

Action Plan on Open Government Partnership

Introduction

Republic of Macedonia is continuously working towards improvement of the operational efficiency of the state institutions, better transparency and access to information, fight against corruption and provision of high quality public service for the citizens and businesses by using the power of technologies and innovations.

By joining the Open Government Partnership, the Government of Republic of Macedonia pledges to continuously improve itself on the foundations of open, transparent, reliable and efficient government institutions that communicate and cooperate with the citizens. The obligations for transparent implementation of the government activities as well as inclusion of NGOs are priorities high on the agenda of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. The civil sector accumulates significant creative energy that should be more actively used in the public sector by improving and cherishing the culture of inclusion and respect of rights for all citizens in the policy making and decision making processes, including the adoption of laws and access to information.

Furthermore, the Open Government Partnership strongly impacts the innovations, development and competitiveness.

One of the initiatives supported by the European Commission that will enable the digital technology to contribute towards governance and transparency is the opening of the public information. In the digital era the data have another value – they are important not only for the transparency but also for stimulating internet content and engine of the economy. “Data is the new oil of the digital era” (Neeile Cross, European Commissioner for the Digital Agenda).

With minimum costs, the government can open up a large quantity of information on the basis of which new business models and innovative solutions can be developed (applications, e-services, etc.). The economic analyses about the EU Directive on the Information in the Public Sector forecast that the open government information policy should directly increase the business operations up to 40 billion euros per year i.e. 0,3% of the GDP – in combination with direct and indirect effects this percentage can go up to 1,7% of the GDP. If we use the EU Directive as the basis for calculation, Republic of Macedonia can expect from 5 to 25 million Euros annually from the open data and information.

The use of public information brings a large economic potential and protection of the consumers’ welfare.

The public information is generated on all levels of the government (local, regional, national). The manner and conditions under which this information is

made available for commercial and non-commercial re-use impact the competition and competitiveness.

The introduction of Open Government requires constant dedication by the public servants and employees in all levels of the government. It also requires Open Government i.e. free access to information and transparency that is one of the most powerful tools of the public policy in the 21st Century. The Open Government Concept provides free access to data and information, without any technical or legal limitations, including complete involvement of the stakeholders in the activities of the Government. The access to administration data ensures transparency, efficiency, equal opportunities, cooperation but it also creates added value. Through this, the information from various sources can be used by different and multiple stakeholders in order to create added value from the data.

In the process of opening data, the rules governing copyrights, classified data and personal data protection will be fully respected.

With the implementation of the Open Government concept, every institution with public information needs to undertake specific steps and measures that will make those data available in public format:

- Publishing of the public character information in a raw format and computer-usable web format
- Provide a possibility to download, index, re-use and search the public information
- Continuous update of such information

Open Government benefits

- For the citizens/ businesses – They will have better choice by having access to different information; this is mainly information generated by the applications using the open-type services that will contribute towards more quality decision making. They are directly involved in the drafting of the laws, regulations and other government documents.

- For the local government – The local government, according to the level of development and the nature of its mandate will have freedom to introduce new services and invent the current ones for the benefits of its citizens.

- For the administration – The administration will regain the professional responsibility and will offer services tailor-made to the needs of the citizens. Its operation will be improved and it will become more effective with the increase of efficiency and development of the competitiveness.

- For the business sector, providers of services/ applications – New business opportunities will emerge for all provider types where they will compete in the

shaping and provision of services, introduction of innovations, expansion of their operational fields, development of new skills and know-how, investing in new technologies thus becoming more competitive on the growing market.

Achievements so far

In the last few years the Republic of Macedonia achieved progress in the areas which are pillars of the Open Government Partnership.

A number of activities have been implemented towards building partnership relations with the citizens and companies in the shaping of the national policies and development of the national legislation, strategies and initiatives. In addition to their implementation through specific strategic documents and codes, interactive web portals have been also opened in order to facilitate the process, provide greater transparency and opportunity for creation of forums for exchange of opinions and standpoints. This approach always produces good results and legislation with better quality, and the provision of all mechanisms that ensure the involvement and partnership relation between the institutions and the civil sector as a basis for building the democratic society, remain priority.

In the Republic of Macedonia there is legislation in place that guarantees access to information. The legal framework was also amended in order to ensure even better enforcement. Trainings have been delivered for the relevant persons directly involved in the implementation. The consultation process in the drafting of the Action Plan contributed towards identification of the challenges for continuous improvement of the access to information.

The institutions in the Republic of Macedonia publish a wide range of information on their websites so the openness towards the citizens and companies is not lacking. However, the open information, in accordance with the pillars of the Open Government Partnership impose certain standards that are to be met. This remains as highest priority of the Partnership, especially taking into account the fact that the companies foresee mechanisms for prioritizing the open information in accordance with the needs of the citizens and companies.

In the last several years a large number of electronic services have been developed in the Republic of Macedonia, aimed to facilitate the access for the citizens. The process of approval of the services and their delivery to the citizens and companies is subject to continuous improvement and betterment. The citizen has the central place. Due to these reasons, in addition to the electronic services, relevant projects have also been developed which are mechanism for evaluation i.e. identification of the satisfaction level among the citizens from the services delivered by the institutions but it is also an opportunity to evaluate the administration or make comments about its work.

In the Republic of Macedonia there is also a legal framework that establishes and standardizes the electronic management, which improved a large number of processes and the interoperability contributed towards improvement of the consistency and efficiency of the administrative procedures.

There are many other activities that directly influenced on the improved quality of life in the modern and democratic society and there is always the commitment that these can be improved.

Implementation

The Action Plan is foreseen to be implemented in the following two to three years. The deadlines in the Plan establish the timeframe in which the activities should be implemented.

The Action Plan remains dynamic and open document that will be continuously improved in order to meet the priorities established in the Open Government partnership. This will be done through the activities that will follow for implementation of the goals and measures.

Objective 1: Participatory policy making

Measure	Description	Institution in charge/ Partner	Deadline	Status
<p>M1: Greater usage of ENER by the business, chambers, civil society and the citizens. Increase public awareness and usage of participatory tools.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every Ministry that is proposing a law will publish on its website the beginning of the process of adoption of the law and this announcement will also include the link to ENER. 2. The Ministry of Information Society and Administration will make a comparison of the overall visits to the ENER with the previous period. If there is a need, additional measures will be proposed for its promotion and use. 	<p>The recently strengthened compulsory consultation mechanisms by the government bodies on law drafting (through www.ener.gov.mk) shall contribute towards increase of the low rate participation by the business, chambers, civil society and the citizens</p>	<p>Ministry of Information Society and Administration in cooperation with all other Ministries</p>	<p>2012</p>	
<p>M2: Increase public awareness and usage of participatory policy making through the e-democracy web portal by the institutions, business, chambers, civil society and the citizens.</p>	<p>www.e-demokratija.gov.mk Stimulate the participation and interactive initiatives exchange on diverse policy perspective and strategic documents by all interested and contested parties</p>	<p>Ministry of Information Society and Administration</p>	<p>2012</p>	

<p>M3: Introduce the possibility for online petitions (online collection of signatures)</p> <p>In order for a particular issue to obtain the status of petition, it must be supported by some number of citizens (for example, 5.000). When the required signatures are collected, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration drafts Information to the Government along with the request which is subject of the petition. The Government conclusion on this matter will be made available to the public</p>	<p>A service will be introduced which includes online petitions from the citizens and it will be offered to the citizens through the use of digital certificates – they will be able to easily engage and provide feedback to the Government. In the same time there will be additional mechanism for collection of the signatures from those people who do not have digital certificates.</p>	<p>Ministry of Information Society and Administration</p>	<p>2012-2014</p>	
<p>Implementation of the measures from the Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Sector 2007-2011 (i.e. 2012-2017)</p>	<p>Most of the aspects that are in the interest for cooperation with the NGO sector are introduced as specific objectives in this Strategy. Its implementation would achieve the desired objectives.</p>	<p>The General Secretariat</p>	<p>2012-2014</p>	
<p>Improved use of the Code of Best Practices for Involvement of the NGO sector in the process of policy making.</p>	<p>The Government already adopted this Code and the intention with this measure is to ensure its consistent implementation by all institutions</p>	<p>The General Secretariat</p>	<p>2012</p>	

Objective 2: Open data

Measure	Description	Institution in charge/ Partner	Deadline	Status
M1. Establish the www.opendata.gov.mk website	Depending on the model that will be the most appropriate, open data will be put on the website during its development through a direct link to the institution that provides that information, or web catalogue will be made which will show the websites from which the open data can be accessed	Ministry of Information Society and Administration in cooperation with all institutions having the data	2012	
M2. Development of new business models from the open-type data (Open data -the engine of the economic development)	Development of indicators to be used for measurement of the benefit enjoyed by the small and medium sized enterprises – business from the use of the open data	Coordinator: Ministry of Information Society and Administration Carrier: the business community and the chambers	2012-2014	
M3: Prioritizing opening of data requested and identified by the stakeholders and the citizens	The process of prioritization on which services shall be open shall be demand-driven (Data	Ministry of Information Society and	2012-2014	

<p>This measure will be implemented using the online consultation tools that will make it possible for the citizens and companies to post requests and elaborate them, and having the other stakeholders support such request, thus making transparent prioritization. These requests are submitted, along with a priority list, to the Government for approval.</p>	<p>request Form)</p>	<p>Administration in cooperation with all institutions having the data</p>		
<p>M4: Using the inter-operable services as guidance in opening data</p>	<p>Opened data by one institution which is part of an interoperable process to deliver the final services shall be boost for the other institutions in the chain to open their data too, thus enabling an alternative (third parties) and other to mediate in the provision of specific service</p>	<p>Ministry of Information Society and Administration in cooperation with all institutions having the data</p>	<p>2012-2014</p>	
<p>M5: Plan and monitor the implementation of the plans for opening the state institutions information.</p>	<p>The manners and dynamics of implementation of the plans for opening the state institutions information and their dynamic should contribute towards informed citizens.</p>	<p>Coordinator: Ministry of Information Society and Administration Carriers: All institutions having the</p>	<p>2012-2014</p>	

		data		
M6: Analysis of the legal framework that provides the concept of open data and determine the need for eventual changes	Remove the legal obstacles that would be identified in the process of opening of the information	Ministry of Information Society and Administration and the Directorate for Personal Data Protection, in cooperation with all institutions having the data	2013-2014	

Objective3: Improved electronic services and procedures

Measure	Description	Institution in charge/ Partner	Deadline	Status
M1: Improving the services and usage of www.uslugi.gov.mk through consolidation of data and increased level of reliability. Introduce a mechanism for the citizens which they can use to assess and comment the services	Introduction of feedback mechanism from the citizens in relation to the services, in order to improve the efficiency and better quality of services	Ministry of Information Society and Administration in cooperation with all institutions	2012-2014	

M2: Development of integrated Citizens Log with clearly determined obligations per institutions	Integration of the Citizen Logs, their update and publishing	Ministry of Information Society and Administration in cooperation with all institutions	2012-2014	
M3: Publish the results of the public administration evaluation projects (or continue the 'traffic light' project)	There are several ongoing projects from different perspective evaluating citizen's satisfaction from the administration	Ministry of Information Society and Administration	2012-2014	
M4: Provision of the Government services through cloud computing.	The cloud will enable the public institutions and public servants to share the systems and resources, making their cooperation more efficient in a situation of improved security and efficiency.	Ministry of Information Society and Administration in cooperation with all institutions having the data	2012-2014	
M4: Consolidation of the databases	Implementation of the Law on Electronic Management which introduces one-off request for the information from the citizens	Ministry of Information Society and Administration in cooperation with all institutions	2012-2014	

		having the data		
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Objective4: Improved implementation of the Freedom of Information Act (Law on free access to public information)

Measure	Description	Institution in charge/ Partner	Deadline	Status
M1. Improved access to public information	Publish the information in format that will make them easy to search, as well as in format that makes them ready to use (usable)	Commission for Access to Public Character Information, in cooperation with all institutions Partner institution: Directorate for Personal Data Protection	2012-2014	
M2: Better enforcement of the Law on Free Access to Public Character Information with the open information 1. Use of the Damage Test in	(requests, records, statistics, etc.)	Commission for Access to Public Character	2012-2014	

<p>accordance with the Law on Free Access to Public Character Information</p> <p>2. The information received in a procedure in front of the Commission for Access to Public Character Information should be published and made available not only for the claimant (with adherence to the limitations for the personal and classified information)</p>		<p>Information, in cooperation with all institutions Partner institution: Directorate for Personal Data Protection</p>		
<p>M3: Law on Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Public Documents</p>	<p>Signed in June 2009 but no Law on Ratification has yet been adopted</p>	<p>Ministry of Justice</p>	<p>2013</p>	
<p>M4: Introduce possibility to submit electronically the requests for access to public character information</p>	<p>Upgrade the Commission website (or build new one) for timely management of the records, statistics, requests, etc.</p>	<p>Commission for Access to Public Character Information, in cooperation with all institutions</p>	<p>2012-2014</p>	
<p>M5: Training of all the officers in the institutions in charge for access to public character information</p>		<p>Commission for Access to Public Character Information, in</p>	<p>2012-2014</p>	

		cooperation with all institutions and the persons designated by the institutions. Partner institution: Directorate for Personal Data Protection		
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Objective 5: Stimulate the scientific-research activity with the easy-to-access information

Measure	Description	Institution in charge/ Partner	Deadline	Status
M1: Identify the information relevant for the citizens in which the private sector would not be interested to invest	Publish the results from publicly financed research	Ministry of Education and Science and the Universities	2013-2014	
M2: Publish information that will enable scientific and research cooperation through the Internet (international aspect)	Advancement of the e-science	Ministry of Education and Science and the	2013-2014	

		Universities		
M3: Publish information from the State Statistical Office in order for that information to be undertaken and further worked on by the scientists	Publish the information in easy-to-process format, the methodologies and the user databases for search purposes	State Statistical office (Committee on Statistical Confidentiality)	2012-2014	

Objective 6: Prevention and suppression of the corruption and promotion of the good governance principles

Measure	Description	Institution in charge/ Partner	Deadline	Status
M1: Increase the number of information the Inspectorates publish in the Internet and identify the types of information that will be useful for the citizens and businesses.	Mapping the flow of the procedure, decisions, resolutions, changing the forms the inspectors fill in extending the level of data to be contained therein	The Inspectorates in cooperation with the Directorate for Personal Data Protection	2012-2015	
M2: Introduce integrity systems in the public administration, including through relevant e-tools	Defining of the procedures for introduction of integrity policies/ anticorruption policies in the institutions and adoption of methodology for introduction of integrity systems in the	State Commission for Corruption Prevention	2012-2014	

	public administration			
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Objective7: Efficient public resource management

Measure	Description	Institution in charge/ Partner	Deadline	Status
M1: Open Budget initiative	Release the budget as open data	Ministry of Finance	2012-2015	
M2: Public Procurements	Continue the good record in transparency and openness of e-procurement and standardize the data to be qualified as open	Bureau for Public Procurements	2012-2014	
M3: Foreign assistance and foreign investments	Consolidation of information and prioritization of the data that qualifies as open data	Ministry of Finance, Secretariat for European Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Agency for Foreign Investments	2012-2014	

Objective 8: Open information on local level

Measure	Description	Institution in charge/ Partner	Deadline	Status
M1: Opening of information by the Municipalities	Opening data that stimulate competitiveness among the municipalities (better schools, living environment, safety of living, etc.)	The municipalities and the Association of the Local Self-government Units Partner institution: Directorate for Personal Data Protection	2012-2014	
M2: Training of the officials and secretaries of the Municipalities in order to ensure better implementation of the Law on Free Access to Public Character Information	Established in the practice so far in the implementation of the Law	Commission for Access to Public Character Information, in cooperation with all institutions Partner	2012-2014	

		institution: Directorate for Personal Data Protection		
M3: Introduce integrity system on local level and use the open information for the benefit of the integrity systems	Establish methodology for introduction of integrity systems on local level Piloting of the integrity systems in at least 10 municipalities	State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, the municipalities and ZELS	2012-2014	

Objective 9: Protection of consumers and of the citizens - users of services and rights

Measure	Description	Institution in charge/ Partner	Deadline	Status
M1: Increased responsibility and promotion of the 'informed consumers and citizens-users of rights and services' concept.	Inform the consumers and citizens – users of services and rights in areas such as health, education, food, energy efficiency, fuel efficiency, environment protection, financial services, services in the area of social protection and	Ministry of Economy in cooperation with other institutions	2012-2014	

	showing information according to gender			
M2: Improved availability and quality of information related to: roads safety, air quality, safety of workers, etc. The harmonization of the regulatory information will support fair and consistent implementation of important regulatory obligations.	This information should be publicly available, easy accessible including the possibility for download and internet search.	Ministry of Economy in cooperation with other institutions	2012-2014	
M3: Public health protection	Identify the data and information that will contribute towards better information of the citizens about the situation relevant for their health, health information and statistics	Ministry of Health	2012-2014	