of city governments may be requested by any interested party. However, the goal is to proactively publish this information, which has already been implemented by various local authorities (such as the city of Rennes, the city of Montpellier, the city of Paris, the province of Hauts-de-Seine and territorial entities)

The same component is aimed at increasing citizen access to the financial data of regional and municipal authorities. Local and regional authorities must publish data on general operating grants (Dotation globale de fonctionnement) or financial contributions received from the central government. In addition, all account balances of local authorities and groups with specific taxation must be published on the data.gouv.fr from 2013 financial year onward. The commitment requires regular and proactive disclosure of financial documents.

The second component requires the decisions and reports of municipal council meetings be published online. Access to these documents must be open and free of charge, the minutes of municipal council meetings must be posted within one week after the meeting on the local government website for at least six years.

The third component requires the information related to building permits be published online, but only after efforts have been made to remove any personal data. Currently, these documents are available to any interested party upon request. The component also involves publishing the decisions

⁵¹ For a Transparent and Collaborative Government: France National Action Plan, 2015-2017, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2015%2007%2009_Plan%20gouvernement%20ouvert%20EN%20Version%20Finale_0.pdf

⁵² Ibid, p. 10-13



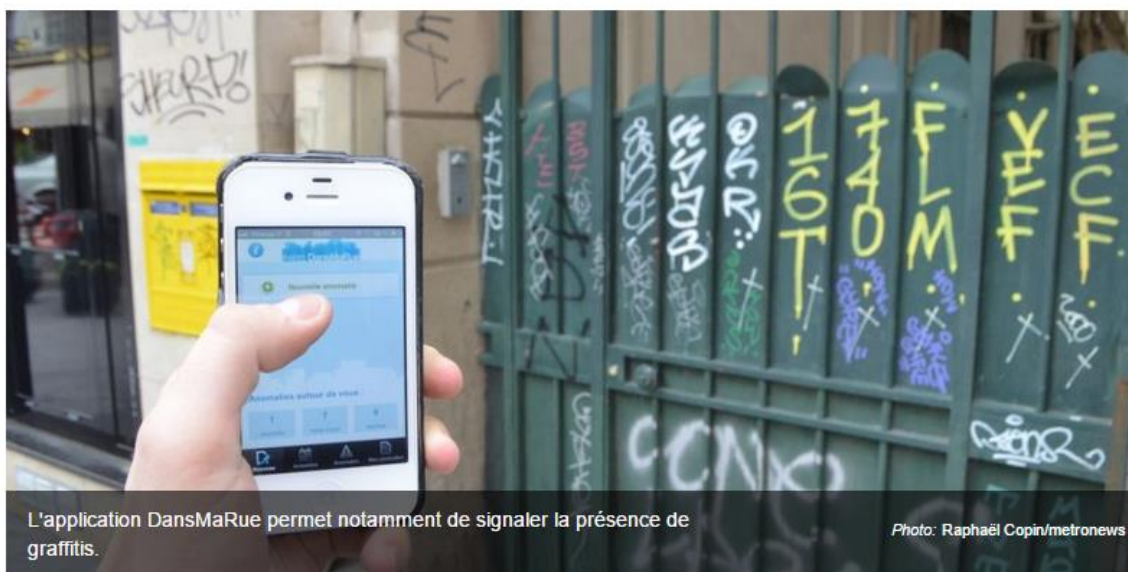
on granting building permits, and starting a working group that will work on other issues related to the openness of these permits.

The tenth commitment of France's OGP Action Plan involves increasing citizen participation in public policy planning and implementation.⁵³

One of the components (Fix My Neighborhood) under this commitment is increasing citizen involvement in the identification of problems through special platforms that enable them to report problems. Such platforms bring the government's attention to the reported problems that it can then successfully solve. These platforms can be used to report road related problems and incidents, undesirable effects of medicines (www.medicaments.gouv.fr) or other products, etc.

The action plan lists several examples of problem reporting both from France (Beecitiz, Jaidemaville, Dansmarue (City of Paris), Fixmaville, Tellmycity, Openmap, proxibuzz, GRC-Mobile) and worldwide (FixMyStreet, PublicStuff, ConnectedBits, ClickSeeFix). One such example deals with reporting urban problems, such as graffiti, abandoned objects, defective street lights and other issues. Citizens can use a mobile phone application to send a picture and information on the location of the problem directly to the city authorities, after which it is the city's responsibility to provide a solution.

APPLIS - Depuis le 26 juin, la Mairie de Paris propose aux possesseurs de smartphones "d'améliorer le cadre de vie de leur quartier" via l'application "DansMaRue". Comment ? En dénonçant, photos à l'appui, les diverses anomalies et incivilités constatées sur l'espace public.



L'application DansMaRue permet notamment de signaler la présence de graffitis.

Photo: Raphaël Copin/metronews

54

⁵³ For a Transparent and Collaborative Government: France National Action Plan, 2015-2017, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2015%2007%2009_Plan%20gouvernement%20ouvert%20EN%20Version%20Finale_0.pdf, p. 27-28

⁵⁴ <http://www.metronews.fr/paris/paris-dansmarue-une-appli-pour-denoncer-le-voisin/mmfb!WmR506GOBabzM/>





Beecitiz c'est...



Une carte participative pour les requêtes des citoyens



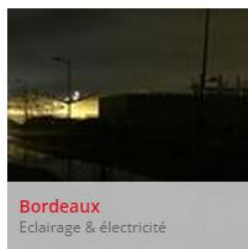
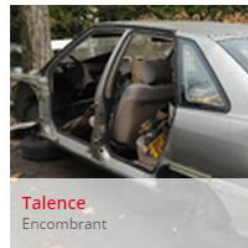
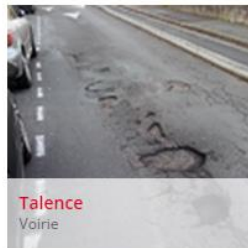
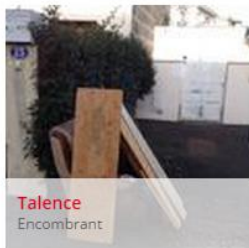
Une interface de gestion des requêtes simple et intuitive



Une plate-forme d'organisation et de communication inter-services

55

Les derniers signalements



56

According to the action plan, a competition for the project Fix My Neighborhood was planned to launch in June 2015. By the end of 2015, it would involve 100 municipalities throughout the country.

The commitment is aimed at providing municipalities with digital platforms for problem identification and monitoring.

⁵⁵ <http://www.beecitiz.com/>

⁵⁶ <http://jaidemaville.com/>



The fifteenth commitment of France's OGP Action Plan aims to support the openness and circulation of data. It states that the French government and its local and regional authorities are strongly committed to opening and sharing public data. This essential policy is both a driver of democratic vitality, a strategy for aiding economic and social innovation and a real lever for government modernization.⁵⁷

The commitment states that the central government already publishes a variety of data on democratic, economic and social issues, and that the local and regional authorities should do the same. As an example, the action plan mentions the Open Data France Association,⁵⁸ which was formed by 30 municipalities that voluntarily took the responsibility of disclosing data and encouraging the open data policy.

The commitment involves: opening more data that have a strong economic and social impact; strengthening open data in local and regional authorities by legally obligating municipalities with more than 3,500 inhabitants to disclose public information; enshrining in law the general principles of openness of public data (with closure being exceptional) and its unrestricted and cost-free reuse.

1.15. Serbia

The twelfth commitment of Serbia's OGP Action Plan involves strengthening citizen participation in local government activities and includes two main components: Signing the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government, and strengthening the cooperation between the local government and civil society.⁵⁹

For the first component the Serbian government must prepare a draft law on ratification of the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

The second component involves strengthening the capacity of local governments in the areas of cooperation with civil society and transparent funding of CSOs. For this purpose, the commitment also involves organizing trainings for local government staff.

1.16. Armenia

Both of Armenia's action plans are interesting in terms of local government engagement with the Open Government Partnership.

⁵⁷ For a Transparent and Collaborative Government: France National Action Plan, 2015-2017, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2015%2007%2009_Plan%20gouvernement%20ouvert%20EN%20Version%20Finale_0.pdf, p. 39-41

⁵⁸ <http://www.opendatafrance.net/>

⁵⁹ Action Plan for Implementation of OGP Initiative in the Republic of Serbia for 2014 and 2015, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/serbia/action-plan>, p. 18-19



1.16.1. Armenia's First OGP Action Plan

The first action plan outlines all the measures implemented in Armenia before becoming part of the OGP. These include the introduction of incentive and motivational mechanisms, such as a performance-based integrated system of remuneration. Municipalities were also obligated to develop action plans and prepare reports annually in order to increase accountability. By 2010, 50% of state and local government bodies had prepared reports on their activities, and by 2011 80% of these reports had been made publicly available. The action plan also notes that the Armenian government intends to amend its law on local government, in order to encourage citizen participation, especially in the budget planning process.⁶⁰

1.16.2. Armenia's Second OGP Action Plan

The sixth commitment of the second action plan involves conducting surveys in 10 municipalities for the purpose of increasing citizen participation.⁶¹ Through text messages (SMS) community residents receive one or several questions about the community problems with variants of possible answers. Within 24 hours, residents respond to the inquiry by sending back a text message with their preferred option. The commitment is aimed at strengthening communication between the community and local government and will ensure transparency in the decision-making process.

The eleventh commitment of the action plan involves ensuring the transparency of large municipalities (with at least 20,000 inhabitants) as well.⁶² According to the action plan, only a part of large municipalities in Armenia have websites. These websites are not being updated regularly and only some of them publish the decisions of local government bodies. The information about public discussions, hearings and sessions of local representative bodies is not being distributed according to existing regulations. Municipal council sessions are being broadcasted online only in the cities of Vanadzor and Gyumri. The lack of sufficient space in some municipalities makes it impossible to ensure all interested persons can attend municipal council sessions.

The commitment is aimed at creating and updating municipal websites, publishing all legal acts adopted by municipal bodies, notifying citizens about municipal council sessions, and online broadcasting of council sessions of municipalities with at least 20,000 inhabitants.⁶³

⁶⁰ Action Plan by the Republic of Armenia,

http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/legacy_files/country_action_plans/OGPAP_Armenia_English.pdf, p. 2

⁶¹ Second Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia (2014-2016),

<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/armenia/action-plan>, p. 12-13

⁶² Ibid, p. 20-21

⁶³ Second Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia (2014-2016),

<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/armenia/action-plan>, p. 20-21



1.17. Hungary

The first commitment of Hungary's second OGP Action Plan emphasizes the necessity to improve the openness of municipal information.⁶⁴

For this purpose, the action plan requires public service providers to keep citizens informed by disclosing data related to the budget, property management, use of public funds, and issues of granting special rights to market actors.

The second action plan states that even though Hungary's first action plan required municipalities to publish their data, OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) found that the commitment was being fulfilled only partially. Therefore, the commitment was retained and expanded upon in the second action plan. In addition, according to the IRM report, even though municipalities are allowed to hold closed sessions, this does not extend to sessions where issues of municipal property are discussed.

The commitment also requires the development and distribution of a special guideline on public information.

The purpose of the guide will be to interpret the legal acts on the openness of information and to make recommendations to municipal bodies on the proactive disclosure of public information (including publication samples).

In order to support the practical application of the guideline, the commitment involves holding a total of 7 workshops (one in each region) for municipal authorities. These workshops will also serve a platform for municipality representatives to share their experience and practice.

The guideline will raise the awareness of municipal authorities about proactive disclosure of public information, increase the openness of the decision-making of municipal representative and executive bodies and reduce the costs of making information public.

The seventh commitment of Hungary's second action plan involves improving the searchability of municipal council records and decisions.⁶⁵ The action plan states that this commitment was originally included in the first OGP action plan, but had to be retained for the second action plan due to its limited implementation. The progress report on Hungary established that the great majority of Hungarian local governments did not comply with the publicity obligation and the information published was often of bad quality and not searchable due to its format. Therefore, in addition to the development of a methodological guideline, the commitment emphasized the need to use proper data formats.

⁶⁴ Action Plan on Hungary's Commitments for the Years 2015-2017 made under the Open Government Partnership, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/hungary/action-plan>, p. 5-6

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 9-10



As an example, the action plan mentions a format called Akomo Ntoso, which converts information into easy to process .xml format. The commitment involves starting a pilot project on using this format to publish data on the bases of voluntary involvement of municipalities.

1.18. Uruguay

Uruguay also engages its local government in the OGP action plan. The country's second action plan includes a number of commitments for the Rivera, Maldonado, Montevideo municipalities.⁶⁶

The eighth commitment of the action plan stresses the importance of improving public service delivery by municipal authorities and requires the introduction of new projects for this purpose.⁶⁷

The first component of the commitment involves introducing new methods of interaction between the citizens and the Municipality of Rivera, specifically, incorporating citizen self-service and consultation tools in the municipality website.

The second component involves creating and implementing an Integrated System for Managing Municipal Complaints allowing citizens to make claims and/or complaints through the municipality website or through special self-management terminals. The component also involves creating a smartphone application for submitting complaints.

The third commitment of Uruguay's action plan is aimed at promoting access to public information.⁶⁸ The fourth component of this commitment involves efforts to promote the culture of open data in the Municipality of Maldonado by digitizing and publishing all existing minutes and manuscripts of municipal council sessions.

Uruguay's action plan also promotes openness of social policy through its second commitment, the third component of which extends its requirements on urban development program to one of Montevideo's municipalities.⁶⁹

1.19. Philippines

Of special interest to this study is the third OGP Action Plan for the Philippines, which includes 4 commitments for local government.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Open Government Partnership 2nd Action Plan Uruguay 2014-2016, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Action%20Plan%20Uruguay%202014-2016%20%28EN%29.pdf>

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 47-48

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 28-31

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 25-27

⁷⁰ Shared Commitments For Better Outcomes, the Philippine Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2015-2017,



The second commitment of the action plan involves the openness of financial documents and transactions of local government units. It requires monitoring of the openness of municipal activities, which will allow citizens and other stakeholders to stay informed of how local government units manage their budgets. The commitment intends to build a culture of transparency among local government units by ensuring regular disclosure of key financial documents. Public access to this information is a prerequisite to effective citizen participation.⁷¹

The sixth commitment is aimed at increasing citizen participation in budget planning through the Bottom-up Budgeting program. According to the commitment, the participation of organizations and citizens in budget planning will increase the accountability of local government bodies. The commitment also involves conducting trainings for volunteers and municipal staff aimed at increasing their capacity to be more involved in budget planning and identification of priorities.⁷²

The eighth commitment of the action plan deals with transparency of municipal housing, social assistance and security. The commitment is aimed at promoting good governance in local government bodies in order to ensure the proper use of public funds, and accountability, transparency and high quality of public services at the local level.⁷³

Finally, the tenth commitment is aimed at improving the competitiveness of local government units. For this purpose, the commitment involves designing a diagnostic tool that can be used to assess the level of competitiveness of local government units and identify areas for improvement and collaboration. This tool will help set up an index of efficiency of local government units that will provide a picture of how they are performing in terms of economy and infrastructure.⁷⁴

1.20. Finland

Finland joined the Open Government Partnership in 2012. Since then, the country developed two action plans, both of which include commitments for municipalities related to citizen participation in municipal activities, budget transparency and public service delivery. Both action plans emphasize that the implementation process involved the representatives of civil society, and central and local governments.

1.20.1. Finland's First OGP Action Plan

The first action plan states that transparency and resident's right to good governance are basic principles in Finnish municipalities. The right to participate in decision-making is enshrined in several laws on municipalities. The legislation also pushes municipalities to use diverse means to

<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/PHILIPPINE%20OPEN%20GOVERNMENT%20PARTNERSHIP%20NATIONAL%20ACTION%20PLAN%202015-2017.pdf>

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 14-15

⁷² Ibid, p. 23-27

⁷³ Ibid, p. 30-31

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 33-34



communicate with and inform their citizens. And the use of new electronic channels sets new requirements for openness to municipalities.⁷⁵ Finland's first action plan is divided in several chapters, the first of which includes commitments for the local government.

According to the first commitment of the action plan, within the first year of its implementation, various kinds of consultations with citizens of all ages will be used extensively in the decision-making process. The central and local governments will together support the implementation of various functions of the E-Participation Environment/Portal. The commitment states that the central and local governments may voluntarily assume additional commitments on openness.⁷⁶

The fourth commitment deals with participatory budgeting and involves creating an open, game-like application that will allow citizens to participate in planning the central and local budgets. After this, municipalities willing to pilot the application will be identified. The commitment also states that participatory budgeting will be included in the comprehensive reform of the Local Government Act.⁷⁷

1.20.2. Finland's Second OGP Action Plan

The second action plan includes 4 commitments in total.

The first commitment requires central and local governments to provide citizens with information on their decision-making in an understandable language.⁷⁸ According to the action plan, the government has a complicated structure and the terminology used in the decision-making process can be difficult to understand for regular citizens.

Even though the government is moving in the right direction, challenges remain related to its structure and the language used to communicate with citizens. The existence of these challenges was made clear during the meetings with citizens.

The first commitment is aimed at simplifying public service delivery and making it more customer-oriented. The information on the structures of government bodies and the service delivery process must be described so that citizens know exactly which authority they should contact for different issues. The language used in the decision-making process must be clear and easy to understand. Government bodies must take feedback from citizens and use it to make improvements.

The second commitment involves opening government data.⁷⁹ According to the action plan, even though many important databases are already open, major challenges remain in terms of openness and transparency. In order to try to overcome these challenges the Open Data Program, steered by

⁷⁵ Finland's Action Plan on Open Government, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/legacy_files/country_action_plans/20130314%20OGP%20Action%20Plan%20Finland.pdf, p. 1

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 4-5

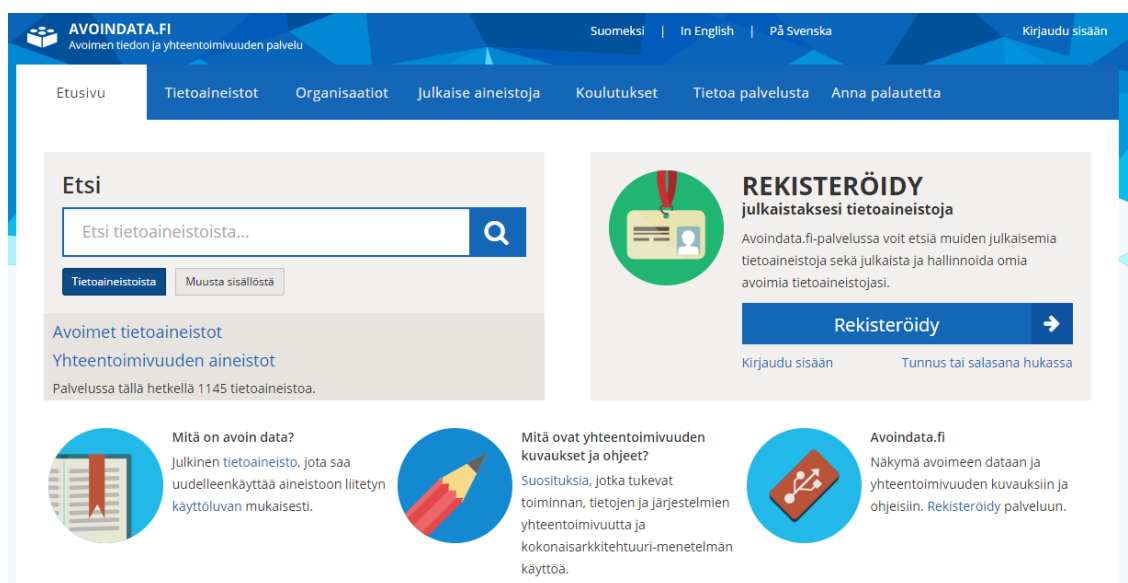
⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 5

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 7-9

⁷⁹ Finland, Open Government Action Plan, 2015-2017, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP_Action_Plan_Finland-2015_2017.pdf, p. 9-11



the Ministry of Finance, launched a common platform (avoindata.fi) for open data and interoperability services.



80

The first commitment emphasizes the importance of delivering public services to citizens via e-technologies, which greatly increases the accessibility of these services.

The third component emphasizes the importance of coordination among ministries, local authorities and civil society organizations. According to the action plan, there is a lack of coordination between municipalities, which serves as an obstacle for volunteering.

The component requires the government to promote data openness, encourage volunteering and introduce electronic technologies for municipal service delivery to citizens, including people with disabilities.

The fourth commitment of the action plan is aimed at strengthening the participation of children, young people and the elderly in the decision-making process and public service delivery.⁸¹

According to the action plan, participation opportunities for children and young people have been systematically enhanced in municipalities and civil society organizations. The action plan requires all municipalities to establish youth councils and councils on disability. Councils for the elderly have been mandatory since 2013. The action plan states that 80% of municipalities already have youth councils and 150 municipalities have councils on disability. Both of these councils will be mandatory from June 1, 2017.

⁸⁰ <https://www.avoindata.fi/fi>

⁸¹ Finland, Open Government Action Plan, 2015-2017, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP_Action_Plan_Finland-2015_2017.pdf, p. 14-15



Finally, the action plan requires paying special attention to engaging citizens who do not know the state language.

1.21. Croatia

Both of Croatia's OGP action plans have included commitments for the local government to introduce open government principles.

1.21.1. Croatia's First OGP Action Plan

The first action plan involves introducing joint programs for regions and municipalities that are aimed at increasing transparency and citizen participation in local budget planning and monitoring of its execution. The action plan requires this commitment to be fulfilled through cooperation with non-governmental organizations.⁸²

Croatia's first action plan pays special attention to the monitoring of local budget planning and execution and requires improving the transparency of these processes. Specifically, it gives recommendations and instructions to all local and regional self-government units to publish, on their official web sites, key budgetary documents (budget proposals prepared by executive bodies; final budget drafts adopted by representative bodies; semi-annual and annual reports on execution).⁸³

The action plan also requires holding open public discussions and consultations with citizens and civil society organizations for the purpose of identifying budget priorities.

Finally, the action plan requires representative bodies of local and regional territorial units to publish session agendas on their websites.⁸⁴

1.21.2. Croatia's Second OGP Action Plan

Croatia's second action plan does not include commitments specifically for the local government. Instead, its commitments on fiscal transparency and access to public information extend to municipal bodies in addition to the central government.⁸⁵

⁸² Action Plan for the Implementation of the Initiative Open Government Partnership in the Republic of Croatia for Period 2012-2013, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/legacy_files/country_action_plans/Croatia-OGP-Action%20plan_0.pdf, p. 7-8

⁸³ Ibid, p. 7-8

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 11-12

⁸⁵ Action Plan for the Implementation of the Initiative Open Government Partnership in the Republic of Croatia for Period 2014-2016, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Action%20Plan-OGP-8-7-2014-final-ENG.pdf>



2. Open Government Guide on Engaging Local Government with the OGP

Engaging local governments is a new direction for the Open Government Partnership,⁸⁶ and has only recently been added to the Open Government Guide.⁸⁷

According to the Open Government Guide, the OGP is a club of nations. But it is clear that if open government commitments are only implemented at the national level they will fail to reach the majority of citizens. Recognizing this, the Open Government Guide states that National Action Plans increasingly include cases of local government undertaking OGP commitments. In addition, central authorities take on obligations to actively work with municipal authorities and increase their involvement.

The Open Government Guide emphasizes that there is currently no formal role for local governments within the OGP framework. However, many of the learning and experience sharing sessions of OGP meetings already include ‘inspiring stories’ from municipalities and other territorial units.⁸⁸ Associations of local governments are becoming involved in the consultative processes for development and implementation of National Action Plans, and are issuing guidance and carrying out training for their members.

However in practice, moves towards more openness in government often advance at an uneven pace. In some places, cities have led the way to openness ahead of their central government. For example, São Paulo set up its [open data portal](#) in 2012, before the Brazilian Federal Government. In other cases, national governments took commitments to promote openness and transparency in local government. The Open Government Guide mentions the Philippines as an example of this, the specifics of which are discussed elsewhere in this report.

The Open Government Guide considers rapidly growing cities as a powerful driver for innovation. The introduction of electronic technologies can be used to improve transportation, healthcare, housing conditions and other issues.

The Guide lists several outstanding examples of openness and engagement of local government, as well as examples of countries that have included commitments related to local government in their action plans. The examples of the latter were discussed in the first chapter of this report. The examples of the former will be discussed in the following chapter.

⁸⁶ <http://www.opengovguide.com/local-government/>

⁸⁷ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/maya-forstater/2014/05/15/open-gov-local-gov>, M. Forstater, Open Gov Local Gov, 15 May, 2014.

⁸⁸ For example, sessions of the OGP Global Summit held in Mexico on October 27-29, 2015, also included discussions of issues related to local government involvement in the OGP: *Partnership of Local Government and the Community within the Field of Neighborhood Priorities and Budgeting* - <http://sched.co/4WhJ>, and the *Inverted Pyramid: Strengthening Municipal Organization's Role in Open Government at the Local Level* - <http://sched.co/4QXP>



The Open Government Guide contains information on a variety of internet resources that can help state bodies, local governments and other stakeholders to learn more about the openness of municipal bodies and use these resources to promote the openness of local government and develop new commitments. One such resource is the Council of Europe's [Handbook on Public Ethics at Local Level](#) adopted in 2005, and <http://www.cityethics.org/>, which presents information on local government ethics programs in the US. Other interesting resources include the International Budget Partnership's report on local government budget transparency,⁸⁹ the [Local Government 2.0](#) developed by E-democracy.org, [Global Charter of the Right to Citizen Participation at the Local Level](#), <http://opengovernment.org/>, and other sources.

The Guide also highlights successful initiatives that aim to strengthen the partnership between cities, exchange best practices and promote participatory democracy. Specifically: <http://www.tedcity2.org/>, <http://opencities.net/>, <http://futurecities.catapult.org.uk/>, <http://newurbanmechanics.org/>, and <http://www.mercociudades.org/>. The last initiative included mayors of various South American cities signing an agreement to cooperate towards increasing citizen participation.

3. Successful Examples of Local Government Openness

The first chapter of this report showed that a significant number of OGP member states have undertaken commitments to promote local government engagement with the OGP and increase citizen participation at the local level.

The Open Government Partnership announced its Subnational Government Pilot Program in order to strengthen the involvement of local government. The OGP calls on subnational governments with a minimum population of 250,000 to submit applications for the program.⁹⁰ The program aims to first promote the involvement of local governments in the OGP initiative by encouraging them to take on specific commitments, and later encourage OGP member states to include these subnational commitments in their respective national action plans. The goal is to better integrate local government openness commitments with national action plans.

The Subnational Government Pilot Program presents a few success stories like Mexico City, New Orleans and Amsterdam.⁹¹ Apart from these, the OGP official website presents other successful examples, which will also be discussed below:

⁸⁹ <http://www.internationalbudget.org/>

⁹⁰ Information on the pilot program can be found at: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/subnational-government-pilot-program#3>

⁹¹ The list also includes the example of the Philippines, which can be found in the first chapter of this report.



3.1. Amsterdam

Amsterdam is considered an interesting case in terms of participatory budgeting. In 2012-2013, the city launched a pilot project in IndischeBuurt, a neighborhood that had 23,000 residents in 2003.⁹²

The project showed that the localization of participatory budgeting down to the neighborhood level was a very effective way to get citizens involved. The residents of IndischeBuurt, who expressed the willingness to participate in budget allocation and monitoring, were offered relevant trainings.

After the training, the pilot groups began commenting on the municipality's 2013 perspective paper and proposed budget. The community members also produced their own perspective paper detailing their priorities for the neighborhood of IndischeBuurt. For example, while studying the budget, the community members discovered that there had been under spending on youth and education, as compared to official reports and municipal plans. The group worked jointly with their local government to create new programs for youth and education in the neighborhood.⁹³

3.2. New Orleans

The city of New Orleans has long faced problems with abandoned and run-down properties. These problems were made worse by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Abandoned buildings (about 35,000), broken windows and caved-in roofs had a negative effect on city and its residents. These problems also lead to increased crime and poverty.⁹⁴

To tackle this problem, the City of New Orleans partnered with the non-profit organization Code for America,⁹⁵ which created an online platform (BlightStatus) that helps residents report abandoned and run-down properties and track those already being processed by the city's relevant departments. The platform has become an effective mechanism for keeping citizens and their local government informed, and has equipped city officials with the data they needed to tackle the problem in an efficient manner, saving the city large amounts of money.⁹⁶

⁹² <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/marjan-delzenne-and-zeynep-gunduz/2013/06/13/budget-monitoring-amsterdam-neighborhood>

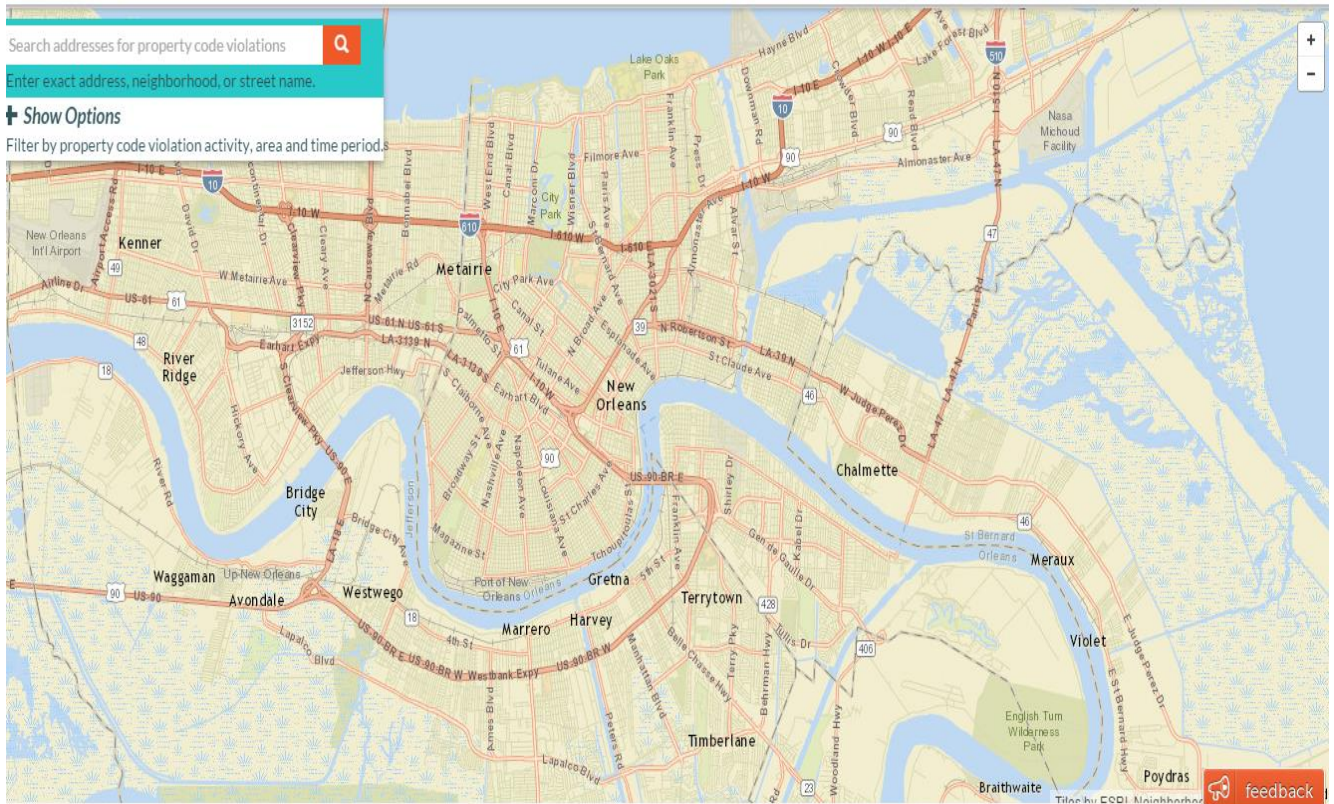
⁹³ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/subnational-government-pilot-program#3>

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ <http://www.codeforamerica.org/>

⁹⁶ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/subnational-government-pilot-program#3>





97

3.3. Mexico City⁹⁸

In 2012, the mayor of Mexico City founded the Mexico City Government Innovation Lab, which is run as a creative think tank that aims to institutionalize innovation inside city government.

The Innovations Lab helped Mexico City develop an open government law, which encourages city residents to participate in public policy making and requires city authorities to take their suggestions into account.

The city also collaborated with students through the "Yo Propongo" initiative, in which students interviewed city residents about their problems. The city authorities used the gathered information to draft the four year policy agenda, helping Mexico City to improve its policies and to be more citizen-centered.

The Innovations lab is also home to a web portalCodigo DF (Code for Mexico City), a program that uses technology to devise solutions to problems facing city residents. For example, the program uses e-technologies to regulate transportation.

⁹⁷ <http://blightstatus.nola.gov/>

⁹⁸ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/subnational-government-pilot-program#3>



3.4. New York

The city of New York began introducing participatory budgeting since 2011. Initially, only four districts were involved. However, in 2014-2015, participation rose to 24 districts, with more than 51,000 residents having taken part in identifying budget priorities.⁹⁹ In 2015-2016, New Yorkers in 27 districts will collaboratively decide how to distribute over \$30 million to local capital projects.¹⁰⁰



Every year the residents of New York districts involved in the participatory budgeting program decide on how to spend the discretionary part of their district's budget (about USD 1 million per district).¹⁰² The residents work and vote on ideas and suggestions related to local infrastructural projects (schools, parks, libraries and residential buildings). After the vote, the majority supported initiatives are sent to the New York representative body.¹⁰³

3.5. Porto Alegre¹⁰⁴

The city of Porto Alegre is located in Brazil and is believed to be the first city in the world to have introduced participatory budgeting. Since 1989, budget allocations for public welfare works in Porto Alegre have been made only after the recommendations of public delegates and approval by the city council. Participatory budgeting has brought substantial improvements to the city. For instance, sewer and water connections went up from 75 percent of total households in 1988 to 98 percent in 1997. Porto Alegre's health and education budget increased from 13 percent in 1985 to almost 40 percent in 1996. Since the launch of the participatory budget program, the number of participants in Porto Alegre grew from less than 1,000 per year in 1990 to more than 16,000 in 1998, to about 40,000

⁹⁹ The city of New York has a total of 51 districts: <http://council.nyc.gov/html/members/members.shtml>

¹⁰⁰ <http://pbnyc.org/content/speaker-melissa-mark-viverito-and-new-york-city-council-launch-2015-2016-participatory-budge>

¹⁰¹ <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/nyc/>

¹⁰² <http://pbnyc.org/content/speaker-melissa-mark-viverito-and-new-york-city-council-launch-2015-2016-participatory-budge>

¹⁰³ <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/nyc/>

¹⁰⁴ http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/14657_Participatory-Budgeting-Brazil-web.pdf



in 1999.¹⁰⁵ By 1999, 21% of the Porto Alegre budget was being allocated on the basis of participatory budgeting.¹⁰⁶

Poverty and poor living conditions remain a challenge for Brazil. There is also a significant gap between the rich and the poor living in cities. Participatory budgeting has greatly improved the conditions for socially vulnerable citizens by involving them in the process of allocating public funds.¹⁰⁷

Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre involves three parallel streams of meetings: neighborhood assemblies (of which Porto Alegre has 16), “thematic” assemblies, and delegate meetings. These meetings continue throughout the year.

Neighborhood assemblies discuss fund allocations for water supply and sewage, street paving, parks, and schools. The assemblies may be held in public places, including union centers, gyms, churches and other public spaces.

The process of participatory budgeting starts with the presentation of the city government’s previous year reports. The government also presents its investment plan for the current year, as decided in the previous year’s meetings. Then a debate starts that continues for nine months. During the debates, each district presents two sets of rankings, one set for requirements within the district (such as pavement, school construction, etc), and the other set for issues affecting the whole city (such as cleaning up the beaches).¹⁰⁸

The main driving principles for participatory budgeting are citizen participation and openness of information. Participatory budgeting helps municipal and city authorities strengthen their accountability.

The main challenge facing participatory budgeting is the engagement of the most poor and vulnerable parts of the population. Participatory budgeting may also influence a city's far-reaching and profit-generating prospects. Therefore, municipal authorities should better inform their citizens about the expected results of proposed suggestions.

3.6. Chicago¹⁰⁹

Since January 2012, the city of Chicago has been making public the data on snow plowing works online. Based on information provided by municipal authorities, the organization Open City,¹¹⁰ together with other partner organizations, developed the ClearStreets application, which shows

¹⁰⁵ In 2010, Porto Alegre had a population of more than 1.5 million.

¹⁰⁶ http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/14657_Particip-Budg-Brazil-web.pdf, p. 2-3

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 1

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 2

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/maya-forstater/2014/05/15/open-gov-local-gov>

¹¹⁰ <http://opencityapps.org/>



citizens which streets have been plowed of snow. The project highlights the importance of openness of information, and emphasizes the need to introduce e-technologies in city management.

Jan 22, 2015
 The Chicago area is expected to get [about an inch of snow](#).
 See which streets have been plowed and when.

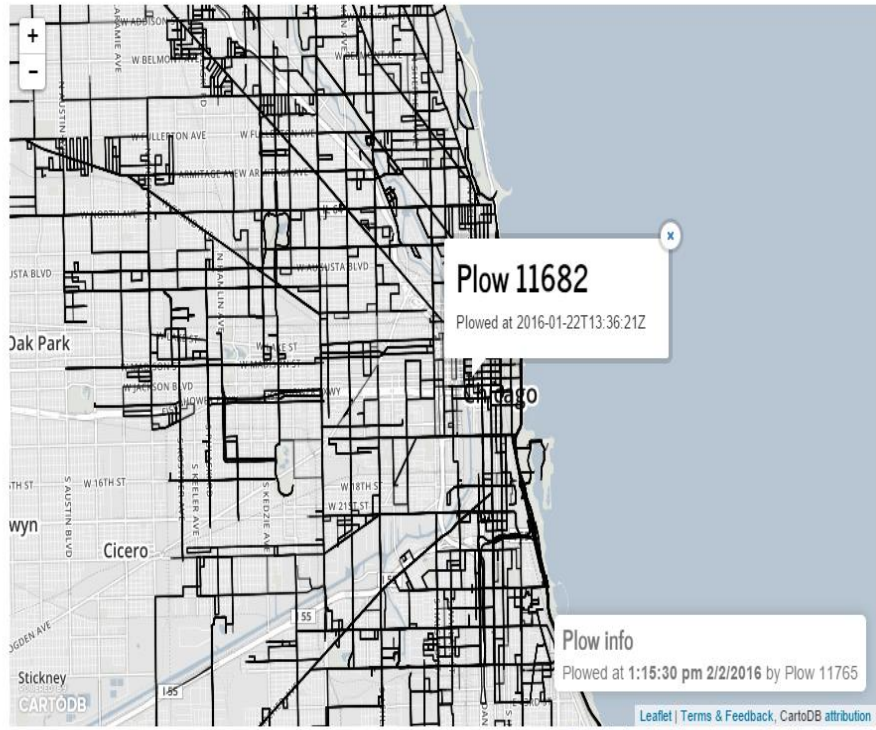
Did my street get plowed? (find me)

Search Reset

Plow fleet: **Hibernating**

What is this?
 ClearStreets tracks Chicago's snow plows in real time by scraping data from the City of Chicago's Plow Tracker. By knowing where the plows are, we've figured out which streets have been plowed. [Read more »](#)

Did your street get skipped?
 We don't have data on all the plows, so this map may be inaccurate. Also, we aren't the City of Chicago, and we don't control or influence where the plows go. If your street needs plowing, call 311.



clearstreets.org

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4. IDFT's Recommendations on Engaging Local Government in the OGP

Georgia developed two OGP Action Plans in 2011-2015 that included commitments to introduce and implement OGP principles on the local level. The 2012-2013 Action Plan involved the introduction of e-governance in municipalities,¹¹² and implementation of crime mapping and Safe Neighborhood projects.¹¹³ The Assessment Report found that e-governance was only partially implemented in

¹¹¹ <http://clearstreets.org/>

¹¹² OGP Georgia Action Plan 2012-2013, <http://goo.gl/fRLwgU>, p. 4

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 9-10



municipalities,¹¹⁴ while the crime mapping and Safe Neighborhood projects were still being implemented.¹¹⁵

The OGP Georgia Action Plan for 2014-2015 included commitments (6 and 7) on introduction of e-governance in municipalities, creation of community centers and public libraries.¹¹⁶

While the actions plans developed by Georgia focus on improving public services and introducing e-governance on the subnational level, other OGP member states choose to focus on increasing citizen participation, creating e-platforms, promoting the involvement of young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities in local governance, and other issues.

Having a more active policy towards local government and sharing best practices of other OGP member states in this regard is especially important for Georgia. This would help enforce the provisions already included in the country's Local Government Code. It is also important for Georgian municipalities to be directly involved in the OGP initiative, in order to better implement its principles. To this end, Tbilisi, Georgia's capital and a regional center, should join the OGP by taking part in the recently announced pilot program.

IDFI believes that the representative and executive bodies of Tbilisi and other local governments in Georgia must share the best practices related to openness, citizen participation and e-governance, specifically:

- 1) Participatory budgeting, which will enhance financial transparency, accountability and citizen participation.
- 2) E-platforms, which will enable citizens to identify local problems (related to infrastructure, traffic, environment, quality of goods and other issues), and will serve as a tool for local government bodies for saving resources.
- 3) Proactive disclosure of data, especially financial data, in easy to use formats. Local governments must also make public documents related to the funding of commercial and non-commercial organizations from the budget.
- 4) Regularly updated information on local government websites, including meeting agendas and protocols, and decisions made by local government representative bodies.

¹¹⁴ OGP Georgia Action Plan 2012-2013 Assessment Report, http://www.justice.gov.ge/Multimedia%2FFiles%2FOGP%2FOGP_Self-Assessment%20Report_Georgia_GEO.pdf, p. 18

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 40-45

¹¹⁶ OGP Georgia Action Plan 2014-2015, <http://www.justice.gov.ge/Multimedia%2FFiles%2FOGP%2FUSA%2FGov.%20Decree%20557%20-%20FINAL.pdf>, p. 66-67



5) Trainings of local government staff and prospective public servants, development of relevant guides, and promotion of participation of young people, the elderly and people with disabilities in local governance.

IDFI hopes that this report and its recommendations will boost the implementation of OGP principles in Georgian municipalities, promote their financial transparency and increase citizen participation.

