Open Government Partnership

Italian Action Plan

# 1. Introduction

Over the last few years, Italy has undertaken a comprehensive process of administrative modernization with a view to enhancing public service provision, touching upon the main aspects concerning Public Administration - PA transparency and citizen participation in public decision-making, through measures aimed at promoting accountability and organizational performance. Among the main actions to support promotion of economic development and growth, the Italian Government attaches special importance to systemic simplification measures, as well as promotion of use of new information and communication technologies that will result in a radical change in the relationship between PAs and citizens and business.

In line with the new reform programme, Italy has fully embraced the principles enshrined in the *Open Government Declaration*. The Minister for Public Administration and Simplification, in coordination with Ministers and public authorities involved in such programme of administrative change and within the framework of the common Open Government Partnership exercise, presents the *Action Plan* with the aim of sharing a full exchange of information with its international partners, while launching a lasting mutual updating process on the respective relevant policies in the field of PA transparency.

Over the last few months, against a backdrop of a wide-ranging reform programme to overcome the difficult economic situation, the newly-established Italian Government has adopted a set of significant legislative measures to achieve the above-mentioned targets of administrative modernization: Law-Decree n. 201/2011 (so-called "Save Italy" Decree, "*Decreto Salva Italia*"), Law-Decree n. 1/2012 (so-called "Make Italy Grow" Decree, "*Decreto Cresci Italia*"), as well as Law-Decree n. 5/2012 (so-called "Simplify Italy" Decree, "*Decreto Semplifica Italia*").

The reformed sectors include:

* Civil Service Sector, with measures to ensure top-quality performance while making the most of professional skills and abilities.
* Recruitment, training and professional status of civil servants, with key principles such as professional competence, merit, impartiality and public ethics at their core;
* Reorganization of administrative structures and machinery, so as to ensure a better functioning and provision of services while reducing inefficiency-related costs;
* Transparency, accountability and organizational performance;
* Reduction of administrative burdens for citizens and business, with sound simplification policies implemented in light the results of cost measurement of the requirements for citizens and business set forth by the existing legislation.

Throughout its mandate, this Government will adopt a working method focussed on consultation and involvement of business and citizen associations, also through telematic consultation in line with the European model. Additional packages of legislative measures to favour simplification and fight against corruption to ensure tangible results for citizens and business are currently under examination.

Transparency is not only a right of citizens and business, but also an opportunity for the administrations themselves, as the latter have to account not only for "what" they do but also for "how" they do by ensuring accessibility of data on organization and staff, services, payments, as well as performance measurement and assessment. Moreover, PA's commitment to transparency and accessibility will provide a useful tool to better identify areas in need of reform, rationalize resource allocation, identify areas to implement anti-corruption and simplification measures and to promote a competitive exchange between public entities.

After the first decisive PA reform in 2009 (Legislative Decree n. 150/2009) to support PA efficiency, merit and integrity, transparency was defined as "total accessibility", by reinforcing the provision of information of general interest to citizens and business, while developing the *open data* set.

## In Italy, the definition of a unitary National strategy on *Open Government* benefited from many good practices previously carried out at regional and local level. The first national Open Government Strategy was submitted by the Minister for Public Administration and Innovation on October 18, 2011. Such strategy was mainly centred on three main axes:

* *Open data* and applications
* Public Administration 2.0
* *Government Cloud*

On the same occasion, the Government also launched the National Open Data Portal [www.dati.gov.it](http://www.dati.gov.it).

**2. Open Government initiatives**

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The main *Open Government* initiatives realized so far can be divided into five areas of action.

## 2.1. Initiatives in the area of PA transparency and integrity

The most significant, comprehensive reform action concerning Public Administration (the above-mentioned Legislative Decree n. 150/2009) incorporated the principle of transparency among the civil and social rights which, according to the Constitution, have to be guaranteed to citizens throughout the whole national territory.

The same Law, against a backdrop of a stricter respect of transparency and accountability principles, sets up the **Independent Commission on Evaluation, Transparency and Integrity of Public Administrations** (**CIVIT**). Among its main institutional purposes, CIVIT promotes and disseminates transparency within administrations, while developing actions which support the culture of integrity. Since its installation in office (December 22, 2009), the Commission has been operating in three areas falling under its remit (transparency, performance, service quality) by elaborating a set of guiding lines for the preparation and updating of the three-year Programme for Transparency and Integrity, while providing guidance on and coordinating implementation by administrations of the measures set forth by new legislation.

Currently, at the National level, most administrations have adopted the three-year Programme for Transparency and Integrity, which specifies timing and publication of "public" data and identifies initiatives related to transparency and integrity. Many administrations have also appointed internally a professional responsible for Transparency who coordinates preparation and updating of the three-year Programme; also, almost all public authorities have set up the section on "Transparency, Assessment and Merits" where easily comparable and revisable data related to the organization, the activities and use of public resources are made available to citizens. For the sake of a higher simplification and usability of data by citizens, CIVIT has also provided a list containing disclosure obligations, while requiring publication of the three-year Programme and data in at least one open and standardized format.

Already in 2008, the Government had launched an important process of dissemination of data on civil servants (the so-called "**Transparency Operation**"), under which each administration is required to communicate to the Department for Public Administration and/or to publish on-line:

* tasks entrusted to employees, consultants and external collaborators;
* data on consortia and companies which are either public entities or entities where the State is a shareholder;
* posting, leave of absence and time off for unions activities and elective public offices;
* striking personnel and deductions from salary in relation to strikes;
* time off for public servants assisting disabled relatives;
* *resumes*, remunerations and address details of managers, rates of absence and rates of higher presence of staff members posted to managerial offices.

All information is subject to periodic disclosure on the website of the Department for Public Administration.

Such reform also lead to the introduction of forms of user, citizen and business consultation and participation, so as to ensure a better measurement and assessment of PA organizational performance.

The implementation of Open Government-related policies also includes enhanced anti-corruption policies, carried out by the Department for Public Administration through the **Anti-Corruption and Transparency Service** (**SAET**). In December 2011, the Minister for Public Administration and Simplification set up an ***ad hoc* Committee** to analyse and prepare proposals **on the issue of transparency and prevention** **of corruption** within Public Administrations. The aim was to provide, in a timely fashion, a series of guidelines for a package of measures to support PA actions in the fight against corruption, including through enhanced transparency. These include:

* measures to protect whistleblowers;
* the relaunch of codes of ethics;
* rules to better manage conflict of interest cases.

In Regions benefiting from EU cohesion and development policies (Calabria, Campania, Apulia and Sicily Regions), a series of ***risk assessment*** actions have been launched and a set of matrices have been developed, based on probabilities and damage stemming from highest ethical risks in the field of Public Procurement and Health. PA's inclination to transparency was measured with the **Transparency Barometer**, a self-diagnosis tool which gathers 90 items related to verifiable evidences and facts.

**2.2. PA Simplification through participation**

Consultation methods are a key tool for effective simplification policies. Indeed, dialogue with service users enables to identify bottlenecks in public administrations and to lay down solutions for change. Participation and consultation strategies are therefore promoted to support simplification policies through various channels:

* the first channel relates to the promotion of permanent consultation platforms: the initiative called "**Halt Red Tape**"("***Burocrazia: diamoci un taglio***") is a permanent tool for consultation allowing citizens and business alike to report cases of red tape and to propose a solution to fix it. Such a consultation programme was launched at the beginning of 2010: many of the resulting proposals, following an assessment by the Department for Public Administration, have become legislative rules or administrative provisions aimed at streamlining the relationship between PAs and citizens (PA payment system, identification documents renewal system, services for people with disabilities, etc.);
* the second channel has to do with relevant stakeholder participation in simplification policy drafting. The most significant experience relates to the **Programme on administrative burden measurement and reduction for 2010-2012**. Thanks to a methodology shared with European partners, such a programme enables measurement of administrative costs for business and citizens by enhancing participation of representative associations; such methodology (*standard cost model*) provides for stakeholder consultation throughout the whole process. Due to the success of this participatory approach, the Parliament decided to extend it to Regions and local authorities, as well as to independent administrations.

## 2.3 Engaging citizens

The promotion of citizen participation, including via the involvement of civil society organizations and user care to enhance public policies and services and to promote and increasingly open, transparent and cooperative governance, feature prominently in the national agenda. More specifically, the Italian Government set up a series of initiatives in these areas with a view to enhancing public service quality, citizen and user relations as well as PA's accountability:

* ***Linea Amica*** ("Friendly Line") is a nation-wide citizen care service based on a multi-channel approach. It combines the contact center's telephone service with the "Italians' Portal" web service. *Linea Amica* provides solutions to citizen problems through an encyclopaedia of questions and answers, the online service directory, the address book of public administrations and a review of enforceable rights. It also integrates open data with smartphone apps.
* The initiative called ***Mettiamoci la Faccia*** ("Put your face to it") was designed to regularly review - via the use of emoticons - user satisfaction on delivered public services, both at public offices and through other channels (telephone and the web). Such initiative was launched in 2009. Today, it has a network of almost 1000 member administrations, with over 750 seats and over 3000 public offices throughout the national territory.
* The ***Migliora PA*** Project ("Enhance PA") aims at promoting a customer satisfaction approach and customer satisfaction management tools in Convergence Regions, with a view to improving these administrations' capacity to manage user satisfaction while enhancing their performance and increasing service quality;
* The ***MiaPA*** Initiative ("MyPA") is the PA's social check-in which, via a smartphone, allows users to find the closest public office, to state their level of satisfaction and to leave a comment on the service received. Launched in 2010, on the basis of a totally "open" approach, it uses open data of the Friendly Line address book;
* The **pilot experience of citizen assessment of services**, launched in 2009 in cooperation with *Cittadinanzattiva* (Active Citizenship). The Initiative was designed, on the one hand, to increase the opportunities for citizens to have a say in assessing service quality - not only in their capacity as sources of data but also as subjects able to autonomously produce information and grounded judgements - and, on the other hand, to allow experimentation of such citizen monitoring as a tool to support strategic programming and management of Public Administration, so as to evaluate the real quality of public service delivery.

## 2.4 Open Data

## The disclosure of Public Sector Information (PSI) is a dynamic and sustained process benefiting from a pool of national, regional and local initiatives. The Portal [www.dati.gov.it](http://www.dati.gov.it), which publishes the dataset catalogue and the smartphone app catalogue, highlighted an exponential increase in open data in six months only. This is especially due to the activities of some administrations acting as a driving force: the Italian Statistical Office (ISTAT, *Istituto nazionale di statistica*), the Italian Institute for Social Security (INPS, *Istituto nazionale per la previdenza sociale*), the Piedmont and Lombardy Regions and the Regions of *Emilia Romagna* and *Veneto*, the Provinces of *Lodi* and *Trento* and the Municipalities of Florence, Turin and *Udine*.

## The opening up of data is being supported, via dati.gov.it, through several tools and initiatives:

* the **open data guidelines**, which provide guidance on legislative issues, how to open a dataset, technical aspects and useful description rules for the national catalogue;
* weekly **online seminars** (**webinars**) to introduce, analyse and present relevant experiences;
* the definition of and support to the adoption of the **Italian Open Data License** (**IODL**);
* **Apps4Italy**, a contest to promote open data reuse through applications and creative data processing.

## 2.5 Open cooperation: Public Administration 2.0

## Italian PA's participation has a record of concrete experiences. The use of 2.0 tools itself is often based on a one-way communication.

## With a view to promoting growth through a shared model, a Handbook for PA 2.0 provides an introduction on participation and social networks within the PA. The Handbook contains recommendations to map out participation in social media, as well as regulatory effects and customer care and participatory tools. The Handbook is included in the Guidelines for website quality.

## Furthermore, the Department for Public Administration, within the framework of a comprehensive environment for knowledge management (Cloud4PA), identified and funded the creation of tools and environments to facilitate active citizen and civil servant participation:

* **ParteciPA**: participatory tools based on sharing and assessing ideas (*Ideario*, a diary of ideas) and regular comments on documents (*Commentario*, a diary of comments);
* **WikiPA**, a cooperative encyclopaedia on PA terminology based on Wikipedia's editorial model and software;
* **InnovatoriPA**, an environment for social networking and best practice sharing dedicated to professionals in the field of PA innovation: a complementary platform to the more famous social networks.

Furthermore, there is a **wealth of public consultation examples**:

* National Authority for the protection of personal data;
* Department for Public Administration – Department for Digitalization and Innovation: Consultation on website quality;
* Authority for Communications (AGICOM): public consultation on provisions concerning the exercise of powers by the Authority in protecting copyrights on electronic communication networks.
* Ministry of Health: towards a National Action Plan of rare diseases;
* Ministry of Education, University and Scientific Research:Consultation on the legal value of academic qualifications, with an analysis of results through semantic analysis softwares.

On the *Linea Amica* Portal, a set of actions aimed at enhancing citizen **crowdsourcing** were designed to improve information on the address book of Public Administrations and schools.

# 3. New commitments

Italy's commitments as set forth by this Action Plan are fully in line with the above policies and initiatives.

As far as open data are concerned, commitments to the Open Government Partnership mainly draw on the **Government's** **Digital Agenda**, as laid down by article 47 of the "Simplify Italy" Decree.

Governance of the Digital Agenda is entrusted to a Committee composed of all relevant Ministries and it will be identified, by June 2012, in a strategy document and with ad hoc regulations ("*DigItalia*" Decrees).

Against this backdrop, the following actions will be undertaken.

**3.1 Ethics, Transparency and Participation**

* **The Transparency Portal**. The portal will be realized and administered by CIVIT in cooperation with DIGIT PA. As provided for by the Law, it will contain PAs' performance plans and reports. Moreover, it will make information available as regards administrations' strategic and operational objectives, alongside information on relevant indicators, targets, stakeholders (leaders and contributors) as well as on the results achieved. Deviations from standards and the reasons for not achieving set targets will be indicated too. The Portal will also contain the full texts of the three-year Programmes for transparency and integrity. As for these Programmes, the Portal will display data which could prove to be useful to assess completion rates in terms of publication of mandatory data and information, together with an analysis of deviation from standards set forth by the Programmes themselves. Finally, the Transparency Portal, once consolidated, will have to contain quality standards of services provided to external users (citizens, business, etc.) by each administration. For each service, it will indicate standards concerning the various dimension of service quality (accessibility, transparency, timeliness, efficacy). With a view to ensuring a better data readability by citizens, we will also set up a reporting system. Such a system will result in an open dataset, to be published on the relevant Portal.
* **Approval of a more efficient regulatory framework to prevent and fight against corruption within PA**, to ensure better market conditions for competition while promoting a reduction of public spending. Draft legislation provides for mandatory implementation of anti-corruption plans by all administrations, with the coordination of the Department for Public Administration, the designation of a person in charge of corruption prevention, the enhancement of a widespread network on the territory (namely Prefects) as a tool to support and provide information to local authorities and acting as an intermediary between the latter and the National Anti-corruption Authority.

Other provisions concern awards and anonymity for individuals reporting crimes against Public Administration (**protection of whistleblowers**), a rotation system for officials working in high-risk sectors, new incompatibility provisions and a better management of conflict of interests, enhanced transparency on assets of PA managers.

* Setting up by the Ministry for Territorial Cohesion of an **information system on the status of actions falling under the unitary regional planning** **(EU structural funds, national development and cohesion funds**). We will therefore anticipate a Community regulation (which will become compulsory for the 2014-2020 programming period) requiring administrations to combine – for each measure undertaken - expected results with relevant indicators in terms of quality of life of citizens. By way of an example, results will be measured in terms of reduced travel time for travellers - and not kilometres of new railways – and knowledge acquired by students according to systematic survey methodologies instead of hours of training provided. This will entail a widespread and conscious evaluation on the side of beneficiaries.
* The "Simplify Italy" Decree (early 2012) introduced an additional programme that confirms the commitment to **cost measurement and reduction by consultation with citizens and business up until 2015**. Consultation of relevant categories, besides simplifying existing regulation, also serves the purpose of streamlining future regulations: the Statute of Businesses (approved by Parliament at the end of 2011) provides for consultation of stakeholder organizations also in respect of new legislation in terms of ex-ante assessment of red tape impact of new regulations.
* Launch of the Initiative "**How to …**" (*Come fare per*…) which promotes transparency on PA's websites in respect of all information on service provision and administrative procedures. A Directive of the Minister for Public Administration and Simplification (expected for the first half of 2012) will indicate publication modalities - in a dedicated section directly accessible from the homepage of each administration (identified by the logo "How to…") - of explanatory detailed sheets on relevant services and proceedings. Citizens will be provided with direct access to each administration, thereby avoiding first-hand information procedures ("how to obtain that specific document?")
* Promotion of implementation of Legislative Decree n. 150/2009, which provides for a quantitative and qualitative development of relations with citizens, stakeholders, users and service beneficiaries, with particular emphasis on citizen empowerment initiatives aimed at increasing quality of interaction and dialogue among citizens, stakeholders and public entities.

**3.2. Open data, promotion of social innovation and e-gov**

Since late 2011, Italian projects on open data continue to flourish both nationally and locally. With a view to enhancing and supporting such a positive trend, the Government commits to:

* amending national legislation to incorporate provisions to **facilitate publication and re-use of public data**, including through the definition of automated processes (eg. "open by default");
* **enhancing the National Open Data Portal www.dati.gov.it**;
* **promoting National standards for open data**, to be defined in line with the perspective pan-European open data portal;
* Promoting an annual **National contest for creative re-use of public data**.

Another objective is to ensure the creation of intangible infrastructures entailing the realization of projects to improve citizen quality of life in urban contexts (*smart cities*) and widespread communities (*smart communities*):

* Preparation of the **National Plan for *smart communities***;
* Consultation with citizens in respect of new policies and new legislation;
* Enhanced participation and cooperation in territorial innovative actions;
* Opening up of new areas for public service development and delivery.

Within the framework of this Action Plan, ICT infrastructure enhancement in Public Administrations is a key driving force for *open government*. In this respect, actions will be undertaken in the following areas:

* Regulation – **Implementation of the Digital Administration Code** and other e-gov regulations;
* **Dissemination of e-gov tools** for companies and professionals alike;
* Infrastructure systems: electronic payment for PAs, online IDs, Certified Mail, digital signature, mobility services, Country networks.
* Cloud computing strategic Plan, creation of PA's data centers within a Public-Private Partnership (*Calabria, Basilicata, Molise* and Sardinia Regions).

**4. Consultation and monitoring of the Plan.**

This Action Plan was edited by the Department for Civil Service in cooperation with other relevant Administrations (Department for PA Digitalization and Technology innovation – DIGIT PA, Ministry of Education, University and Scientific Research, Ministry for Territorial Cohesion, Independent Commission on Evaluation, transparency and integrity of public administrations - CIVIT) and with the support of the Italian Centre for Studies and Training (FORMEZ PA). The Action Plan provides an overview of the initiatives undertaken in the area of Open Government and identifies its future main developments.

In compliance with the principles enshrined in the Open Government Declaration, consultations on the document were launched in April 2012 on the website [www.lineaamica.gov.it](http://www.lineaamica.gov.it). The Department for Civil Service undertook a first phase of consultation with a group of qualified referees (associations and representatives from training institutions, business and civil society). After a restricted consultation phase, the page was opened up, thereby providing the possibility to make observations on and read comments via a simple "click".

All comments have been and will be taken into account to improve or further integrate the Plan. Public consultation will continue even after the *Open Government Partnership Annual Meeting* in Brasilia on April 17-18, 2012, so as to enable any update following the outcome of the Brasilia Conference.