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Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2014-2016

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Introduction

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a Governments' multilateral initiative for the promotion of innovative policies aimed at making public institutions more open and accountable through transparency in the public sector, the fight against corruption and the implementation of participatory democracy principles. The OGP was established in 2011 and in three years it has grown from 8 to 64 members: Governments, by signing the declaration on open government, commit to implementing the OGP objectives through initiatives, summarized in an Action Plan whose content is established through a participatory process with civil society.

Italy joined the OGP with a letter by the Minister for Public Administration and Simplification on 5 September 2011. The DPA - Department for Public Administration coordinated public institutions involved in the Digital Agenda program and presented the 1st Italian Action Plan on the occasion of the OGP Ministerial Meeting held in Brasilia (17-18 April 2012).

The open government actions foreseen in the first Action Plan included measures for transparency, integrity, open data simplification as well as actions to support collaboration and public involvement in the implementation of public policies. In April 2012, an online consultation on the document was launched. All the comments were analyzed with a view to improving the implementation of the Plan and presented at the 3rd European OGP meeting held in Rome on 10 December 2012.

In September 2013, the Italian public administrations drew up and published a self-assessment document on the implementation of the commitments undertaken within the framework of the OGP. Italy, as all OGP member Countries, set up a public consultation on the document. The text and the comments received were forwarded to the OGP Secretariat and informed the IRM — Independent Report Mechanism. On 10 February 2014, the IRM released the report on the state of play of Italy. The report was published on the OGP official website, on the DPA's website and on other institutional websites.

The actions of the Italian Government

The Italian Government has been implementing policies for a more open public administration within the framework of broader administrative modernization policies and the digital agenda program for several years. The objective is to increase efficiency and effectiveness of public sector activities, supporting the integrity of institutions and thus improving the relation between PA and citizens by increasing their confidence.

On 22 February 2014, a new government officially settled in and Matteo Renzi, the Prime Minister, during his inaugural speech made a clear reference to issues such as transparency, accountability and open data. One of the first measures taken was the public opening of the SIOPE database (an information system on the transactions made by government bodies) for anybody to be able to check receipts and payments of all public institutions. Several references to open government measures are also included both in the 2014 NRP - National Reform Program and in the new Public Administration Reform that was the object of a public consultation on its 44 main points last May.

In particular, open data policies are central in two documents submitted by AgID — Agency for Digital Italy, in the year 2014: the National Agenda for the Enhancement of Public Information and the National Guidelines for the Enhancement of Public Information. Both of them have been carried out in cooperation with public authorities and in response to specific requests from civil society with the purpose of improving the quality of released data and, especially the guidelines, to provide technical guidance to facilitate interoperability, comparability and re-use of data.

The OGP main challenges and basic principles also underpin the policies and strategies established by the government in the Italian Digital Agenda that sets measures for the growth and development of economy and education, based on the adoption of extensive digital tools and processes, both in the private and public sector. Thus it establishes the basic rules and laws, for example, for a digital citizenship based on the delivery to citizens of a identity and a digital domicile to have online access to public services, on a wide availability and interoperability of databases on general government digital transformation, education, health and justice. In all these areas the AgID has contributed with its technical regulations, guidelines and projects in collaboration with other administrations.

The regulatory and legal basis for a digital citizenship was laid down. Citizens will be provided with digital identity and domicile and will have online access to public services, to a wide range of available and interoperable PA databases, to digital education, justice and health services. AgID made its contribution to all these innovations with guidelines, technical regulations and a number of projects in cooperation with other administrations.

The OGP 2nd Action Plan drafting process

The 2nd OGP Action Plan is the outcome of a process of collaboration and participation where representatives from the DPA - Department for Public Administration, the AgID - Agency for Digital Italy and the A.N.AC. National Anti-corruption Authority, exchanged experiences and worked with civil society representatives for the preparation and drafting of the document.

On 7 October 2014, the DPA hosted a Focus group with civil society where CSOs representatives and the administrations involved discussed the objectives to be taken into account: they gathered ideas, views, suggestions and identified problems in the areas concerned. The thematic areas of the discussion were: Participation, Transparency, Technological Innovation, Integrity and Accountability.

Then, the Focus group participants continued to work together through Google docs. The discussion about possible actions as well as the elements emerged during the meeting were taken into account when preparing the first draft of the Plan.

The draft was published online and a public consultation was launched on the portal Partecipa!, from the 4 to the 21 November 2014, in order to receive feedback from stakeholders. The results of the consultation: 40 users who cast 174 votes and 60 comments.

A second meeting between civil society representatives and PA representatives took place on the 27 November 2014 at the DPA. The event was streamed online in order to have a wider participation. The discussion also focused on the outcomes of the public consultation and led to the final drafting of the document. The 2nd OGP Action Plan was officially published in December 2014.

The process of involvement and participation of civil society will not end with the publication of the plan. Indeed, the discussion will also take place during the implementation phase of the actions described in the document and for the purpose of any update of the plan.

The actions

The commitments below fall into the following areas: participation, transparency, integrity, accountability and technological innovation. All goals are S.M.A.R.T. and therefore Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based.

PARTICIPATION

Action 1 – Partecipa!

State of play

Currently the level of citizens' participation and involvement by the PA for the definition, implementation and evaluation of modernization policies and for the development of services or works is low and uneven.

In the PA, the culture of participation is still immature, unclear about the aims and methods, with little understanding of the processes that need to be activated and of the available means for doing so. Basically, the current organization is inadequate to manage the processes of participation as part of the system and not as one-time events. It is appropriate, therefore, to rethink participation models taking into account the point of view of citizens/stakeholders and to develop participatory processes based on a circular approach, in contrast with the current unidirectional top-down approach and in the perspective of a shared administration.

General objective

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 sign in 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.

PA responsible	DPA	**Possible metrics**
Other PA involved	AgID	Number of participation processes measured Number of civic applications measured
Implementation	June 2016	

Action 2 – Organize the PA for the participation

State of play: see Action 1

General objective

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 center of expertise at the Prime Minister's Office. Develop skills and culture both for 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.

PA responsible	DPA	**Possible metrics**
Other PA involved	AgID	Number of participation processes activated using the guidelines.
Implementation	June 2016	

Focus group with civil society on participation

On October 7, 2014, the first focus group between participating public administrations and civil society took place in Palazzo Vidoni, in view of the presentation of the 2nd Italian OGP Action Plan by December 2014.

The following public administrations participated in the event: DPA, AgID and A.N.AC. Ten representatives from civil society attended the event. The main aim of the meeting was to involve representatives of civil society in the preparation of the 2nd Italian OGP Action Plan.

Representatives of the DPA in the role of moderators from the public side, together with four representatives of the following associations: Cittadinanzattiva, Open Economics Working Group @OKFN Yourtopia Italy Project, World Economic Forum and Stati Generali dell'Innovazione - the latter in the role of moderators from NGOs -, sat around the table in the panel about participation.

Compared to the initial ideas proposed by the DPA, the discussion and debate led to identify a set of goals and objectives that have outlined a broad and complex framework of actions and opportunities to ensure the effective use of public participation at all stages of the processes of developing and implementing policies and activities such as conception, design, implementation, evaluation, monitoring.

An important element that emerged during the discussion was the urgency for the government to focus on participatory processes that are useful for citizens and stakeholders as each involvement process implies a cost for those who are part of it (in terms of time, effort, expertise invested) and it is therefore crucial that the players involved can have an interest in terms of relevant content and feedback.

The need was also highlighted for the PA to allocate a specific budget for the participation initiatives that can not and must not rely solely on approximate and voluntary approaches both in terms of trained and skilled human resources and structural and functional economic investment.

In some cases, on the other hand, the shared objectives go beyond the time and functional horizon of this plan, as for the idea of creating a platform for popular legislative proposals, the implementation of which would require institutional actions that would be impossible to implement under this Plan or the creation of training programs for the PA on the processes of consultation and participation, which could become effective downstream the implementation of the second action "Organize PA for participation".

As for the proposal emerged to make it compulsory for the PA to appoint staff responsible for participation and implement openness policies for example through the mandatory use of the portal Partecipa!, it is not considered that the OGP Plan is the appropriate forum to achieve organizational changes that necessarily require different steps (eg. parliamentary) and to impose formal behaviours on PA.

A less formalistic and more substantial approach to the participation policies might be the most appropriate solution that, if well implemented and monitored, could lead to a similar result in terms of connection between the various participatory initiatives at central and local level, not on the basis of a constraint but of a tangible and real interest.

Transparency, integrity and accountability

Action 3 — transPArent + 1

State of play

Legislative decree no. 33/2013 renewed the entire legal framework on transparency. On the one hand, it sets forth the obligation for public administrations to publish on their own web site a relevant number of documents, information, data; on the other hand, it provides through the so called "civic access" ("*accesso civico*"), the right for anyone to ask for such documents, when the publication is omitted.

An empirical analysis carried out by A.N.AC. on public administration's websites showed that, a little over a year after the entry into force of the decree, a number of public administrations still have not fully implemented the *accesso civico* and have not fulfilled their publication obligations.

On 2013 A.N.AC. developed a web platform, the so-called "Communicate with Authority" ("*Comunica con l'Autorità"*) with the aim of facilitating the communication between citizens and A.N.AC. This platform aims at raising the level of transparency in public administrations, through a campaign for citizens engagement and provides a concrete support to public entities in implementing transparency regulations. The platform has been operating in a pilot phase since March 2014.

The experimental use of the web interface allowed users to submit requests, reports, and proposals on transparency regulations and allowed A.N.AC. to acquire systematic and structured information on transparency levels in public administration, enabling the creation of a valuable information asset.

The first six months of experimentation showed, from the very beginning, a wide use of the web platform.

However, the pilot project also revealed the limits of the current data acquisition and management process that could be enhanced by an automated management. The automation is needed particularly in view of processing data in monitoring and preventing corruption activities and in the reporting on the activities and the outcomes of A.N.AC.

General objective

The initiative, called "trasPArenti+1" aims at promoting and fostering the active participation of citizens in the A.N.AC. monitoring activity. This initiative has two main purposes: it aims at spreading the use of *accesso civico* by public entities and increasing the efforts to enhance transparency, as total accessibility to 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 reengineer the citiziens' communication web interface "Communicate with A.N.AC." 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 backend 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 tool *accesso civico* through appropriate awareness-raising and civic monitoring initiatives jointly developed with civil society organisations.

PA responsible	A.N.AC.	**Possible metrics**
Other PA involved	None	In order to monitor the satisfaction level and participation in the initiative, a counter is intended to be used as possible meter. Such meter should be able to identify the "single" users who access the communication web interface and use it for forwarding reports, questions and proposals.
Implementation	June 2016	

Action 4 — Open Data Portal

State of play

In Italy the dissemination of data produced by the State is still limited and, in the various administrative areas, it is based on extremely variable rules and practices.

The quality of published data is generally low and the possibility of their reuse is often undermined by the use of non- open formats and licenses that do not allow for their re-use for commercial purposes.

Although there are not regulatory barriers, public authorities find it difficult to publish open data (and update them).

General objective

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

a) 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;

b) 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;

c) hackathons and contests will be organized to promote the reuse of published data. These will involve specific categories (students, associations, startups) 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.

PA responsible	AgID	**Possible metrics**
Other PA involved	All	Achieving the objectives of the National Strategy for the Enhancement of Public Information. Access to and re-use of the datasets published by administrations, citizens and businesses. Publication of the datasets foreseen in the Agenda for the enhancement of public information.
Implementation	December 2015	

Number of datasets published and downloaded.
Number of publication requests submitted by users.
Number of applications developed reusing public datasets.

Action 5 — follow the money (SoldiPubblici)

State of play

The traditional operating budget is not enough to explain the actions taken by public administrations to citizens.

Economic and financial data are not easy to understand and do not explain PA's work and results to citizens: they are mainly interested in understanding how the administration implements its mandate, what are the policy priorities and the real objectives, the expected performance levels and, above all, the impact of its actions.

Fiscal transparency is one of the cornerstones of the pact between governments and citizens, governments of different countries, banks and businesses, at the international level. The availability and provision of information about how and from whom public resources are collected and how they are really spent are principles generally provided by the law. However, there is an increasing demand for publishing such data in a more comprehensible way on official websites, in open format and as detailed as possible.

General objective

Improving data usability; establishing communities for data reuse; communication and awareness-raising initiatives, and training for data reuse:

- for citizens: a) greater transparency; (b) possibility to have a better 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 (temporary name of the initiative): 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' budget 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.

PA responsible	AgID	**Possible metrics**
Other PA involved	None	Access to the platform and information sharing. Reuse of published open data. Single users and accesses. Number of sharing of published information. Database searches and displays. Datasets downloaded. Number of developed applications that reuse published open data.
Implementation	December 2015	

Focus group with civil society on transparency, integrity and accountability

On October 7, 2014 the first focus group meeting between public administration and civil society took place in Palazzo Vidoni, in view of the presentation by December 2014, of the 2nd Italian OGP Action Plan.

The following public administrations participated in the event: DPA, AgID and A.N.AC. Participants from civil society were between 10 and 15. The main task of the meeting was to involve representatives of civil society in the preparation of the 2nd Italian OGP Action Plan.

Representatives of A.N.AC. in the role of moderators from public sector, together with four representatives of the following associations: CAN, Cittadinanzattiva, RISSC and Stati Generali dell'Innovazione, participated in the panel "integrity, accountability and transparency".

Based on a shared methodology, the panel set a number of goals to be pursued in the field of transparency.

In particular, the need to start an initiative aiming at increasing transparency levels of public administration websites was stressed. Such initiative should ensure the widest participation of civil society, also by means of specific monitoring sessions, and provide a mechanism of shared monitoring (*vigilanza partecipativa*), to strengthen the tools, which are provided for under the current legal framework.

The discussion panel accepted the request coming from civil society regarding the possibility to present the outcomes of the monitoring activity:

» to the public, through aggregated reporting, which should be clear and easy to understand also by using information graphic tools;

» to individual users, with a tracking function which updates the stages of the user's request in real time.

In the field of transparency, a discussion was also carried out on the initiative "*Portale open data*". Some goals to be pursued were highlighted, namely for data classification on the basis of their quality, open meta-data availability, and a function to monitor data updates.

As regards accountability, participants in the Panel, discussed, amongst others, the initiative "*BilanciAperti"* and highlighted some aspects and goals to be pursued, such as the standardisation of budget items, the involvement of ANCI, the association of Italian cities, and the implementation of graphic information with benchmarking functions.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Action 6 – Digital Citizenship

State of play

Existing authentication, payment, invoicing and registry services rely on decentralized heterogeneous systems which are scarcely interoperable and still heavily use paper. While the working life and personal relations of citizens take often place in the web using digital tools, the persistence of traditional analogic modalities in administrative interactions hinders economic development, leads to less and less sustainable costs for the State and appears to citizens as being in contrast with the evolution of society.

General objective

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.

PA responsible	AgID	**Metrics**
Other PA involved	None	Transaction costs / back office costs for PAs / administrative costs for businesses. Services' adoption rate by citizens and businesses.
Implementation	June 2016	

Focus group with civil society on technological innovation

On October 7, 2014, the first focus group between participating public administrations and civil society took place in Palazzo Vidoni, in view of the presentation of the 2nd Italian OGP Action Plan by December 2014.

The following public administrations participated in the event: DPA, AgID and A.N.AC. Ten representatives from civil society attended the event. The main aim of the meeting was to involve representatives of civil society in the preparation of the 2nd Italian OGP Action Plan.

The representative from AgID took part in the debate on "Technological Innovation" and acted as moderator for the public side. Two other representatives from civil society were also involved.

Based on a shared methodology, the panel agreed on a number of goals to be pursued:

» merge all municipal population registries into a single system (ANPR);

» make a significant number of online public services accessible using citizens' public identification credentials;

» implement the Public Digital Identity System (SPID) as early as possible;

» switch off services which are not yet digital.

The panel also identified some criticalities which were not included in the draft plan because they are not in line with the scope of OGP: limited diffusion and use of Certified E-mail (PEC), lack of resources to develop digital infrastructure and the skill level of users/citizens.

An additional critical factor identified is making PA systems more interoperable.