

Italy: 2014-2016 End of term Report

Italy's second action plan reflects recent efforts to fight corruption. Most of the commitments were still in their preliminary phase during the mid-term period, with low completion after the second year of the action plan. Moving forward, the new found energy and ambition of the third action plan's consultation should advance part of the second action plan's commitments.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a review of the activities of each OGP participating country. This report summarizes the results of the period July 2014 to June 2016 and includes some relevant developments up to September 2016.

The Department of Public Administration (DPA) coordinates the OGP working group in Italy and with the assistance of the Agency for Digital Italy (AgID), and the National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC), it held the main responsibility for Italy's OGP commitments in the second action plan. At the time of writing this report Italy has presented a new action plan for its third cycle after a public consultation ended in August 2016.

Table 1: At a Glance		
	Mid - term	End - of - term
Number of commitments	6	
Level of completion		
Completed	1	1
Substantial	1	1
Limited	1	2
Not started	2	2
Unclear	1	
Number of commitments with:		
Clear relevance to OGP values	5	5
Moderate or Transformative potential impact	1	1
Substantial or complete implementation	2	2
All three (⊕)	1	1
Did it open government ?	Major	1
	Outstanding	0
Moving forward		
Number of commitments carried over to next action plan:	4	

Consultation with civil society during implementation

Countries participating in the OGP follow a process for consultation during development of their OGP action plan and during implementation.

In the case of Italy, the government did not hold any consultation processes during the implementation of the action plan. The government only solicited comments to the final self-assessment report published online, during the two-week period required by OGP, from October 27 to November 10, 2016. The government had initially called for consultation on OGP process at an ad-hoc basis. However, a regular forum for in-person consultation with stakeholders was not established.

The government created an online community forum for the OGP process called *comunità online Open* in 2013 with the aim to make it a tool for regular consultation on the action plan. The online tool is still available at Innovatori PA.¹ However, a new consultation platform called Open.gov.it (open.gov.it) was set up for the third action plan in 2016. An online public consultation process of the third action plan was launched between July 16 and August 31, with significant input (350 comments) from civil society organizations and individuals on a variety of issues. The government presented the third action plan on September 20, 2016. A specific section of the new platform is dedicated to monitoring each commitment and the costs involved in their implementation.² The third action plan also includes the adoption of an Open Government Forum for regular consultation and monitoring. It will be open to the public via an application form available online.³

Table 2: Action Plan Consultation Process

Phase of Action Plan	OGP Process Requirement (Articles of Governance Section)	Did the government meet this requirement
During Implementation	Regular forum for consultation during implementation?	No
	Consultations: Open or Invitation-only?	Open
	Consultations on IAP2 spectrum ⁴	Consult

¹ <http://www.innovatoripa.it/groups/open-government>

² www.open.gov.it (“Monitors”)

³ <http://bit.ly/2dgE9nC>

⁴ IAP2 Spectrum information available here

http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf

Progress in commitment implementation

All of the indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual, available at (<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm>). One measure deserves further explanation, due to its particular interest for readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top between OGP-participating countries: the “starred commitment” (★). Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. In order to receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

1. It must be specific enough that a judgment can be made about its potential impact. Starred commitments will have "medium" or "high" specificity.
2. The commitment’s language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.
3. The commitment would have a "moderate" or "transformative" potential impact if completely implemented.
4. Finally, the commitment must see significant progress during the action plan implementation period, receiving a ranking of "substantial" or "complete" implementation.

Based on these criteria, at the mid term report, Italy’s action plan contained 1 starred commitments. At the end of term, based on the changes in the level of completion, Italy’s action plan contained 1 starred commitment:

- Commitment 5: Follow the Money (SoldiPubblici)

Commitments assessed as star commitments in the mid term report can lose their starred status if at the end of the action plan implementation cycle, their completion falls short of substantial or full completion, which would mean they have an overall limited completion at the end of term, per commitment language.

Finally, the graphs in this section present an excerpt of the wealth of data the IRM collects during its progress reporting process. For the full dataset for Italy, see the OGP Explorer at www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer.

About “Did it Open Government?”

Often, OGP commitments are vaguely worded or not clearly related to opening government, but they actually achieve significant political reforms. Other times, commitments with significant progress may appear relevant and ambitious, but fail to open government. In an attempt to capture these subtleties and, more importantly, actual changes in government practice, the IRM introduced a new variable ‘did it open government?’ in End-of-Term Reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation. This can be contrasted to the IRM’s “Starred commitments” which describe *potential* impact.

IRM Researchers assess the “Did it open government?” with regard to each of the OGP values that this commitment is relevant to. It asks, did it stretch the government practice beyond business as usual? The scale for assessment is as follows:

- Worsened: worsens government openness as a result of the measures taken by commitment.
- Did not change: did not change status quo of government practice.
- Marginal: some change, but minor in terms of its impact over level of openness.
- Major: a step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scope or scale
- Outstanding: a reform that has transformed ‘business as usual’ in the relevant policy area by opening government.

To assess this variable, researchers establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan. They then assess outcomes *as implemented* for changes in government openness.

Readers should keep in mind limitations. IRM End-of-Term Reports are prepared only a few months after the implementation cycle is completed. The variable focus on outcomes that can be observed on government openness practices at the end of the two-year implementation period. The report and the variable do not intend to assess impact because of the complex methodological implications and the time frame of the report

Table 3. Overview: assessment of progress by commitment

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP value relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did it open government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1. Partecipa!				x		x		x					x					x			
2. Equip PA for participation			x			x			x				x					x			
3. TransPArent + I			x		x	x		x						x				x			
4. Open Data Portal			x		x					X					X				x		
5. Follow the Money (SoldiPubblici) (🗳️)			x		x		x				x					x				x	
6. Digital Citizenship		x			Unclear					x			Unclear					x			

General overview of commitments

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. End of term reports assess an additional metric, ‘did it open government?’ The tables below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on this metric. Note for commitments that were already complete at the midterm, only an analysis of ‘did it open government?’ is provided. For additional information on previously completed commitments, please see Italy’s IRM mid-term progress report.

At first glance, the second action plan appeared more realistic but less ambitious than the previous one. This might derive from the difficulties experienced by the OGP Italy Team to progress with the past Plan. Six commitments were designed to be SMART, instead of 16, thus reducing the scope of the Plan. Additionally, some of the commitments of the second action plan replicate initiatives already in place, while others were considered by the experts interviewed to be vague and not entirely meaningful. Two years after its adoption, most of the 6 commitments have not evolved since the mid-term report, with most of them still in their preliminary phase, not started yet or completely dropped. Notwithstanding the fact that the country shows a new energy for ambitious reforms, the institutional changes of the past two years have contributed to the delay!

In general, according to interviews conducted by the IRM researcher, the general opinion of civil society organizations on the second action plan was moderately positive towards the efforts made by the DPA and other institutions to open up the process to the civil society. Criticisms concern the ambition and the potential impact of the plan, considering also its delays. According to one expert interviewed and discussions during stakeholder meetings and focus groups organized by the IRM researcher, the plan should not even be evaluated, since it only involves pre-existing initiatives and contains no novelties. A widely held comment by stakeholders interviewed for this end-of-term report confirmed that the second action plan turned out to be a mere “transition” from the first one to the third which equally widely considered the most promising. The government admitted also the delay in the implementation due to the reform process in public administration, which was happening in parallel. It is worth noting that the adoption of a freedom of information act, although included in the reform process, was not part of the commitments of the second action plan.

Nevertheless, some factors that contributed to the success of this Second Action Plan – if compared with the first – were as follows:

- The political commitment of the current Executive to the modernisation and digitalisation of the country;
- The limited number of institutions involved (DPA, in cooperation with AgID and ANAC), and;
- A clear chain of responsibility for the different actions.

However, due to the limited scope of the consultation phase, the plan remained tailor-made for the three institutions. The limitations for the achievement of its results included:

- Limited resources available for the OGP Italy team;
- A high level of uncertainty in institutional framework of the government, and;
- The number of ongoing reforms that aim at substantially changing the organisation and the procedures within the Public Administration at any level (national, sub-national, and local) in Italy.

As mentioned in the mid-term report these factors undermined the OGP process and delay implementation of commitments, therefore threatening achievement of open government goals.

For ease of read, the IRM researcher grouped the commitments in three themes:

Theme 1. Participation

- Commitment 1 – Partecipa!
- Commitment 2 – Equipe the PA for the participation

Theme 2. Transparency, integrity and accountability

- Commitment 3 — transPArent + I
- Commitment 4 — Open Data Portal
- Commitment 5 — follow the money (SoldiPubblici)

Theme 3. Technological innovation

- Commitment 6 – Digital Citizenship

¹ The former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi took office on the 22nd of February 2014 announcing a major reform of the public sector that was approved by the Cabinet in June. The reform – led by the Minister for Simplification and Public Administration – aimed at making public administration more efficient and cost-effective by including the digitalization of a variety of services, anti-corruption measures and the adoption of a freedom of information act. The need to align and coordinate several departments and agencies involved in the reform process led to delays that also affected the draft and implementation of the second action plan.

I. Theme I: Participation

Commitment I. Partecipa!

Commitment Text:

Restructure and revamp the Partecipa! portal as a reference platform for processes of public participation, expanding the current context, limited to consultation, to the stages of monitoring the implementation and the evaluation of services/policies.

Create a single signing system for the citizens who participate, so that they can follow the evolution of the initiatives in which they are involved and can also have a public structured space where they can make proposals to the institutions and administrations. Foster the management and dissemination of available applications, optimizing the use of civic media.

Specific Objectives

- Restructure and revamp the Partecipa! portal as open front end where you can:
 - activate a public structured space to receive proposals and requests for administrations;-
 - set up a smart repository for all the participation processes, clustering the experiences on the basis of similarity, reuse, performance offered, best practices and collect the tools, the technical documentation, the methods, the guides, etc., to manage the consultation processes;
 - set up a single sign in system for the citizens, with the option to subscribe to a newsletter and the possibility to receive automatic alerts on the progress of the initiative which they have participated in;
 - create a repository of the civic open source applications and of the civic media that can be (re) used to build the consultation processes, with summary profiles and opportunity for comment by users.

Responsible institution: DPA

Supporting institution(s): AgID

Start date: January 2015

End date: June 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP value relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did it open government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
				x		x		X		x											
													x					X			

Commitment Aim:

The commitment aimed at improving public participation in services design and delivery by offering a single point of entry to anyone interested in taking part in consultations about specific public policies. A platform was available only for consultation prior to the implementation of the commitment. The platform was later launched in November 2014 as part of a series of initiatives to improve public consultation¹.

Status**Mid-term: Not started**

According to the IRM researcher and official government sources, the implementation of the commitment had not started during the first cycle of implementation. An internet archive search by the IRM team found that the Italian Government launched the initiative “Partecipa!” in 2013² to engage citizens in the process of Constitutional reform. The site gathered around 425.700 visits from around 306.500 unique visitors. It was then used for consultation during the development of the first and second OGP Action Plans: the consultation for the second Action Plan was opened from 4 to 21 November 2014. The IRM researchers did not find further evidence of any actions taken to restructure or revamp this portal at the mid term mark. For more information, please see the 2014-2015 mid-term IRM report.

End of term: Not started

Based on Italy’s self-assessment report and desk research conducted by the IRM researcher, there was no further progress on the implementation of the overall commitment. Since the mid-term IRM report, the government did not conduct any consultations with stakeholders. Representatives within the government also confirmed that the lack of implementation of the commitment was due to the delay in the approval by the parliament of the necessary legislative provisions (Legge delega 124/2015 and consequent legislative decrees) needed to start developing the project³. The delay was due to the fact that the government inherited a backlog of laws that needed a secondary legislation in order to be effective.

Did it open government?**Civic Participation: Did not change**

Ensuring public participation on policy proposals and practices requires a consistent set of common guidelines, a clear methodology for engagement, and a single point of entry that avoids a proliferation of online platforms. Although the government showed willingness to develop the project in line with these principles, the lack of implementation hampered the opportunity to see these principles in practice, so the commitment did not change the status quo.

The high number of users for the consultation on the constitutional reform carried out in 2013 raised the expectations that further development of the platform would increase the number and quality of the consultation. However, the delay in approving the necessary administrative provisions to start the upgrade of the platform prevented the stakeholders to continue to have a space for participation and consultation thus jeopardizing the previous government’s effort to engage a significant number of participants.

Carried forward?

Although in a much more simplified version, this commitment has carried over to commitment 14 of the next action plan called “Strategy for Participation”. The scope of the new commitment is to develop a clear methodology for public consultations, thus avoiding the proliferation of platforms that has in the past contributed to decrease the interest and willing to engage of many stakeholders.

¹ <http://www.logospa.it/archivio-news/2920-18-11-2014-partecipa-il-portale-per-le-consultazioni-pubbliche.html>

² www.partecipa.gov.it

³ The government's self-assessment report states that "The time needed by Parliament to approve the Delegated Law no. 124/2015 and the related enabling decrees did not allow us to start the implementation of Actions 1 and 2 of the Action Plan focusing on participation". Action 1 is the commitment about Partecipa!. Final review on the implementation of the Second Italian OGP Action Plan. Available at: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Italy_End-of-Term_Self-Assessment_%202014-2016_ENG.PDF

Commitment 2. Equip the PA for participation

Commitment Text:

Organize the management of the participation processes (inform, consult, involve, collaborate), taking into account already existing experiences, establish guidelines shared with civil society and identify a centre of expertise at the Prime Minister’s Office. Develop skills and culture both for Public Administration¹ (PA) and citizens in order to manage and participate in the processes of participation, including through the use of open data. Ensure external monitoring on participation.

Specific objectives:

-Define a policy document/guidelines for the participation processes of the PA to be tested by applying an iterative model and also through the analysis of the previous experiences of participation, so as to achieve a consolidated version of the document as a basis for a next update which restarts the cycle;

-implement a monitoring process with members outside the Administration to follow the participation processes since the definition of the guidelines;

-set up a central coordination, which spans over all the administrations and acts both as a network of exchange and sharing and also as a center of expertise for the dissemination and implementation of best practices on participation.

Responsible institution: DPA

Supporting institution(s): AgID

Start date: January 2015

End date: June 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP value relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did it open government?					
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
																						End of term
			x			x				x			x									
													x					X				

Commitment Aim:

While the first commitment aimed at the digital tools necessary to improve participation, this second commitment aimed at innovating the methodological approaches, policies and guidelines in order to set up effective mechanisms for consultations and participation. More specifically, the commitment set out to:

- Define a policy and guidelines for the participation initiative promoted by the PA;
- Implement monitoring mechanisms involving members of the public and stakeholders;
- Set up a coordination unit and center of expertise for best practices dissemination.

Status

Mid-term: Not started

According to the IRM researcher and official government sources, the implementation of the commitment did not start during the first cycle of implementation. The IRM researchers found no evidence of any implementation of this commitment. As stated in the 2014-2015 mid-term IRM report, this commitment falls within the wider scope of the public administration reform being carried out by the DPA.

End of term: Not started

As stated in the IRM progress report, the implementation of this commitment has been undermined by the need to carry out a larger set of public administration reforms. As legislative reforms are pending, the IRM researchers did not find further evidence of progress from interviews or the desk research conducted. This end was also corroborated in the government's end of term self-assessment report.

Did it open government?

Civic Participation: Did not change

This commitment intended to procure effective participation through effective and user-friendly digital tools but also innovative methodological approaches, policies and guidelines that define the rules of engagement and the possible concrete outcomes. However, the government did not move forward in developing that type of methodologies and guidelines, nor the coordination unit.

The IRM researcher believes that if implemented, it could have a positive effect on participation as it allows for a more accountable and participatory policymaking process. In the long term, this commitment would allow civil society organizations to monitor and report on this process and share information to the wider public.

Carried forward?

Although in a much more simplified version, this commitment has carried over to commitment 14 of the next action plan called "Strategy for Participation". The scope of the new commitment is to develop a clear methodology for public consultations, thus avoiding the proliferation of platforms that has in the past contributed to decrease the interest and willing to engage of many stakeholders.

¹ The original text in the Action Plan only states "PA". The words "Public Administration" have been added for clarity.

II. Theme II: Transparency, integrity and accountability

Commitment 3. TransPARENT + I

Commitment Text:

The initiative, called “trasPARENTi+I” aims at promoting and fostering the active participation of citizens in the ANAC monitoring activity. This initiative has two main purposes: it aims at spreading the use of the access to information (accesso civico) by public entities and increasing the efforts to enhance transparency, as total accessibility of all information on institutional websites of public administrations (Legislative decree no. 33/2013, articles 1 and 2).

Specific objectives

In order to attain the objective, we need to re-engineer the citizens’ communication web interface “Communicate with ANAC.” through specific actions aimed at:

- enhancing the functionality, simplifying the front-end interface data acquisition and their quality (participatory supervision);
- strengthening external communication tools online;
- developing the back-end functionality, creating a platform for the internal management and processing of data (database), which enables:
 - to interpret – for corruption prevention purposes - all the information obtained also on the basis of corruption risk indicators that can be possibly identified by the Authority with reference to specific areas of activity of public administrations;
 - to report externally (web publication) the results of supervisory activities operated by the citizen (accountability);
- encourage the use by citizens of the access to information (accesso civico) through appropriate awareness- raising and civic monitoring initiatives jointly developed with civil society organisations.

Responsible institution: ANAC

Supporting institution(s): -

Start date: January 2015

End date: June 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP value relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did it open government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
			x		x	x	X		x					x			x				
													x								

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aimed at improving citizen participation in monitoring anti-corruption activities carried out by the National Anti-corruption Authority set up by the government. More specifically, the commitment set out to

- Expand the use of access to information provisions called “civic access”
- Increased the accessibility of transparency-relevant information on the institutional websites of all public administrations as required by the law (Legislative decree no. 33/2013, articles 1 and 2).

Status

Mid-term: Limited

The government had taken some preliminary steps in preparation to the implementation of this commitment. The aim of the initial activities was to continue and evolve an existing initiative: the Anti Corruption Authority (ANAC), a web platform developed in 2013 to facilitate communication between the Authorities and citizens: “Comunica con l’Autorità”¹. According to their self-assessment review, the government also started working on drafting the “Regulation concerning surveillance activities for transparency obligations and corruption prevention measures” which intends to reorganize and level out the surveillance activity carried out by ANAC in the field of transparency and anticorruption.

End of term: Limited

Based on the monitoring activity of the above website conducted by the IRM researcher, there was no further progress on the implementation. A post on the website made on October 2016 declared that the use of the web platform had been temporarily suspended. The website further indicated that the use of the platform was pending due to the need to comply with the provisions of the newly adopted legislative decree 97/2016 (so called Madia decree) aiming at simplifying provisions about corruption prevention and transparency². It is important to note that anti-corruption measures through increased transparency and scrutiny by the public has been a major component of the public administration reform. As stated in the government’s self-assessment, it was crucial to coordinate and align with the government’s anti-corruption body (ANAC). The reform had been widely promoted as a way to boost the economy, rebuild citizen trust in the government and modernize the provision of public services.

Did it open government?

Access to information: Did not change

Civic Participation: Did not change

In order to promote a more effective anti-corruption strategy, the government intended to engage the public and promote proactive disclosure of all relevant information on public authorities' websites. To do so the government planned to strengthen an existing platform run by the Anti-corruption authority by improving the interface and the communication tools to better engage users. However, due to the need to comply with a new policy change the platform has been temporarily suspended thus hampering its potential to increase access to information and civic participation.

The commitment aimed at spreading access to information and enhancing total disclosure by public bodies by allowing citizens to exercise their right to "civic access". However, civic access was not in line with the international standards of FOIA legislation as it granted access only to specific information about the transparency obligations of any public bodies. This was recognized in the Legislative decree no. 33/2013, articles 1 and 2. In that sense, the right to civic access regarded only information on the institutional websites of public administrations and their obligation to disclose certain information on those websites. The platform allowed citizens to report those public administrations who were not in compliance with such provisions. This made it a tool provided to citizens to monitor compliance of public disclosure obligations.

However, civic access did not granted the right to access as envisaged by the international standards of FOIA legislation. Furthermore, this initiative had a limited timeframe during which no relevant changes occurred on the quantity and quality of the information disclosed and available to citizens.

Carried forward?

The scope of this commitment is now included in commitment 8 of the third action plan which has the same responsible authority (ANAC) and has the overall goal of clarifying and simplifying the procedures for the publication of data by public authorities. This commitment aims to encourage widespread forms of control by citizens, the exercise of institutional functions and the use of public resources. It would do so by developing guidelines for the publication of documents, information and data that the law requires published on the websites of administrations and entities subject to the legislation on anti-corruption and transparency. Commitment 8 also mentions the activation of initiatives of civic monitoring on such provisions.

¹ <http://campagnatrasparenza.anticorruzione.it>

² On 5 October 2016, ANAC released an official note signed by its president Raffaele Cantone that "the use of the web platform (then called "Campagna Trasparenza") – would be temporarily suspended pending the necessary changes to make the system comply with the new provisions."

http://www.anticorruzione.it/portal/public/classic/AttivitaAutorita/AttiDellAutorita/_Atto?ca=6608

Commitment 4. Open Data Portal

Commitment Text:

The aim of this action is to boost transparency of administrative actions and foster the open data economy through the following activities:

1. Reinforcing the National Open Data Portal dati.gov.it. Firstly, the number and quality of datasets published on the national portal will be increased, through the release of all data mentioned in the National Agenda 2014 for the enhancement of public information resources; the portal will also host the catalogue of the applications developed through the re-use of PA open data;
2. Publishing the most important data for citizens and businesses. In parallel, a public consultation open to citizens and businesses will be launched in the portal dati.gov.it; it will be open to citizens and business for the identification of further information to be released in addition to those already provided by the National Agenda. The future versions of the National Agenda will include the results of such consultation;
3. Hackathons and contests will be organized to promote the re-use of published data. These will involve specific categories (students, associations, start-ups) or will be thematic (data concerning food, traffic, public expenditure, etc.). A national contest will also be organized to reward the best applications developed using data from the portal.

The action is in line with similar international initiatives, for example the G8 Open Data Charter signed by Italy in 2014. AgID shall take all necessary actions to provide standards for the creation of qualitative PA open data.

Specific objectives

For citizens: a) greater transparency; b) possibility to use innovative online services; c) improved quality of life.

For companies: a) availability of open data to develop goods and services; b) greater transparency; c) possibility to use innovative online services; d) simplified relations with the PA.

For PA: a) rationalization of expenditure; b) encouraging the reuse of open data; c) greater confidence; d) increase of productivity.

Responsible institution: AgID

Supporting institution(s): all

Start date: January 2015

End date: December 2015

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP value relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did it open government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
			x		x					x					x				x		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aimed at improving transparency and facilitating the re-use of data by making it available in open format. More specifically, the commitment set out to:

- Reinforcing the National Open Data Portal dati.gov.it;
- Make “public interest” data widely available to for citizens and businesses;
- Increase the re-use of open data by promoting civic initiatives like hackathons and national context.

Status

Mid-term: Substantial

Based on the information gathered by the IRM researchers, this commitment had been substantially completed in the first year of implementation, with ongoing improvements to the number of datasets released and on the quality of data being released.

An upgrade of the website www.dati.gov.it, was completed on 05 June 2015. However, the quantity and the quality of the datasets need further improvement and many national institutions had not released datasets in open format, and in other cases the datasets were not updated.

The AgID had made further attempts to give citizens a tool for re-using open data with four main updates:

- OpenEXPO (<http://dati.openexpo2015.it/it>), related to expenditure on the international Exhibition held in Milan from May to October 2015;
- SoldiPubblici (<http://soldipubblici.gov.it/>), related to the expenditures of Public Administrations;
- ItaliaSicura (<http://italiasicura.governo.it/>) on hydro-geological instability.
- Maker Faire (<http://ed2015.makerfairerome.eu/thebighack/?lang=it/>) a hackathon targeted at developing apps related to online communication.

In particular, the publication of data on the expenditures of all Public Administrations was achieved in part on 20 January 2015 (www.soldipubblici.gov.it), a month after the publication of the plan. For more information, please see the 2014-2015 mid-term IRM report.

End of term: Substantial

Based on monitoring activity on the website conducted by the IRM researcher on monthly basis, there was no further progress on the implementation of the commitment since the mid-term IRM report.

Apart from minor updates and a review of the information architecture of the website, the IRM researchers could not find evidence of any further attempts by the government to make progress on the commitment whose level of implementation remains substantial as in the mid-term report. The government's self-assessment report is silent on this point.

Did it open government?

Access to Information: Marginal

Improving participation and accountability on public spending and the policy making process requires that the most relevant information be accessible, in an open machine-readable format, and available to all stakeholders. However, until the establishment of the Open Data portal, there was no single platform ensuring easy access to sharable public data. Given that the portal has been established only relatively recently, the effect that this commitment has had on government openness in Italy, to date, is incipient. By completing an upgrade of the online portal in 2015, the government provided stakeholders with access to relevant and updated information regarding the public administration reform.

However, given that the quantity and the quality of the datasets need further improvement and many national authorities had not released datasets in open format, and in other cases the datasets were not updated, the change in government practice has been marginal.

Although the commitment was not considered to be relevant for civic participation per the language, as it was implemented, the government began to engage more with citizens through hackathons and public initiatives. However, not to an extent that suggests sustained, changes in government practice to this extent.

Carried forward?

The scope of the commitment has been carried over to the next action plan and it has still been assigned to AgID. In fact, commitment I includes the implementation of the National Agenda for the promotion of the Public Information Assets as part of a new strategic framework called "Three-Year Plan for ICT in Public Administration".

This commitment would provide for: i) Databases of interest national, ii) data sharing between public authorities and iii) Re-use of public data (Open data). In particular, the new tool will be represented by a "dataset basket" (updated annually) that will be used to identify databases that administrations would make available in open format from 2016 onwards. That basket will support the government for the effective opening of datasets with the overall objective to increase the availability, usability, how to access and re-use of government data, in order to pursue effectively the objective of an overall enhancement of public information.

Commitment 5. Follow the Money (SoldiPubblici) (🔄)

Commitment Text:

Improving data usability; establishing communities for data re-use; communication and awareness raising initiatives; and training for data re-use:

for citizens: a) greater transparency; (b) clear understanding of public expenditure (c) possibility to be involved in participative budgeting initiatives;

for public administrations: a) rationalization of expenditure; b) encouraging open data reuse; (c) greater confidence; d) possibility to compare expenditure with other administrations.

Specific objectives:

-SoldiPubblici: a web platform to monitor and analyze financial information from public institutions such as budgets, expenses and contracts.

-An open dataset which provides greater transparency and understanding of how public money is spent through a graphic representation of data and their processing. All the platform material will be released in open data format and open content. It will be mainly provided through open tools and available under an open license.

In particular, the site will allow citizens to:

- interrogate public administrations' expenses using the SIOPE database;
- interrogate central administration expenses;
- display and interrogate local public administrations' budgets according to a uniform ranking;
- explore the timeframe of spending with different levels of aggregation;
- download the datasets of interest in an open format;
- display charts and benchmarking indicators

Responsible institution: AgID

Supporting institution(s):

Start date: January 2015

End date: December 2015

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP value relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did it open government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsens	did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
			x		x		x				x				x				x		

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aimed at improving understanding of public expenditure and engaging the public in participative budgeting initiatives through a unique open data portal dedicate to the public expenditures.

More specifically, the commitment set out to:

- disclose public administrations' expenses using an ad-hoc database called SIOPE;
- search central administration expenses;
- search local public administrations' budgets according to a uniform ranking;
- explore the timeframe of spending with different levels of aggregation, charts and benchmarking indicators;
- download the datasets of interest in an open format;

Status: Complete at the Mid-term

Based on the database SIOPE of the National Bank (Banca d'Italia)¹, the portal was released for the first time in December 2014, at the same time as the Second Action Plan.

This action was included as a commitment in the action plan because of its potential and meaningfulness, but the added value of the action plan to the existing commitment was unclear. The action aims at increasing usability of data through the creation of communities, communication initiatives and provision of training for data reuse.

At the time of the mid-term report not all of public administration entities were participating, particularly small municipalities that were having a hard time finding the resources to implement the initiative.

The interface was upgraded in November 2015 and the search engine was made more user friendly. Since then, new datasets have also been added including all local and central public administrations². These new datasets include all annual payments and disbursements of any public entity divided by different classification codes. With this upgrade, the Soldipubblici platform now includes payments for expenses sustained by 22 public entities that include ministries, municipalities, medical services, universities and other local authorities³.

Did it open government?

Access to information: Major

Soldipubblici.gov.it aimed at promoting the civic access to public expenditures from all public administration bodies, including all central and local government agencies. This initiative has raised awareness about the Open Data ecosystem, and is seen as an innovative tool to fight corruption. From this website, citizens can find expenditures of many public authorities through a semantic search engine. According to government figures made available to the IRM researchers, more than 1.5 million queries have been made in the first 30 days of activities. From November 2015 to July 2016, the portal has registered 39.118 accesses and 82.909 page visualizations, with an average now of 4,436 monthly access.

¹ <http://www.siope.tesoro.it/>

² <http://soldipubblici.gov.it/it/help>

³ Each payment has to be transferred to a main database called SIOPE where the Soldipubblici platform is linked. A new decree (Decreto 9 giugno 2016) about SIOPE has now extended the obligation to transfer payments for regions and local administrators. http://www.agid.gov.it/sites/default/files/documentazione/circolare_agid_siope.pdf

This initiative provided better quantity and quality of the information. However due to the lack of common standards among administrations in collecting and presenting financial information and expenditures, this effect can be visible only in “vertical” analysis about each local or central administrations while it remains difficult to carry out “horizontal” analysis aiming at comparing costs and expenditures between administrations. This limits reflects on the scope and extent of the level of civic participation enabled by the initiative.

A major change is registered in the possibility now offered to dig further into the work of single administrations and influence decisions at local level or within single central administrations, while it remains challenging to “compare and contrast” data between different entities. The IRM researchers did not find cases of officials accountable for their actions as a result of this initiative. However, in accordance to civil society organizations interviewed by the IRM researcher, given its high potential in triggering answerability, it would be useful to monitor and evaluate the initiative on a regular basis over a longer timeframe in order to assess its real impact.

Carried forward?

This commitment was complete so no further action was needed. Therefore, it was not carried over to the next action plan.

III. Theme III: Technological innovation

Commitment 6. Digital citizenship

Commitment Text:

This action aims at providing citizens and businesses with the main tools needed to digitally interact among themselves and with the State. In addition to the goals of effectiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, the goal is to obtain greater transparency in administrative processes, especially in those involving payments, and more generally to promote the evolution of citizenship towards the digital dimension.

The workshop “Government as a Service” will effectively help pursue this goal. The project will develop low-cost advanced cloud services and gradually provide them to all public administrations, partly using EU funds. A single modern and user-oriented portal relying on the best international practices is indispensable to rationalize the supply of digital public services and drastically reduce their cost.

- For Citizens:
 - a) more user-friendly digital services;
 - b) availability of innovative online services;
 - c) improved quality of life.
- For Businesses:
 - a) simpler payments;
 - b) greater transparency;
 - c) availability of innovative online services;
 - d) simplified relation with PA.
- For Public Administrations:
 - a) simplification of processes
 - b) better services through data analysis;
 - c) greater confidence;
 - d) encouraging the use of digital services.
- For everybody: reduction of transaction costs for public services and increase of digital skills.

Specific objectives

- Providing citizens with user-friendly tools to access online services.
- Reducing costs for PAs when providing digital services.

- Simplifying the online service delivery process.
- Encouraging citizens and Administrations to use digital tools for delivering services.
- Ensuring security and lawfulness of online services.
- Gradually enhancing the availability of online services delivered by PA.
- Making electronic payments available.

Responsible institution: AgID

Supporting institution(s): All

Start date: January 2015

End date: December 2016

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP value relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did it open government?						
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	End of term	Worsens	Did not change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
		x			Unclear					x			Unclear					x					

Commitment Aim:

This commitment aimed at creating a single modern and user-oriented portal to rationalize the supply of digital public services, facilitate payments for services used by citizens and drastically reduce their costs.

Status

Mid-term: Unclear

Language of the commitment was vague which made it difficult to assess properly. The commitment contained a wide range of initiatives that belong to other national initiatives, most being already in place before the adoption of the Plan. The objectives of this action are very generic (“providing citizens with user friendly tools to access online services” or “simplifying the online service delivery process”) or mandatory by law (“Ensuring security and lawfulness of online services). Therefore, this objectives can also be difficult to measure, as any innovation can be considered in principle a deliverable of this action. Only few of these actions are ongoing. Given the lack of clarity and indication of specific deliverables for the assessment of this commitment, IRM researchers found this commitment to be of unclear completion. Please see the mid-term report 2014-15 for more information.

End of term: Limited

Based on information and data made available to the IRM researchers by government officials, there was limited progress on the implementation of some of the actions listed in the text of commitment. According to the government's self-assessment report, this commitment includes the Public System of Digital Identity (Sistema Pubblico d'identità Digitale or SPID), the electronic invoicing towards the Public Administration (fatturazione elettronica), the electronic payments to the PA (pagamenti elettronici), and the General Register Office (Anagrafe Nazionale della Popolazione Residente). AgID is responsible for all these activities, which are all included in the Masterplan for digital growth of Italy released on November 2014. None of the described activities show a meaningful connection with the commitment. However, the Public System of Digital Identity (SPID) has seen further progress since the mid-term report. It was launched in March 2016 with a series of pilot projects with local and central administrations, including INPS, Revenues and Customs Agency, Inail, regions of Tuscany and Emilia Romagna e the municipality of Venice.

Did it open government?

Access to information: Did not change

Civic participation: Did not change

Public accountability: Did not change

By providing a single user-oriented portal relying on the best international practices, the government aimed at improving the supply of digital public services and reducing their costs. However, there are no clear indicators of how this portal has been implemented. From information and data made available to the IRM researchers by government officials about some of commitment's actions, no changes on the quality of information disclosed to the public or on the opportunities that might have been created for participation were evidenced. In addition, due to the lack of clarity around the scope and level of implementation of most of the actions, the IRM researchers have not been able to assess whether any opportunities to hold officials answerable to their actions were created.

Carried forward?

As for the part of the commitment related to SPID, it has been included in the next action plan. Commitment 29 called Italia.it of the third action plan falls within the scope of commitment 6 of the previous one as its stated goal would be to facilitate the relationship between citizens and government through a fully integrated and user-friendly system accessible via a unique digital identifier represented by SPID. While it was carried forward, this commitment relates to e-service activities, which are potentially useful but due fall outside the scope of OGP relevance. In this regard, this type of activities might be included in other initiatives different than the OGP action plan.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Commitments are clustered based on the original OGP action plan. This report is based on a desk review of governmental programmes, draft laws and regulations, governmental decrees, review of the government self-assessment report, analysis of the commitments, as well as on monitoring the process of implementation of the 2nd Action Plan and elaboration of the 3rd Action Plan. The IRM researcher also relied upon written consultation with the government OGP team, reports from the Italian media, and interviews with stakeholders to evaluate completion of the Action Plan.

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The Open Government Partnership (OGP) aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and improve accountability.

