

# Denmark Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2012

April 2012



**DIGITALISERINGSSTYRELSEN**

Danish Agency for  
Governmental Management

# Table of content

---

<b>I. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>II. Open Government Efforts to Date</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>III. OGP Commitments</b>	<b>11</b>
III.1. Supporting the promotion of open government practices	11
III.2. Involvement of civil society and new approaches to public service	11
III.3. Open Data	13
III.4. Self-service and reporting solutions	14
III.5. Strengthening the businesses' social responsibilities	15
III.6. Legislation and data	16
III.7. Use of new technology	17
III.8. Good governance - transparency and better public ICT projects	18
III.9. Local and regional large-scale initiatives	19



---

## I. Introduction

---

*“The Danish democracy needs to be renewed. The government will present a programme for good governance as a concrete initiative to ensure better legislative quality and to improve the possibilities to control the governance of the government.”*

This is what has been written in the government programme from 2011. The reason is that the world is changing and we need to continuously strive for renewal and progress. The Danish government will commit itself to a radical modernisation of the public sector. A prerequisite for this is comprehensive and innovative reforms developed in partnerships that remove traditional boundaries. In this context, the Danish government welcomes the Open Government Partnership initiative.

Denmark has been invited to participate in the international initiative “Open Government Partnership” (OGP). The initiative was founded by the U.S. government in collaboration with seven other countries and today more than 50 countries are participating in the partnership. The purpose of the OGP is to promote good governance and to strengthen democracy. Participating countries commit themselves to implement initiatives for increased transparency in public decision processes, citizen participation and dialogue with civil society, anti-corruption and accountability, and technology and innovation. Increased openness and public insight lead to better political decisions and to a shorter distance between the citizens’ wishes and specific services.

The Open Government Partnership covers broadly initiatives within the following areas:

1. Improving public services
2. Increasing public integrity (*e.g.* the fight against corruption)
3. More effectively managing of public resources
4. Creating safer communities (*e.g.* disaster and crisis response, environmental threats, etc.)
5. Increasing corporate accountability (*e.g.* goals for CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility)

The Open Government Partnership contributes – amongst other goals – to ensure that public services are delivered in the best and most efficient way in order to stimulate and support innovation and value-creation in society, to strengthen knowledge, public engagement, transparency, collaboration and cohesion. A main driver is the use of new technology and media which allows citizens and businesses to access public information and technology, and increase collaboration between the public sector and civil society.

Participation in the Partnership is a consequence of the government agenda on good governance and the government's prioritisation of promoting democratic traditions and values. Further, the Partnership is a logical platform for renewal and modernisation of the relationship between citizens and the public administration. As a consequence, Denmark has chosen to focus mainly on the digitisation aspects of: 1. Improving public services; and 3. More effectively managing of public resources.

In the past 20 years, digitisation has changed the public sector. Many functions and tasks that previously were manual have been digitised. Today a number of e-government services support self-service by citizens and businesses. As a result, we have harvested significant cost-savings from efficiency gains, and we intend to continue doing that.

But we need to go further and beyond. We must utilise new technological opportunities in order to change and renew the public sector's role towards more openness and collaboration; we must promote good governance. New technologies strengthen the citizens' and the businesses' possibility to participate actively in service delivery and decision-making in the public sector, and they create more openness, transparency and collaboration, and provide the means to re-use digital resources across society.

With "Open Government" we will continue to develop our digital government, our welfare system and our democracy towards a "version 2.0" by exploiting the digital opportunities fully. This is why we also call it "Government 2.0". It's about new technology – but most of all it's about a new approach to being a public sector.

A new approach is crucial, because Denmark faces a number of serious challenges in the shape of low growth in productivity, a need for more efficiency and innovation, and ever increasing demands and expectations of public services. This happens at a time when strict prioritisation of public funds is necessary: the demographic development carries the consequence that a larger population of elderly people needs to be supported by fewer people in active employment. In this situation it is natural to take advantage of the fact that many citizens want to contribute with ideas and to play an active role, that businesses want to build on top of government solutions and create added value, and that new forms of collaboration and new technology can make our work smarter and more efficient.

The digital technology creates new opportunities for the way we work, and the way we access and manage information. The public sector must make use of the new digital opportunities to further develop Danish society, and through the international OGP initiative we will share our knowledge and experience with other countries and learn from their ideas and experiences.

The Danish Action Plan for OGP is based on inputs from a broad consultation process in which citizens, companies, NGOs and public authorities were invited to propose initiatives and activities. The focus of some of the initiatives is on the common public sector e-government strategy 2011-2015, while other initiatives are meant to support a closer dialogue with the citizens. All initiatives in the action plan are based on existing efforts and support the government's work programme from 2011 which covers broadly the challenges of the future regarding education, knowledge, innovation, health, management in the public sector, and democratic participation.

It is a part of the government programme that the Danish government will launch concrete initiatives to improve the quality of legislation and improve the general possibilities to control government, e.g. by ensuring that the Danish Parliament draw on knowledge from experts and NGOs, and in this way strengthen the knowledgebase for the legislative process. The government will propose a new freedom of information act that further secure transparency and accountability.

Working with the Open Government Partnership and promoting "Open Government" and "Government 2.0" practices in Denmark will be an ongoing and open process that must extend well beyond the Action Plan initiatives. This is important, not least because the main purpose of the OGP initiative is to change the mindset in the public sector. The work on open government is not a technical project; rather it focuses on bringing about fundamental changes within the public sector and in the way it builds relationships and co-operates. As a consequence, additional initiatives can be included in the work and in future action plans. The Danish Open Government Partnership effort must be based on an open process, and all of Denmark is invited to participate.





---

## II. Open Government Efforts to Date

---

Since the mid-1980s, Denmark has focused on making the public sector more efficient through digitisation. From 2001, the digitisation of the public sector has been based on multi-year common public sector e-government strategies. The priority in the first years was on improving the efficiency of internal processes within public sector administration. In parallel with the continuous increase of the penetration of the internet, the public sector has increased its use of digital self-service solutions for citizens and businesses.

Since 2008, central government, regional authorities, and municipalities have collaborated on developing the common public sector citizens portal, *borger.dk*. The portal contains information and services for citizens with a common login to all services. For businesses, a similar portal, *virke.dk*, has been in service since 2003 giving businesses access to digital services and to online reporting.

A couple of examples:

- *NemHandel* (or “EasyTrade”) is a national internet-based infrastructure for the exchange of digital business documents, such as electronic invoices. It was launched in 2007. The system is based on open technologies (open source and open standards) which allow ICT vendors to develop various solutions which can connect and “talk together”. The entire public sector uses NemHandel to receive electronic invoices, and today more than one-third of Denmark's businesses have used the system.
- “*The Software Exchange*” was established in 2008 as a library of software solutions to be used for free. The solutions build on open and flexible technologies with liberal user licences. The software can be obtained for free and implemented as needed. The Software Exchange supports knowledge-sharing and promotes strategic use of open source in the public sector as a way to ensure coherent solutions, innovation, and market competition.

In 2009, the international scene saw the first examples of systematic experiments with Web 2.0-technologies in the public sector and Denmark was quick to join. In line with the comprehensive digitisation of the public sector, the citizens’ portal has been continuously developed, adding ever more services. As part of the government strategy for user involvement, a Citizens’ Panel has been created to provide valuable input to service design processes, and an innovation camp has been held to engage citizens in the development of public self-service solutions.



---

## III. OGP Commitments

---

### III.1. Supporting the promotion of open government practices

Denmark has a long tradition for openness, dialogue and cooperation. In this light, it is hardly surprising that many public authorities are taking a strong interest in the possibilities of open government and government 2.0. Some are already experimenting with various aspects, and several others have plans to do so. To further promote the OGP initiative and knowledge about the opportunities offered by open government and government 2.0, to support and accelerate OGP efforts in Denmark, and to document and evaluate the Danish OGP work, a number of OGP support initiatives will be launched.

#### **OGP online community**

To support the overall OGP work, an online community forum will be created as a meeting place for civil servants and others engaged in open government activities. The forum will support knowledge sharing and collaboration, the documentation and continued development of the Danish OGP portfolio of initiatives, and it will provide a platform for engaging civil society as a whole.

#### **Online OGP handbook for public authorities and institutions**

Information and guidelines on how to develop and implement OGP initiatives and activities will be provided in an online format to help public authorities and institutions launch open government projects and successfully integrate open government practices into their routines. Ultimately, this material will constitute a handbook or "toolkit" for open government related work.

### III.2. Involvement of civil society and new approaches to public service

Just like new opportunities emerge when digital solutions can be connected and digital content exchanged across society, significant potentials can be realised when civil society and the public sector engage with each other, develop ideas together, learn from each other, and collaborate on various tasks. By participating in OGP, Denmark will strengthen the co-operation between the public sector and civil society, and explore new approaches to public problem-solving where citizens, businesses and civil society in general can play a more active and direct role.

**Management labs and new forms of co-operation**

The Central Denmark Regional Authority in partnership with municipalities and businesses will collaborate on new ways to involve citizens, employees and other stakeholders through “management labs” where stakeholders will participate in decision-making and the development of prototypes and large scale experiments.

**Public hearings on the design of foreign aid programmes**

In connection with the forthcoming new law on foreign aid and development assistance, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs will conduct public hearings on the design of future foreign aid programmes, allowing citizens and civil society to contribute input and suggestions to key development assistance issues and budgets of a certain size.

**InnovateWithAarhus**

Aarhus Municipality will launch the innovation programme “InnovateWithAarhus” to encourage new approaches to public services provision by creating good conditions for broad collaboration, by earmarking funds for innovation and by highlighting best cases. This initiative aims to increase the innovative capacity and efficiency of Aarhus Municipality and to help develop new services for citizens.

**Increasing the use of user ratings in the citizens’ portal *borger.dk***

The public citizens’ portal *borger.dk* will implement user assessment and comment functionality on self-service solutions and other content in the portal. The goal is to utilise user inputs as a support for the continuous improvement of *borger.dk* and related services, including services provided by third parties. Ratings and comments will be made available for public authorities, ICT developers and citizens to drive and support innovation.

**”Open Government Camp”**

Based on previous experience with similar initiatives, an “Open Government Camp” event will be organised where citizens, businesses and NGOs may collaborate with public authorities and institutions on developing ideas, concepts and functional solutions based on government data, open source software, digital tools and new methods of collaboration. The camp will explore how civil society and public authorities can work together on problem-solving in new ways and together exploit digital technologies to make public welfare services more open, efficient and innovative. At the same time, the camp will serve as inspiration for public bodies to organise their own similar events or, in other ways, initiate co-creation and citizen involvement projects and practices.

### III.3. Open Data

The public sector will support new ways to innovation in the public and private sectors enabling renewed growth and welfare. This can be achieved if public sector information (data and digital content) is made available for re-use by individuals, media, business, etc. In addition, it is possible to use technologies (open source software and open interfaces) to make it as easy and cheap as possible to develop completely new or related services based on the public digitisation efforts.

Open public data is an important digital resource which can be used in the development of commercial products, to create better and smarter public sector information and services, to disseminate knowledge and insight, and to enhance transparency and democracy. The European Commission proposal for a revised directive on access to public sector information and data supports this development. Open source software can be used strategically to lower the barriers for digitisation across sectors for the benefit of all.

A liberal and open practice with regards to re-use of public sector information is an important part of public governance in a modernised public sector.

#### **Renewed effort for open government data**

The government's 'Open Data Innovation Strategy' (ODIS) initiative will be continued as part of the common public sector e-government strategy 2011-2015 to allow the public easier access to more re-useable public data. Guidelines and assistance will be provided to help public authorities make their data available for re-use, the public "Data Catalogue" will be maintained, knowledge sharing and collaboration will be facilitated, and examples of re-use of open data will be documented and shared.

#### **Regional initiative on open data**

In partnership with municipalities and businesses, the Central Denmark Regional Authority will establish a regional public-private initiative to help realise the potentials associated with the re-use of data and better use of data. The initiative will be integrated with the regional authority's work on geographic information systems (GIS) and digital self-service solutions.

#### **Reuse of open source software in the public sector**

The Public portal, "Software Exchange", where authorities can publish, share and re-use open source software, will expand co-operation with the ICT industry associations to stimulate the development of open source software for the "Software Exchange" and support the re-use of existing open source software in the public sector.

#### III.4. Self-service and reporting solutions

Most citizens and businesses consider self-service on the web efficient and convenient, as long as solutions are user friendly and provide value. When more citizens and businesses use self-service through the digital delivery channels administrative resources are freed up for other purposes. Previously, public digital solutions have not all been sufficiently user-friendly; hence public authorities will work closely together to improve the provision of public digital services. As a main rule, it will become mandatory to use digital self-service; however, information and assistance will be provided for those who are uncertain about or have difficulty using the digital channels.

For Danish companies, time and effort is much better used developing the business and creating growth than dealing with the administrative burdens of reporting to the government. To make reporting processes and other transactions faster and to ease administrative burdens, public authorities will digitise and automate a range of workflows and offer more and better digital self-service solutions for businesses.

##### **Binding guidelines for self-service solutions**

The public sector must exploit digital technologies to provide citizens with easy-to-use and efficient self-service solutions. To support the improvement of existing solutions and the development of new user-friendly solutions a set of guidelines on usability, accessibility, language, design, security, and the re-use of data will be published in 2012.

##### **Guidance and information on accessibility to digital solutions**

To ensure that digital content and services are useable for all citizens, accessibility for persons with various disabilities must be addressed. The Danish Agency for Digitisation will provide information and guidance to public authorities on relevant guidelines and standards for ICT accessibility.

##### **Peer-to-peer learning programmes to help citizens use digital self-service**

In collaboration with public libraries, community groups and volunteers, *e.g.* under the auspices of the Senior Citizens Association, information and peer-to-peer learning programmes will be implemented to help citizens and businesses obtain basic computer skills and learn to use digital self-service. Supporting the government's goal of "full digitisation" for citizens in 2015 and for businesses in 2013, new target groups can be reached, and information and guidance can be provided in various ways which match those groups' needs through a broad collaborative effort.

**Location-based content and re-use of content in *borger.dk***

The citizen's portal *borger.dk* will be further developed to become the citizens' secure and easy access to public self-service solutions and to personalised information on housing, health, taxation, rights and duties, etc. Functionality will be added to support location-specific content which provides citizens with information that is specifically relevant to each individual user's location (*i.e.* in a municipality). A content export feature will also be implemented to make possible re-use of portal content in other public websites across the public sector.

**Less reporting through increased re-use of key data**

Many citizens and businesses expect that public authorities can share key data so that information need only be reported once. As part of the common public sector e-government strategy, a cross-governmental programme has been launched to improve re-use of key data in the public sector in order to reduce the need for repeated reporting of key data.

**“MyPage” for businesses**

A personalised “MyPage” for businesses will be developed in 2012 and 2013 for the national business portal *virke.dk* as part of the common public sector digitisation strategy. The objective is to provide each company with an overview of its basic registration data, active employee signatures, rights, and reportings.

**Companies to be “born digitally”**

A new service will be developed for the business portal *virke.dk* and on the “MyPage” for businesses that will ensure that new businesses “are born digitally”. The companies will get the most important digital tools such as digital signatures for employees and a digital company letter box as part of their registration in the national company register.

**III.5. Strengthening the businesses' social responsibilities**

Danish companies already assume societal responsibilities regarding the considerations for employee and human rights, international environmental standards, and the fight against corruption. But we must still improve our efforts to manage societal and environmental challenges and at the same time take advantage of the opportunities for new paths towards growth in the private sector.

The Danish government has launched an action plan for the businesses' social responsibilities – ‘Responsible Growth’. The new action plan shall contribute to ensure that growth and responsible behaviour are linked, and as a result create new value for both the companies and society as a whole. It is a task that involves the business community, consumers, investors, organisations, NGOs, and the

public sector. The action plan will be implemented in the period towards 2015. Already in 2012, a number of initiatives will be implemented.

#### **Creating a mediation and complaints institution for responsible business behaviour**

The Danish government will propose legislation for creating a mediation and complaints institution for responsible business behaviour where issues regarding Danish companies' violation of international principles for social responsibilities, including human rights, can be investigated. The mediation and complaints institution shall comply with the UN recommendations on human rights and business, and with OECD's guidelines on multi-national enterprises.

#### **International human rights conference**

In order to increase awareness in companies and broadly in the public of the new UN guidelines for human rights and business, an international conference on human rights is planned to take place on 7-8 May 2012 under the auspices of the Danish EU Presidency.

#### **Promote social responsibility in the fashion business**

The Danish government will take the lead in the first UN initiative for social responsibility in the fashion business. The Danish Fashion Institute has partnered with the UN on the development of a new "code of conduct" that will set guidelines for social responsibility in the fashion business. The objective of the guidelines is to promote responsibility throughout the fashion business. The guidelines will be launched 3 May 2012 during the Copenhagen Fashion Summit.

#### **Reporting on human rights and the climate**

The Danish government will propose an expansion of the Danish Financial Statements Act, §99a to ensure that the largest Danish enterprises in their reporting on social responsibility have to explicitly consider their work on respecting human rights and on reducing their climate impact. In order to ensure that the enterprises have the right tools and the necessary guidance to respond to the new demands, the government will strengthen its guidance through *e.g.* the websites *csr-kompasset.dk* ("The Corporate Social Responsibility Compass") and *klimakompasset.dk*. ("The Climate Compass").

### **III.6. Legislation and data**

Today, many citizens and businesses expect that public authorities are fully digitised and that information is exchanged between authorities as needed. However, the majority of Danish legislation was prepared at a time when digital technologies played only a minor role in public administration. As we raise our digital ambitions and apply digital technology in new areas, new legal issues will arise. We need to update and align legislation to ensure that we have a flexible and



robust legal framework in order to take advantage of digital opportunities and to increase co-operation in the public sector as whole.

Another important prerequisite for further digitisation is the availability and smooth management of key data for administrative purposes made possible a shared foundation of coherent and authoritative data of high quality. It is an important initiative of the common public sector e-government strategy to rethink the way we distribute key data across the public sector in order to ensure that data can be accessed in one place only and is easily and consistently available for re-use by all public authorities.

### **Legislative principles for the digital age**

The use of digital technologies is now applicable to all areas of public sector administration. We need to ensure that new legislation takes into account and allows for the utilisation of those technologies. This applies to mandatory digital communication, re-use of data and the use of the common digital infrastructure in the public sector, to mention just a few examples. In 2012, the government will establish principles for the drafting of legislation that take into account the increasing use of digital means and technologies in the public sector.

### **Consolidated key data**

Key data is the foundation on which public authorities provide services in a correct manner which is crucial with regards to citizens' and businesses' legal rights, and the efficiency and effectiveness of society as a whole. As part of the implementation of the common public sector e-government, a programme will be implemented to consolidate key data registers.

## **III.7. Use of new technology**

Danish primary and lower secondary schools already use digital learning tools and processes, but digital learning is often merely a supplement to the traditional teaching methods. However, digital learning should be applied in a more focused manner to strengthen pupils' academic skills and prepare them better for the future. Today, the ability to use digital technology creatively and critically is an essential competence. Pupils should be able to assess the quality of information online, and they must be able to express themselves in new media and collaborate digitally - and internationally. In future, digital learning should be integrated far more consistently into the everyday teaching in the primary and lower secondary schools.

Also, the health care system can and should take a big step forward by embracing and integrating the use of new technology. In many areas, technology is now sufficiently mature that the largest patient groups and the outpatient groups requiring the most treatment can be engaged and empowered to play an active

role in their own treatment. We need to rethink health care services and utilise technology to create better treatments and improve quality of life for patients while spending fewer resources, *e.g.* by offering patients at-home monitoring via telemedical solutions which reduce or eliminate the need for frequent trips to the hospital for routine check-ups. Welfare technology solutions allow us to provide good service and to empower citizens in relation to their own treatment while streamlining routine processes and redirecting resources towards more specialised treatments.

#### **App Store for digital learning resources**

The central government and the municipalities will prepare the creation of one or more market-based distribution platforms for digital learning resources, *e.g.* a kind of "app store", to facilitate easy access to digital learning resources for teachers and pupils.

#### **Preparing a digital reform of the public welfare areas**

The government is preparing a reform of the welfare areas with a special focus on social security, health and education. The reform shall create a better framework for the use of existing welfare technological solutions, and recommend areas where the need and the potential for the use of welfare technological solutions are largest. As part of the preparations for such a reform, a comprehensive analysis will be made to assess how welfare technological solutions can increase productivity in the public sector and strengthen citizen engagement and empowerment.

### **III.8. Good governance - transparency and better public ICT projects**

Transparency and openness in government is a prerequisite for citizens' ability to hold accountable the government and the public administrations as well as for the public sector itself to monitor and audit its activities. Denmark has a long-lasting tradition of promoting and upholding a high degree of transparency, and now digital technology creates more new opportunities for providing access to information and insight. A number of transparency initiatives will provide greater insight into the management of foreign aid, e-government implementation, and public sector ICT projects.

An important prerequisite is a well-consolidated digital infrastructure in the public sector. A more consistent and systematic use of the shared solutions established in recent years have to be ensured. The economic situation requires efficient solutions. Digitisation plays a key role and at this point it is essential to leverage our shared solutions fully to follow-up and make visible progress.

**Transparency in foreign aid programmes**

In 2012, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs will launch a comprehensive transparency initiative that will present to Danish citizens as well as to partner countries detailed information about all foreign aid and development assistance projects and programmes.

**Tracking progress of universities' transition to digital-only administrative communication**

To create transparency about the process and to support sharing of experience the government will monitor and publicise reports on the activities and progress of all Danish universities in their transition to fully digital written communication.

**Disclosure of status reporting from the National IT Project Council**

In order to support open government and increase the sharing of knowledge and experience as a basis for improving public ICT solutions and services, status reports from the National IT Projects Council on public ICT projects will be published.

**Overview of public ICT architecture**

In order to create more coherent public sector ICT and to strengthen the re-use of existing solutions, standards, data, applications and infrastructure, a comprehensive overview of public ICT architecture will be established as part of the implementation of the common public sector e-government strategy. The initiative supports professional decision-making, management of the strategy's initiatives, and financial management. The structure of the architectural overview will consist of a collection of documentation on the ICT architecture structured on the basis of public architecture tools (OIOEA, FORM, and STORM).

**Open license publication of educational materials on the government's ICT Project Model**

With a view to improve public sector ICT projects through the dissemination of information on the government's ICT project model and good practice cases, educational materials about the model will be published under an open public license.

**III.9. Local and regional large-scale initiatives**

Some public authorities are already working with various elements of open government and government 2.0 and other authorities are getting ready to start too. A few authorities have even decided to go ahead and take the plunge with full-scale initiatives. A Danish municipality and a Danish regional authority will run comprehensive initiatives with several sub-initiatives in order to develop their local areas in the context of open government. What the two initiatives have in

common – apart from their mutual agreement to work closely together – is that the processes of developing and implementing their initiatives and activities will be open, iterative and based on collaboration with civil society. Both initiatives will make themselves available for sharing of experiences and collaboration with other similar projects nationally and internationally.

**Smart Aarhus**

Aarhus Municipality, in partnership with the Alexandra Institute, Aarhus University and Central Denmark Regional Authority, will carry out a large-scale initiative called “Smart Aarhus”. Based on collaboration between citizens, public sector and the private operators, the initiative aims to transform the city into an open digital platform which will support re-use of government data, citizen engagement, co-creation, and public-private co-operation. The initiative will be allowed to evolve through an ongoing and open process in which all businesses, citizens and NGOs are invited to take part. The “Smart Aarhus” initiative will also contribute to making Denmark an international pioneer of openness, democracy, and innovation by participating in knowledge sharing and the exchange of case studies.

**Smart Region**

The Central Denmark Regional Authority will establish a broad regional initiative, “Smart Region”, as a way to organise public services more efficiently and create a more open and participative public sector as a driver for innovation. The initiative aims to create new ways of co-operation between companies, knowledge institutions, the public administration, and the citizens in order to support the development of creative ICT-based solutions to solve societal challenges and turn them into tomorrow's business opportunities for the region's companies, and new opportunities for citizens.

