Finland: 2013-2015 End-of-Term Report

The Finnish action plan was ambitious and relevant to OGP goals. Commitments of interest focused around four themes: open procedures, clear language, open knowledge, and government as an enabler. However, many commitments were focused internally and lacked specific, measureable milestones. In the year since the last IRM report, four commitments were completed, but progress stalled on commitments with limited completion between the midterm and end-of-term reports.

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 final results of the two-year period from 2013 to 2015.**

During the first action plan, the Department of Administration Policy at the Ministry of Finance led the OGP process in Finland. This Ministry appointed a working group to develop the action plan and to monitor implementation. The working group includes representatives from the other ministries involved in the OGP process, a representative from the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, an academic, and representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs). After the government approved the action plan, a working committee that included representation from two other ministries and several state agencies complemented this working group.

Overall, four of the 18 commitments were complete by the end of the implementation cycle. While an internal government survey found some evidence of progress on completion, due to the internally focused nature of the activities, stakeholders and the IRM researcher often were not able to verify independently if progress was sufficient to warrant an increase in the completion rating.

Table 1. At a glance

	Midterm	End-of-term
Number of commitments	18	
Number of milestones	46	
Level of Completion:		
Completed	1	4
Substantial	9	8
Limited	7	5
Not started	1	0
Number of Commitments with:		
Clear relevance to OGP values	18	
Moderate or transformative potential impact	8	
Substantial or complete implementation	10	12
All Three (✪):	4	5

Table 2. At a glance

Carried over to next action plan:	*Unknown*
Significantly modified or updated to the next action plan:	*Unknown*
Left out of next action plan:	*Unknown*
Unclear relationship to next action plan:	*Unknown*

Regarding the impact of the action plan on opening the government in Finland, a significant number of the commitments could have had a moderate or transformative impact on the state of open governance, if they had been implemented fully. The activities undertaken consisted largely of internal government reforms, which, while not as relevant to OGP values, were important prerequisites to enhance accountability and civic participation. However, the IRM researcher found that they yielded minor impact because implementation has not been timely and has not produced the results expected. The unexpected results were due to discrepancies between the activities outlined in the commitment language and how they were implemented.

This report was prepared by Oxford Research.

Consultation with civil society

Countries participating in the OGP follow a process for consultation during development and implementation of their OGP action plan. The Finnish Government organized multiple events in the capital region and in other parts of the country to consult the public on action plan development and implementation. While the process aimed to involve members of civil society and to inform the public about the OGP process, the public consultation included a limited number of civil society organizations (CSOs). Further, stakeholders had limited opportunities to influence the implementation process. The Finnish Government organized various events during the implementation period to inform the public about the OGP process, including online publication of the OGP monitoring document. However, the public and civil society had limited opportunities to influence the implementation process.

Table 3. 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?	Yes
	Consultations: Open or invitation-only?	Open
	Consultations on IAP2 spectrum	Consult

Action plan implementation

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. Table four summarizes for each commitment, the level of completion, ambition, whether it falls within Finland's planned schedule, and the key next steps for the commitment in future OGP action plans. The crosscutting theme of the Finnish action plan is citizens' participation. The plan includes four thematic clusters: open procedures, clear language, open knowledge, and government as an enabler. The action plan sought to make interactions with public servants and certain government services more approachable for citizens. These reforms were achieved through internal government improvements such as clear language trainings for civil servants, rather than through creating additional feedback mechanisms to allow for greater government-citizen exchange. The four themes contain 18 commitments that are comprised of 46 actions.

At the end of the implementation period, the government conducted an internal survey that assessed the extent to which open government principles and activities had been implemented in government agencies. However, the government did not publish an end-of-term self-assessment report, which would have included information on the completion of individual commitments of the national action plan for 2013-2015. As many of these commitments focused on internal government improvements, nongovernmental stakeholders were not able to provide independent verification of completion for commitments.

About "Did it open government?"

Often, OGP commitments are worded vaguely 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 how the practice of governing has changed as a result of the commitment. This can be contrasted to the IRM's starred commitments, which describe potential impact.

IRM researchers code the "did it open government?" variable using the same scale as the "potential impact" variable. This allows for comparisons of intention (potential impact) with outcomes government. A variable scale also allows categorization of results along a spectrum, as some commitments may have mixed results. The scale is as follows:

- Worsens: worsens government openness
- None: maintains the same degree of government openness
- Minor: an incremental but positive step for government openness in the relevant policy area
- Major: a major step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scope or scale
- Transformative: 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 a few months after the implementation cycle is completed and focus on government practice, so the variable does not capture longer term changes or on-the-ground impacts. Second, as with all assessments of OGP commitments, the variable assesses only the outcomes of the commitment. It should not be interpreted as an evaluation of open government on the whole in the national context as the scope of each action.

About starred commitments

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. 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 midterm report, Finland's action plan contained four starred commitments. At the end of the term, based on the changes in the level of completion, Finland's action plan contained five starred commitments.

Note that the IRM updated the star criteria in early 2015 to raise the bar for model OGP commitments. Under the new criteria, a commitment receives a star if it was measurable, clearly relevant to OGP values as written, had transformative impact, and was substantially or completely implemented. For end-of-term reports, commitments were evaluated using the old criteria listed above. Future end-of-term reports will use the new criteria.

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 Finland, see the OGP Explorer at www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer.

Table 4. Overview: Assessment of progress by commitment

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP value relevance				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	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
Theme 1. Open procedures																					
✪ 1.1. Preparatory procedures openness			✔		✔	✔	✔			✔					✔ (mid) / ✔ (end)				✔		
✪ 1.2. Emphasizing dialogue skills in job descriptions of civil servants			✔		✔	✔					✔				✔ (mid) / ✔ (end)				✔		
1.3. Strengthening proactive publishing and communication			✔		✔	✔				✔					✔ (mid)	✔ (end)			✔		
1.4. Promoting participatory budgeting		✔				✔				✔				✔ (mid)	✔ (end)					✔	
1.5. Information and communication technology and e-services openness and customer orientation			✔			✔				✔					✔ (mid)	✔ (end)			✔		
1.6. Open and online meetings			✔			✔				✔			✔ (mid)	✔ (end)					✔		
Theme 2. Clear language																					
2.1. Standard language titles of government proposals			✔		✔					✔				✔ (mid) / ✔ (end)				✔			
2.2. Visualization of decisions			✔		✔	✔				✔					✔ (mid) / ✔ (end)				✔		

Commitment Overview		Specificity				OGP value relevance				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	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
Theme 2. Clear language	2.3. Clear and plain language for civil servants				✔	✔					✔					✔							*(Mid term)*
																	✔				✔		*(End-of-term)*
	2.4. Public administration texts			✔		✔	✔				✔				✔					✔				*(Mid term)*
															✔								*(End-of-term)*
	✪ 2.5. Standardize public administration terms			✔		✔						✔				✔						✔	*(Mid term)*
																✔							*(End-of-term)*
	2.6. Standardize texts in customer letters and decisions			✔		✔						✔			✔						✔			*(Mid term)*
															✔								*(End-of-term)*
Theme 3. Open knowledge	✪ 3.1. Machine-readable new and existing data			✔		✔		✔	✔		✔				✔						✔		*(Mid term)*
																✔							*(End-of-term)*
	✪ 3.2. Open data terms of use				✔	✔					✔					✔				✔			*(Mid term)*
																	✔						*(End-of-term)*
	3.3. Citizens' right to personal information			✔		✔		✔	✔				✔		✔					✔			*(Mid term)*
															✔								*(End-of-term)*
Theme 4. Government as an enabler	4.1. Remove barriers to action for civil society			✔		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔				✔					✔			*(Mid term)*
															✔								*(End-of-term)*
	4.2. Accessibility of civil servants				✔		✔	✔		✔						✔				✔			*(Mid term)*
																✔							*(End-of-term)*
	4.3. Providing web tools and training to civil society organizations			✔			✔			✔							✔				✔		*(Mid term)*
																	✔						*(End-of-term)*

Theme 1. Open procedures

✪ 1.1. Enhancing openness of preparatory procedures

Commitment Text:

In the year 1 of the Action Plan the ownership of the already existing government's project register and possibilities of its further development will be clarified. In addition, possibilities for further development of the state government's project register are studied, including its usability and possibilities to increase the awareness of its existence.

To increase transparency government decision making processes are made more traceable by publishing clear and popular process maps and annual cycles of the core preparatory and decision-making processes during the years 1 and 2 of the Action Plan

In year 1 the principles of the consultation guidelines of legislative work will be extended to the rest of the preparatory work in the state administration. Publishing drafts and alternative solutions at the preparatory phase, using diverse consultation methods and consulting people of all ages will be emphasized when updating the guidelines.

In 2005 the Permanent State Secretaries signed common principles to enhance openness and consultation. In year 1 they will renew their commitment as their ministry's 'openness leaders' to further develop openness in their ministries and in the whole-of-government.

The marketing and implementation of the different functionalities of the e-participation environment/portal will be supported both in the state and municipal administration in year 1. Voluntary commitments will be collected from state agencies and municipalities on how they will promote openness. On their websites, the agencies will inform the public about their new actions to promote openness.

Finland will join the Open budget index programme in year 2014.

In years 1 and 2 as part of the comprehensive reform of the Local Government Act other ways of increasing the openness of preparatory processes will be studied.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): Municipalities, The Association of Local and Regional Authorities, Ministry of Justice, Open Ministry (CSO), Prime Minister's Office

Start Date: 1 July 2013   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Moderate	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
✪ 1.1 Overall			✔				✔		
1.1.1. Government project register development				✔			✔		
1.1.2. Decision making processes more traceable		✔				✔			
1.1.3. Consultation guidelines of legislative work		✔					✔		
1.1.4. "Open Government Principles for Civil Servants"				✔			✔		
1.1.5. New citizens' participation portal				✔			✔		
1.1.6. Voluntary commitments on promoting openness			✔					✔	
1.1.7. Joining the Open Budget Index Program in 2014	Withdrawn				Withdrawn				
1.1.8. The Local Government Act reform			✔				✔		

✪ Commitment 1.1 is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has moderate or transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented. Therefore, it qualifies as a starred commitment.

Policy aim

The commitment set ambitious goals: to make the legislative and government agency project preparatory processes more open, so that participation is easier for civil society, and to change the mindset of civil servants, so that they understand the importance of openness.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

Two of the eight milestones were completed at midterm and one milestone (1.1.7) was withdrawn. Changing mindsets is hard to measure and, as written, the milestones were found to have minor or moderate impact on the policy area. Members of both government and civil society interviewed reveal that there is room for improvement. Government representatives stressed that the government needs to develop the HARe service (the government's online project register) to meet current technical standards, and civil society emphasized consistent use of the service in public administration.

End-of-term: Substantial

An additional two milestones were confirmed as complete at the end of term.

1.1.1: The plan for developing the government's project register is complete[1] and the government register has a new website with improved search functions and ease of use under the government's main website.[2]

1.1.8: Parliament ratified the renewed Local Government Act that emphasizes the participation of citizens to the local governments' decision making in April 2015.[3]

However, three milestones achieved either limited or significant completion at the end of the term.

- 1.1.2: The project renewing the core preparatory processes was completed and a report was published in December 2014.[4] However the IRM researchers could not confirm from public information sources that internal process maps and annual cycles were published as planned as part of the project.
- 1.1.3: The new consultation service[5] is online as of 3 December 2014. The service creates a standardized repository and procedures for citizens, organizations, and authorities to comment on drafts, to track the status of requests for service, to browse other users' comments on legislation, and to provide feedback on service. The IRM researchers could not confirm from public information sources that the consultation guidelines were extended to earlier stages of the preparatory and consultation process.
- 1.1.6: The civil servants' open government network[6] has been used to promote open government within different agencies, but agencies continue to rely on reports sent to the OGP working group to document their development of open government practices and voluntary commitments.[7]

Did it open government?

Voluntary commitments from state agencies and municipalities to promote openness have been a major step towards a more open government, even if there is little evidence that these commitments have been published on their public-facing websites. However, most of the commitment milestones had only minor potential impact or were not fully completed. Therefore, the commitment as whole was a minor step towards opening the government.

Carried forward?

The IRM researchers recommend that consultation guidelines (milestone 1.1.3) and maps and annual cycles of preparatory processes (milestone 1.1.2) should be included in the next action plan to ensure they are implemented as planned. Additionally, voluntary commitments from agencies should be made visible to the public.

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[1] Ministry of Finance, "Valtioneuvoston Hanketiedon Esiselvitys," January 2015, http://bit.ly/20tjonq

[2] "Hankkeet ja Säädösvalmistelu" [Government's Project Register Service], Valtioneuvosto, http://valtioneuvosto.fi/hankkeet

[3] "Kuntalaki," 410/2015, Finlex, https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2015/20150410

[4] Ministry of Finance, "Päätöksistä Muutoksiin: Valtion Ohjausjärjestelmän Kehittäminen – Hankkeen Raportti ja Toimenpidesuositukset," 1 December 2014, http://bit.ly/1PjNUfR

[5] Public Administration Consultation Service, https://www.lausuntopalvelu.fi

[6] "Virkamiesverkosto," Ministry of Finance, http://bit.ly/1SjX0di

[7] "Suomen Liitymistä Open Government Partnerships (OGP) – Aloitteeseen Valmisteleva Työryhmä" [OGP Working Group Project], Valtioneuvosto, http://valtioneuvosto.fi/hanke?selectedProjectId=4602

✪1.2. Emphasizing dialogue skills in job descriptions of civil servants

Commitment Text:

The competences needed to enhance open government are specified starting from the year 1 of the Action plan. Across the public administration, the importance of dialogue sills will be highlighted in job descriptions, in recruitment criteria and in assessing personal performance in positions demanding such competences. In addition, trainings in customer oriented service design is arranged for civil servants and citizens.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): The Association of Local and Regional Authorities

Start Date: 1 July 2013.................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Moderate	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
✪ 1.2. Overall			✔				✔		
1.2.1. Dialogue skills of civil servants		✔					✔		
1.2.2. Training in customer-oriented service design			✔				✔		

✪ Commitment 1.2 is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has moderate or transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented. Therefore, it qualifies as a starred commitment.

Policy aim

In Finland, society often expects civil servants to be in direct contact with citizens, other stakeholders, and also other civil servants from different agencies. Civil servants do not necessarily possess the dialogue skills for these situations. The commitment aims to change public administration recruitment and performance assessment when a job position requires strong dialogue skills. The recruitment guidance for these positions would emphasize the need for dialogue skills.

Status
Midterm: Substantial

The IRM researchers found there was no evidence that this accomplished its aim because the recruitment criteria guidelines for assessing personnel performance have not been created or published. At the municipal level, officials organized training sessions for civil servants in conjunction with the "Kuntalaiset Keskiöön" project, which included perspectives on service design. However, there were no publicly available guidance materials or guidelines for assessing performance.

End-of-term: Substantial

The completion rate for this commitment has not changed since the midterm report.

- 1.2.1: The IRM researchers could not confirm from public information sources that guidelines for recruitment or performance assessment were created or modified since the midterm report, thus there is no evidence that dialogue skills would have been highlighted in recruitment or performance assessments.
- 1.2.2: The IRM researchers were not able to find evidence from public resources that additional customer service design trainings took place during the implementation period beyond the Kuntalaiset Keskiöön project covered in the IRM midterm progress report.

However, based on the language of the commitment, this milestone can be considered complete.

Did it open government?

This commitment sought to open government by recruiting, training, and assessing public servants based on their ability to communicate effectively with citizens. The impact of the commitment suffered from limited completion, which resulted in the commitment being only a minor step towards making government interactions more open and accessible to the public.

Carried forward?

The IRM researchers recommend including this commitment in the next action plan, but the wording of the commitment should allow for substituting it with other policy measures. Dialogue skills are important, but the milestones, as formulated, may not significantly change the status quo.

1.3. Strengthening proactive publishing and communication

Commitment Text:

As part of the comprehensive reform of the Local Government Act possible needs to renew the legislation regarding the information-, interaction-, and consultation practices will be evaluated. The possible regulatory ways to support proactive communication will be studied during the years 1 and 2 of the Action Plan.

In the ongoing Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy (SADe) the importance of proactive communication will be emphasized. Communication training will be organized for the project actors in years 1 and 2.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): The Association of Local and Regional Authorities

Start Date: 1 July 2014................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Minor	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
1.3. Overall				✔			✔		
1.3.1. Study on municipalities' proactive communication				✔			✔		
1.3.2. SADe project actors training				✔			✔		

Policy aim

Prior to the OGP process, proactive government communication about projects was not a common practice because the government usually made projects public only after they became official. This commitment aims to increase participation at the earliest stages of public consultation. It would enable proactive communication for projects in their earliest stages of development to provide stakeholders with more time to prepare responses to proposals and to engage at an earlier stage.

Status
Midterm: Substantial

The government implemented this commitment's milestones as planned, although the commitment has not succeeded in changing the status quo regarding proactive communication. The government provided the communication training to a small group of civil servants, and the commitment sought to study including elements of proactive communication in the Local Government Act, rather than implementing them. However, if the government ratifies the Local Government Act, it could have a significant impact. But stakeholders can evaluate this only after the government has implemented the law properly.

End-of-term: Complete

While the impact of the commitment remained limited, the two milestones were completed as planned.

- 1.3.1: Parliament ratified the reformed Local Government Act on 10 April 2015,[1] but the law does not comment explicitly on proactive communication. Nevertheless, the regulatory ways were studied as planned.

- 1.3.2: The IRM researchers could not find evidence from public information sources that further trainings were organized in the SADe program after the midterm report. But, based on the language of the commitment, the milestone can be considered complete.

Did it open government?

The intention behind this commitment, to increase public participation and consultation on projects during the early stages of development, would have a transformative impact on government practice. Additionally, the move towards proactive communication on the part of the government is an important step toward greater open governance. While this commitment is considered complete, due to the limited scope of the activities in the commitment–studying proactive communication rather than implementing proactive communication practices–the commitment resulted only in a minor change in existing government practice. More work is needed to ensure that proactive communication and early-stage public consultation is adopted as a regular practice.

Carried forward?

The aim to increase proactive communication is valid, but completely new milestones should be created to change the status quo.

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[1] "Kuntalaki," 410/2015, Finlex, https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2015/20150410

1.4. Promoting participatory budgeting

Commitment Text:

Starting from the year 1 of the Action Plan, information about existing national and international practices and experiments as well as experiences of participatory budgeting will be spread. A possibility to create an open, game-like application to citizens for alternative budgeting in government and municipalities will be studied. Municipalities interesting in pilotings participatory budgeting will be searched for. As part of the comprehensive reform of the Local Government Act, the possibility of promoting participatory budgeting by legislative measures will be evaluated. In addition, a pilot government agency, willing to put a part of the appropriation (e.g. 1%) to be budgeted in a participatory process, will be studied.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): The Association of Local and Regional Authorities, Network Democracy Association

Start Date: 1 July 2013.................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Low • Potential impact: Minor	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
1.4. Overall			✔					✔	
1.4.1. Participatory budgeting information		✔					✔		
1.4.2. Game-like application on alternative budgeting				✔			✔		
1.4.3. Piloting participatory budgeting in municipalities				✔				✔	
1.4.4. Pilot government agency for participatory budgeting		✔				✔			
1.4.5. Participatory budgeting through legislation				✔			✔		

Policy aim

This commitment aims to increase awareness of participatory budgeting as a tool to increase citizen participation in decision making and to expand such initiatives to the municipal level. This commitment promotes the use of participatory budgeting through several activities, most of which focus on studying international and national practices, evaluating the utility of participatory budgeting apps, and initiating a municipal government agency pilot program. Prior to the OGP process, the government used participatory budgeting in some pilot studies, although government contacts interviewed by the IRM researchers found municipalities were unlikely to try a process not set in legislation, because they are either unwilling or unaware of the tool.

Status
Midterm: Limited

Most of the commitment milestones do not feature easily measurable outputs and only specify disseminating information on the potential of participatory budgeting, rather than a commitment to use participatory budgeting. For milestone 1.4.3, two cities were identified for a pilot program, but no further information on pilot development is available. For milestone 1.4.4, the government has not found an agency for a participatory budgeting pilot. Milestone 1.4.5 has the potential to impact

citizen participation significantly on the municipal level. Participatory budgeting was included in the draft of the Local Government Act reform. If ratified, municipalities will be more aware of this citizen participation method and will have the possibility to implement it more easily.

End-of-term: Substantial

Two additional milestones (1.4.3. and 1.4.5) were complete at the end of the reporting period. Regarding Milestone 1.4.2, while a game-like application for participatory budgeting was not produced, the government published the 2014 state budget in open data format and participated in the Apps4Finland 2014 competition to facilitate citizens' use of the data. The IRM researchers found that these activities fulfill the stated goal of exploring alternative participatory budgeting for citizens' use, and the IRM researchers consider the milestone complete.

- 1.4.3: A participatory budgeting pilot project was implemented in Tampere in 2014.[1] A report on findings from the pilot project and follow up actions for 2015 was published in December 2014.[2] The IRM researchers were unable to confirm whether a pilot was carried out in Vantaa as planned, but few other municipalities have developed the model to a pilot project stage.[3]

- 1.4.5: Parliament ratified the reformed Local Government Act on 10 April 2015.[4] The act includes a sentence mandating local governments to ensure that the citizens have opportunities to participate in local decision making, including economic planning at the municipal level.

However, two milestones remained limited in their completion rate:

- 1.4.1: The IRM researchers did not find information from public information sources about whether additional actions were taken to spread information on participatory budgeting.

- 1.4.4: The IRM researchers were unable to find information from public information sources on whether a pilot government agency was selected. Further, there is no evidence of pilots conducted during the implementation period.

Did it open government?
The commitment laid a legal foundation for using participatory budgeting and, according to stakeholders, helped to bring attention to the issue. This resulted in several municipalities piloting participatory budgeting projects. Therefore, even if individual milestones were limited in scope or completion rate, the commitment as a whole may be considered a major step in opening the government.

Carried forward?
The commitment should be carried forward, but the wording of the milestone allows for substituting it with other policy measures. The government should continue with piloting participatory budgeting, finding new pilot organizations from within the state, and disseminating best practices.

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[1] "Oma Budjetti," Oma Tesoma, http://omatesoma.fi/omabudjetti/
[2] "Oma Tesoma –Hanke," http://bit.ly/1NBtyJt
[3] Silja Raunio, "Osallistuvasta Budjetoinnista Intoa Kuntavaikuttamiseen," Kotimaa, Yle Uutiset, 23 January 2014, http://bit.ly/1PTleGB
[4] "Kuntalaki," 420/2015, Finlex, https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2015/20150410

1.5. Increasing openness and customer orientation in information and communication technology e-services development

Commitment Text:

During the years 1 and 2 in the Action Programme on eServices and eDemocracy (SADe) services wil be designed, tested and implemented together with the future users of these services. Joint communication to common target groups of the services developed in the programme will be supported.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): Agencies building online services

Start Date: 1 July 2014.................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
• Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Minor				✔			✔		

Policy aim

The commitment aimed to increase the quality of public sector online services and their user base by including interested future service users in the development of these services. The commitment is closely related to the existing Action Program on eServices and eDemocracy (SADe). The government built many of the current services according to the public administration's specifications. With this commitment, the SADe program aims to take more users' perspectives of service into account by taking a user-centric approach to designing services.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

The government held several meetings with 100–200 representatives from the developer community to help develop the same services. The impact of user input is visible in these services, which now have a big user base. However, the SADe program includes seven projects, with 40 services implemented from 2012–2015, and the government did not incorporate as much user input to develop all these services. The scope of the SADe program is also an issue, especially given limited resources and limited target groups for many of the services. Therefore, it was sometimes challenging to achieve far-reaching participation.

End-of-term: Complete

While the IRM researchers were unable to find information from public sources on what concrete measures each project in the SADe program had taken by the end of the reporting period, the principles of user interaction were outlined in the SADe common practices.[1]

Did it open government?

The goal of increasing user participation in the development of online public services could increase the openness of government, as citizens would have the opportunity to request services that are relevant to their interests and needs. The implementation design of this commitment, particularly the creation of user interaction principles that focus on joint design and communication between the government and citizens, is a good step towards more openness in public service delivery. However, due to the limited resources and size of the target groups used for the SADe program, the commitment may be considered only a minor step towards opening the government.

Carried forward?

If citizen participation in service development is included as a theme in the next action plan, a new commitment with concrete, measurable milestones on achieving far-reaching participation should be created.

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[1] Ministry of Finance, "Toimintamalliehdotus: Vuorovaikutus Käyttäjien Kanssa," 17 December 2009, http://bit.ly/1JFG7Zd

1.6. Increase number of open and online meetings

Commitment Text:

Starting from the year 1 good practices of organizing open and online meetings as well as co-production of texts will be gathered and shared.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): The Association of Local and Regional Authorities

Start Date: 1 July 2014................. End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
• Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Minor		✔					✔		

Policy aim

Since Finland has relatively low population density, it may be impractical for citizens to attend meetings in person. The commitment seeks to increase motivation for participation. The commitment aimed to gather information on best practices for open and online meetings and to provide citizens with a chance to follow more closely the topics that interest them.

Status

Midterm: Not started

So far the government has not produced the main output (i.e. information on best practices for open and online meetings). Additionally, the language of the commitment does not include measures with potentially more impact, like the actual implementation of such practices.

End-of-term: Limited

Some information about open and online meetings that have been arranged in municipalities is online.[1] According to the informal government survey, many agencies organize interactive online events, but the IRM researchers were unable to confirm from public information sources that any guidelines were produced.

Did it open government?

As the commitment has not produced the information on best practices or resulted in a considerable increase of open and online meetings, the commitment may be considered only a minor step towards opening the government. More online events may be available, but without guidelines to ensure they are interactive and not a 'tick box' measure, it is difficult to evaluate if more online events leads to better and easier civic participation.

Carried forward?

The IRM researchers recommend including a commitment to produce guidelines for open and online meetings in the next action plan.

[1] The Association of Local and Regional Authorities, "Kunnissa Yhä Monipuolisempia Työskentelytapoja," 22 May 2014, http://bit.ly/1lTlaOT

Theme 2. Clear Language

2.1. Drafting standard language titles of government proposals

Commitment Text:

All draft legislation will be given a concise title for communication in the preparatory phase. If possible, a plain language version will be made of the main content of the law and its core issues. Crowd-sourcing and test reading groups will be used in drafting the standard language names and resumes. The need to update instructions regarding implementation of the law being drafted is evaluated already at the beginning of the law drafting process, so that authorities can be prepared for the update work. In the year 1 of our Action Plan, we will create the guidelines for drafting the titles and resumes and state testing them in pilots. In the year 2. New guidelines will be added to the handbook on law drafting.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice

Supporting Institution(s): None

Start Date: 1 July 2013................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
• Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Minor		✔				✔			

Policy aim

From a citizen's perspective, legislative texts can be challenging to understand because the language the government uses is often technical, juridical, and bureaucratic. This commitment aims to improve public access to, and assessment of, government initiatives by providing titles and summaries of government policy proposals and draft legislation in a standardized language and format. Its goal is to create drafting guidelines in year one and add the guidelines to the handbook on drafting law in year two.

Status

Midterm: Limited

At the midterm report, two pilot projects testing the effectiveness of draft guidelines on clear language were completed. However, it should be noted that stakeholders interviewed found that the understanding of the requirements concerning clear language text has improved through the process.

End-of-term: Limited

The Ministry of Finance, the Association for Local and Regional Authorities, and the Institute of Languages in Finland (KOTUS), launched a large campaign on clear language for civil servants that ran from 13 October 2014 to 31 December 2015.[1] However, the IRM researchers were unable to find information from public sources to confirm whether clear language guidelines on drafting laws, law titles, and summaries were created and implemented. According to the government's internal survey, clear language titles and summaries are drafted only occasionally. The IRM researchers conclude that there has not been enough progress on this commitment to be considered substantially complete.

Did it open government?

Ensuring that titles and summaries on important documents are presented in clear, plain language is important for citizens to monitor government activities. While there is some evidence that clear language titles and summaries are being drafted, it is clear that it is not standard practice. However, as indicated in the midterm report, stakeholders found that understanding of clear language text requirements has improved through the pilot project process. While the status quo has not worsened, due to lack of evidence that the drafting of government proposals has changed, the commitment can be considered as having no impact on opening the government.

Carried forward?

The clear language guidelines should be produced as planned.

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[1] "Virkakielikampanja," Kotus, http://bit.ly/1VsnxEG

2.2. Visualization of decisions

Commitment Text:

Year 1 on Action Plan we will visualize the state budget "what do I get with my tax euros?" and the budget of the programme of e-services and e-democracy (SADe). In years 2 and 3 the visualization of budgets will be further spread in public sector.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): None

Start Date: 1 July 2013................. End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
• Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Minor			✔				✔		

Policy aim

Before the OGP process, authorities in Finland did not commonly use visualization. The new Administrative Procedures Act[1] requires authorities to use language citizens are able to understand. The commitment set out to make information easier to access and faster to process, which would contribute to government efficiency and enhance public access to information.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

The government faced several challenges during the implementation of this commitment, with the major obstacle being a lack of visualization skills among government officials. The government published a data visualization version of the SADe-budget[2] in Autumn 2013 and will update it in Autumn 2014. However, they did not produce a visualization of the state budget. The government plans to publish a visualization of the 2015 state budget, and officials have secured funding for this project.

End-of-term: Substantial

The IRM researchers were unable to find information from public sources on whether new action to further the visualization of budgets had been carried out since the midterm review. However, an internal government survey revealed that over half of the agencies that responded used visualization in some way to clarify their documents. The commitment language specifically states that the state and SADe budgets will be visualized. The IRM researchers found that there has not been progress on visualizing the state budget; therefore, this commitment remains substantially complete rather than complete.

Did it open government?

Budget visualization is the key for this commitment and this has not changed. It is a small problem, but it is more important for key budget documents like the state budget. While the use of visualization in general seems to be increasing within government agencies, there is little evidence that visualization of decisions or budgets would be a standard practice for publicly available budget information. Therefore, the commitment may be considered only a minor step in opening the government.

Carried forward?

The commitment should be carried forward, but the wording of the milestone allows for substituting it with other policy measures. The commitment language indicates that visualization of decisions and budgets will be further spread in the public sector through 2016 (year three).

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[1] "Hallintolaki," 6.6.2003/434, Finlex, http://bit.ly/17vclDY
[2] "Sade-Ohjelman Budjetti," Ministry of Finance, http://bit.ly/1cwk5Rw

2.3. Training civil servants to use clear and plain language

Commitment Text:

In year 1 of the Action Plan a working group will create a program to develop the use of clear and plain text in government documents. Defined actions will be implemented in ministries and agencies with support of professionals. Implementation may include training in years 2 and 3 of the Action Plan. A plain language check-list will be produced to support training and to be utilized by civil servants.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Education and Culture

Supporting Institution(s): Institute for Languages in Finland

Start Date: 1 July 2013.................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
• Relevance: Clear • Specificity: High • Potential impact: Minor				✔				✔	

Policy aim

Before the OGP process, there were few structured efforts to improve civil servants' language, although KOTUS had highlighted the issue. This commitment aims to organize training for civil servants in the use of clear, plain language in ministries and agencies. Additionally, it aims to create a program to develop the use of clear and plain text in government documents and a plain language checklist for civil servants.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

In terms of outputs, a working group initiated an action program,[1] which includes guidelines for better language use for civil servants.[2] Drafting of this action program already was included in the Government Program 2011–2015.[3] As a follow-up, the government will start a campaign on civil servant language in Autumn 2014.[4] After inclusion in the OGP action plan, KOTUS reported an increased number of requests for clear language training.

End-of-term: Complete

The Ministry of Finance, the Association for Local and Regional Authorities, and KOTUS launched a large campaign on clear language for civil servants, which ran from 13 October 2014 through 31 December 2015.[5] KOTUS published a webpage with a checklist for civil servants, tools, and suggestions for improving language.[6] According to an internal government survey, most of the state agencies had improved their language use in various ways, but specific examples were not provided.

Did it open government?

Despite the limited formulation of the commitment milestones, the commitment seems to have resulted in efforts to improve the language in state agencies and a publicly available checklist on how civil servants can improve their language and communication skills. Therefore, the commitment may be considered a major step in opening the government.

Carried forward?

The commitment objectives, as written, have been achieved. See the midterm IRM report for recommendations on next steps for this commitment.

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[1] "Working Group Appointed to Prepare Action Plan Promoting Plain Language in Administration and Legislation," Kotus, http://bit.ly/1uTpguL

[2] Ministry of Education and Culture, "Report of the Working Group for Clear Administrative Language" (Hyvän Virkakielen Toimintaohjelma), Ministry of Education and Culture, 30 January 2014, http://bit.ly/1LeLfOt

[3] "Hyvän Virkakielen Toimintaohjelma," Kotus, http://bit.ly/1AX3WVR

[4] "Virkakielikampanja Käynnistyy (Selkokeskus)," National Institute for Health and Welfare, http://bit.ly/1uTpmlX

[5] "Virkakielikampanja," Kotus, http://bit.ly/1VsnxEG

[6] "Virkakieliohjeita," Kotus, http://www.kotus.fi/ohjeet/virkakieliohjeita

2.4. User testing of public administration texts

Commitment Text:

The comprehensibility of the texts, guidelines, forms etc produced by public administration will be developed by testing them together with citizens and services users. Agencies will ask for feedback and corrections through their feed-back channels on comprehensibility of the existing texts. The work will state with pilots in year1 of Action Plan: A user panel will be formed to test the comprehensibility of the new core texts and pilot agencies and municipal-ities will be nominated.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): None

Start Date: 1 July 2013................   End Date: 30 September 2014

		End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Minor	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative	
		✔				✔				

Policy aim

This commitment aims to improve the comprehensibility of government texts through user testing. The goal is to improve communication between government and citizens by making public documents easier to understand for both civil servants and citizens. Prior to the OGP process, large government agencies carried out service user testing of government texts while smaller agencies with fewer resources did not. To some extent, this commitment also aims to share good practices from the larger agencies to the smaller agencies.

Status

Midterm: Limited

At the time of writing the midterm report, the government had not started the pilot project on comprehensibility of public administration texts. Government sources cited a lack of funding and the inability to find a partner government agency. However, on the municipal level the Kuntalaiset Keskiöön project, which aims to increase democracy on the municipal level, succeeded in piloting projects on testing the usability of public administration texts. The customer council of social services for the city of Tampere[1] enables customers of social services to participate in the development of these services, including testing of text produced by social services. The IRM researchers found this commitment to have limited completion because progress was made in expanding this user testing practice beyond large government agencies, which is in keeping with the spirit of the commitment. However, additional work is needed to implement the pilot project activities described in the commitment language.

End-of-term: Limited

The Ministry of Finance, the Association for Local and Regional Authorities, and KOTUS launched a large campaign on clear language for civil servants, which ran from 13 October 2014 through 31 December 2015.[2] The IRM researchers found evidence of user panel testing for a pilot project on Tax Authority texts, but an internal government survey revealed that only a few state agencies had user panel testing. The commitment language indicated that user panels would test the comprehensiveness of existing public administration core texts and several pilot agencies and municipalities would be nominated.[3] As the IRM researchers did not find evidence of these activities

beyond the single pilot, there is insufficient evidence of progress to merit an increase in the completion level for this commitment.

Did it open government?
Due to the limited completion of the planned milestones and the lack of significant change of the practice in state agencies, the commitment may be considered as having no effect opening the government. While some agencies have adopted user panel testing on a regular basis, the scope is too narrow to have a significant impact on opening existing government practice

Carried forward?
The commitment should be carried forward, but the wording of the milestones allows for substituting it with other policy measures. This commitment could be implemented much more effectively if it were formulated using the SMART method to ensure concrete, measureable actions. Further pilots of user panels should be carried out as planned, and best practices should be formulated and disseminated based on the pilot projects so that they become the standard practice for the majority of government agencies.

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[1] "Tampere: Kiinnostaako Sosiaalipalveluiden Kehittäminen? Tuo Ideasi Asiakasraatiin!," SOS II - Hanke, http://bit.ly/1nPAGwN
[2] "Virkakielikampanja," Kotus, http://bit.ly/1VsnxEG
[3] "Kampanjan Pilotit," Kotus, http://bit.ly/1JFDCq3

✪2.5. Standardize and clarify terms used in public administration and services

Commitment Text:

We will definie the common concepts of the public administration and the relationships between the concepts in a computer- readable way. This definition work (ontology work) is needed, because the same service or information can be searched after by using many different terms. Year 1 of the Action Plan we will create a stable operational environment and sustainable operational model to current project-based ontology work.

We will make sure that the names of administrative organizations, programs and job titles are comprehensible and transparent. Names and their abbreviations are used with consideration and the abbreviations are not used as primary names.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): None

Start Date: 1 July 2014................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Moderate	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
✪ 2.5. Overall				✔				✔	
2.5.1. A stable operational environment and sustainable operational model for ontology work				✔				✔	
2.5.2. Comprehensible names and abbreviations				✔			✔		

✪ Commitment 2.5 is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has moderate or transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented. Therefore, it qualifies as a starred commitment.

Policy aim

Currently, no standard, machine-readable repository of definitions for common public administration terms exists. This leads to inconsistent definitions and application of policies within individual agencies. In the past, ontological efforts were project-based and too small in scale and scope. The commitment aims to create standard definitions for common public administration terms and to create a stable, scaled, and sustainable model for ontology work to continue to define these terms as well as to ensure that they are used consistently across public agencies.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

There is evidence that the commitment achieved partial success in the form of the ontology service and the publication of findings in a report by the Working Group for Clear Administrative Language.[1] Both of these outputs have the potential to impact the whole public sector by improving access to information. If the ontology service gains the required funding, the impact of the commitment would be continuous, since the service would be running long-term.

End-of-term: Complete

By the end of the reporting period, both milestones were completed. The ontology service has not secured permanent funding, but it does not appear to be at risk for running out of funding. The institutionalization of the service is sufficient to ensure that it will continue to have an important impact on the policy area. The IRM researchers found that the ontology service is online[2] and operational (milestone 2.5.1), and there are guidelines available for using names and abbreviations[3] (milestone 2.5.2).

Did it open government?

While it is too early to tell the long-term impacts of the commitment outputs, the commitment has been a clear major step towards clarifying and standardizing terms used in the public administration and, therefore, opening the government. The creation and continuation of this centralized service represents a significant change in government practice. The work of the ontology service revolves around the generation, dissemination, and enforcement of standard terms, which reinforces the clear and standard language activities of other commitments. Past efforts lacked the scale, scope, and funding necessary to serve as a single repository and authority on standard public administration terms.

Carried forward?

The commitment, as written, has been completed.

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[1] "Report of the Working Group for Clear Administrative Language," 30 January 2014, http://bit.ly/1LeLfOt
[2] Finto [Ontology Service], http://finto.fi/fi/
[3] "Nimistösuunnittelun Ohjeita," Kotus, http://www.kotus.fi/ohjeet/nimistonsuunnittelun_ohjeita

2.6. Increase readability of standard texts in customer letters and decisions

Commitment Text:

Year 1 of Action Plan we will make the phrase- based writing visible by organizing a seminar focusing on the issue. We will continue developing phrase- based writing in a pilot to which different people with different skill profiles will be invited.

Year 1 of our Action Plan, the requirement of simple update of standard texts is included in the recommendations of procurement and development of Information and Communication Technology (ICTO systems.

Responsible Institution: Institute for the Languages in Finland

Supporting Institution(s): National Health Insurance Institute, Ministry of Finance, The Association of Local and Regional Authorities

Start Date: 1 July 2014.................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Moderate	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
2.6. Overall		✔					✔		
2.6.1. Phrase-based writing seminar				✔			✔		
2.6.2. Phrase-based writing pilot	Withdrawn								
2.6.3. Simple standard text in ICT guidelines	✔					✔			

Policy aim

Prior to the OGP process, the government highlighted phrase-based writing (i.e. computer-assisted text generation) as an issue it needed to address. Citizens find it difficult to understand such writing, and it strains public resources because citizens may have to demand clarification on the content from public servants. The tools that public servants have available for phrase-based writing are often outdated and unable to produce easily comprehensible text. This commitment aims to enhance the readability of customer letters and decisions, especially for standardized texts and form letters.

Status

Midterm: Limited

The planned seminar took place in January 2014.[1] The event was aimed at public servants, researchers, developers, and IT experts. The city of Tampere showed interest in being a pilot municipality, but it proved challenging to define the content of the pilot. Another pilot possibility was Finnish Institute of Occupational Health's Flow IT project, which aims to make IT solution procurement in the public sector easier. However, due to financial constraints, it was not possible to collaborate. Initially, when the government developed its action plan, it did not anticipate the amount of work required to set up the pilots. The government did not update the milestone of recommendations of procurement and development of ICT systems to include editable phrase-based writing. In interviews with public servants, researchers, developers, and IT experts, the IRM researchers found that stakeholders are generally more aware of the inadequacy of phrase-based writing and the challenges to modernizing the practice. In interviews with the IRM researchers,

KOTUS indicated increased demand for training and consultation on the topic of effective phrase-based writing.

End-of-term: Limited

The IRM researchers found that no additional progress was made on this commitment since the midterm review. The decision to withdraw (or not carry out the implementation of) milestone 2.6.2 was communicated officially to the IRM researchers in interviews with government officials. The reasons for withdrawing the commitment are elaborated in the IRM midterm report. The IRM researchers could not confirm through public information sources whether the government had included phrase-based writing requirements in the ICT system procurement and development guidelines (milestone 2.6.3).

Did it open government?

Due to the limited completion of the milestones, the commitment was only a minor step in opening the government. The challenges in carrying out pilot projects on phrase-based writing helped the government and stakeholders to understand better the challenges in modernizing the outdated practice. While this does not represent a definitive, major change in government practice, such as the fully implementing the phrase-based writing requirements in ICT guidelines (milestone 2.6.3), the recognition of the nature of the challenge is an important first step to overhauling the practice.

Carried forward?

This commitment should be carried forward. If a pilot is too difficult for the government to carry out, it could set a commitment to provide further training and seminars for good phrase-based writing.

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[1] "Tietojärjestelmät ja Kirjoittaminen," Seminaari, 14 January 2014, Ministry of Finance, http://bit.ly/1SKD4lj

Theme 3. Open knowledge

✪3.1. Publishing new data and existing open data in machine-readable format

Commitment Text:

As part of Ministry of Finance's open data programme the possibility to open more documents in structured form will be studied. The Open Data program will state simultaneously with the implementation o f the Action Plan. Year 1 information on public sector databases and the data sets is gathered by linking the specifications of IT- systems to one portal. Open data and open application interface requirements will be included in procurement guidelines for ICT- systems and architectural principles, in order to enable building of alternate user interfaces to IT- systems year 1 of the Action Plan. When purchasing analytical tools and research the possibility to publish tools, methods and data will be taken into account.

Starting from year 1 of the Action Plan data reserves that are central to openness of govern-ment will be opened. The project portfolio of State administration ICT projects and Govern-ment program follow-up data will be published online. The possibility to open legislation in machine-readable form is studied. In Years 2 and 3 more data will be opened.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): None

Start Date: 1 July 2013................. End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Moderate	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
✪3.1. Overall			✔					✔	
3.1.1. Study opening more documents in a structured form		✔					✔		
3.1.2. Data reserves and data sets in open portal				✔				✔	
3.1.3. Openness in ICT principles				✔				✔	
3.1.4. Analytical tools and research publishing				✔				✔	
3.1.5. Open data central to openness of government			✔				✔		

✪ Commitment 3.1 is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has moderate or transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented. Therefore, it qualifies as a starred commitment.

Policy aim

In Finland, the government often publishes documents that are not machine-readable (scans of documents, for example) so that searching for a particular topic or reusing information can be challenging for both citizens and public administration. This commitment aims to increase the ease of access to public administration decisions and data information. It also aims to explore options for opening documents in a structured form and for open data reserves that are central to government openness.

Status
Midterm: Substantial

The government did not properly study the options for opening more documents in a structured form. As a result, with the resources available, the effort has proven to be too ambitious. Because the government automatically produces data on documents in systems used by the public administration, this task would require a significant update of those systems. The government succeeded in gathering information on public sector databases and datasets, linking them to one portal, and drafting open data and open application interface requirements. However, government officials interview expressed concern that target groups are not aware of the one-stop portal (Yhteentoimivuus.fi). The government did not open either the portfolio or the follow-up data during the period of implementation for the midterm report. However, the government opened the follow-up data during the Open Finland Conference in September 2014, after the planned schedule for this milestone.

End-of-term: Substantial

By the end of the reporting period, three of five milestones were completed:

- 3.1.2: The online portal is running on the official open data service.[1]
- 3.1.3: The ICT procurement guidelines include requirements for open data and open application interfaces.[2]
- 3.1.4: The Ministry of Education and Culture launched a program on open science and research,[3] and the Prime Minister's Office, which coordinates the government's research activities, underlines that government-funded research should be produced in open data format.[4] While the IRM researchers did not find evidence of specific policies or guidelines implemented to require open data formatting and publication, the language of the milestone was fairly vague on specific outputs. Therefore, this milestone can be considered completed, although additional work could be done to codify open data publication guidelines.

However, two milestones had less clear completion rates:

- 3.1.1: While some structured data probably has been published on the official open data service,[5] the IRM researchers could not find evidence of a study for opening documents in structured form. The IRM researchers found that the government tried to encourage the different ministries to produce detailed studies for opening the data, but little was done. Therefore, the IRM researchers found this milestone to have limited completion.
- 3.1.5: The government opened the follow-up data of Prime Minister Stubb's government program, but it has not done the same for the current government. The current government uses a different system for monitoring the government program. In addition, the IRM researchers could not find information from public sources to confirm whether the state ICT project data was opened. Therefore, the IRM researchers found this milestone to have substantial completion.

Did it open government?
The commitment made finding and using open government data easier and laid foundations for opening more data. Even if not all milestones were completed, the commitment as whole can be considered a major step in opening the government.

Carried forward?
The government should continue opening data, and in structured form. Considerations will need to be made to ensure that adequate resources are dedicated to this project so that the deliverables in this commitment can be realized fully and within the given implementation period.

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[1] "Open Data and Interoperability Tools," Avoindata.fl, https://www.avoindata.fi/en
[2] Julkisen Hallinnon Tietohallinnon Neuvottelukunta (JUHTA), "JSS 166 Julkisen Hallinnon IT-Hankintojen Yleiset Sopimusehdot (JIT 2015)," http://bit.ly/1Kbo39n
[3] "Open Science and Research," Ministry of Education and Culture, http://openscience.fi/

[4] The Prime Minister's Office, "VN TEAS –Toiminnan Yleiset Ehdot (Täydentävä Haku 2015)," Government of Finland, http://bit.ly/1SbImGJ

[5] "Open Data and Interoperability Tools," https://www.avoindata.fi/en

✪3.2. Clear terms of use of open data and knowledge

Commitment Text:

In year 1 of the Action Plan we will produce a public sector recommendation of terms of use of open data based on international practices.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): None

Start Date: 1 July 2013.................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
• Relevance: Clear • Specificity: High • Potential impact: Moderate				✔			✔		

✪ Commitment 3.2 is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has moderate or transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented. Therefore, it qualifies as a starred commitment.

Policy aim

Prior to the OGP process, no common standards for the terms and use of publicly available government data were available for the public sector. This commitment aims to provide clear terms of use for open data and open knowledge by producing recommendations for the public sector based on international best practices. It intends to set the standards and provide recommendations on open data and open knowledge, including licensing policy. As a result, the use of open data and open knowledge should become easier for nongovernmental groups.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

At the time of the midterm review, the government had drafted the recommendation but had not finalized it.

End-of-term: Complete

The government published a public sector recommendation of terms of use of open data on 11 December 2014,[1] making the publication and use of open data easier.

Did it open government?

While the recommendations are not binding, the public sector strives to adhere to them. As the recommendations make publishing and use of open data easier, the commitment may be considered to have a minor impact in opening the government. For this commitment to have a major or transformative potential impact on opening government and changing existing government practice, the recommendations would need to be made binding.

Carried forward?

The commitment, as written, was completed during the implementation period.

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[1] JUHTA, "JHS 189 Avoimen Tietoaineiston Käyttölupa," 11 December 2014, http://bit.ly/1JFB2A4

3.3. Strengthening citizens' right to personal information

Commitment Text:

A citizen should have the possibility to check which registers information about him/her has been recorded. Different options to realize this will be studied in year 1 of the Action Plan. In years 2 and 3 of the Action plan a viewing function for citizens' own personal data and her right to re-use of personal data will be built to core registers of authorities. In year 1 of the Action Plan we will look into the training needs for open knowledge and organize a seminar jointly with the open data community, experts of access to information legislation and the office of the data ombudsman. In year 1 we will create a stable operational environment to produce open data support services and tools: systematic training for finding, processing, harmonizing, publishing and utilizing open data.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): Open Knowledge Finland

Start Date: 1 July 2013................. End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Transformative	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
3.3. Overall		✔					✔		
3.3.1. Studying options for checking personal information		✔					✔		
3.3.2. Viewing function and personal reuse of personal data		✔					✔		
3.3.3. A seminar on combining open data and data privacy		✔					✔		
3.3.4. Operational environment for open data support		✔					✔		

Policy aim

Before the OGP process, the personal data law[1] allowed citizens to inquire as to what types of personal information was held by public authorities. However, in practice, it is difficult for citizens to obtain this information, and there are few possibilities for citizens to reuse the data. This commitment has three distinct aims: (1) strengthen citizens' skills needed for combining privacy and open data, (2) strengthen citizens' rights to own their personal information by researching options on how citizens can find out what information is recorded about them, and (3) create a stable operational environment to produce open data support services and tools by means of systematic training.

Status

Midterm: Limited

This OGP commitment made a few small steps toward easing access to personal data, but the situation has not changed significantly. The government will release a beta version of a citizens' data portal in Autumn 2015 and will, to some extent, include the option to check registry data.[2] However, the government will not integrate an information-viewing function or the data reuse functionalities into the core registers of authorities on schedule. This proved to be too challenging due to inefficient implementation and an overly optimistic original schedule. So far, neither the Ministry of Finance nor the open data community or other organizations organized a systematic

training for finding, processing, harmonizing, publishing, and utilizing open data in relation to this commitment.

End-of-term: Limited

By the end of the reporting period, it seems that none of the four milestones were completed fully. The internal government survey did not mention progress on the milestones.

- 3.3.1: The IRM researchers were unable to find published studies on the different options for checking personal information.
- 3.3.2: The Service Architecture project mentions that a citizens' data portal will be published in the future and that it will allow citizens to check register information about themselves.[3] However, the IRM researchers did not find evidence of the possibility to reuse the data.
- 3.3.3: While the IRM researchers could not confirm from public information sources whether training needs had been studied. The Open Finland fair event was organized in Autumn 2014. It included participants from the open data community, experts of access to information legislation, and the office of the data ombudsman.[4]
- 3.3.4: The Open Knowledge Program, started by the Ministry of Finance to explore how to create a stable operational environment for producing open data support services and tools, ended in June 2015. The IRM researchers could not find evidence from public information sources to confirm whether a stable operational environment to produce open data services and tools, including training, was established.

Did it open government?
The milestone to include a viewing function and data reuse functionalities in government registries had a potentially transformative impact. But, due to limited completion rate of the milestones, the commitment may be considered to be only a minor step in opening the government.

Carried forward?
The commitment should be carried forward, but the wording of the milestone should allow for substituting it with other policy measures. Strengthening citizens' right to personal information should be carried out and, as indicated in the midterm IRM report, continuing the implementation of activities contained in the incomplete milestones would advance this goal. However, additional resources should be provided to ensure adequate support to fully implement them within the action plan cycle.

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1 "22.4.1999/523 – Henkilötietolaki," Finlex, http://bit.ly/1LhxiBv
2 "Kansallinen palveluarkkitehtuuri (KaPA)," Ministry of Finance, http://bit.ly/1TocZYy
3 "Palvelunäkymät," Ministry of Finance, http://vm.fi/palvelunakymat
4 "Avoin Suomi 2014 –Messujen Ohjelma Valmis," Valtioneuvosto ja ministeriöt, http://bit.ly/1KFL6nN

Theme 4. Government as an enabler

4.1. Remove barriers to action for civil society

Commitment Text:

A campaign of "inform about barriers" will be started in year 1 of the Action Plan. In this campaign one can report about barriers, obstacles or hindrances in public administration. This will help to prioritize open citizen debate and fixing issues that are in the way of devel-oping services for instance by updating legislation, guidelines or web services. Also in year 1 of the Action Plan consultation guidelines are updated so, that engaging citizens in consultation process always includes a commitment to process the results. The Open Knowledge Forum Finland will actively monitor and report of the creation of applications using open data and their implementation.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): Association for Local and Regional Authorities, Open Ministry (CSO), Ministry of Justice, Network Democracy Association

Start Date: 15 October 2013.....   End Date: 31 May 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Moderate	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
4.1. Overall		✔					✔		
4.1.1. "Inform about barriers"	Withdrawn					✔			
4.1.2. Update consultation guidelines			✔				✔		
4.1.3. Monitor and report on open data apps	✔					✔			

Policy aim

Prior to the OGP process, civil society did not see the government as an enabler for civil society action. This commitment's milestone—to tear down barriers of action for civil society through a campaign where citizens could report obstacles they encounter in public administration—is the outcome of the civil society representatives' request during the action plan consultation phase.

Status

Midterm: Limited

The commitment could have been ambitious, but the government realized the milestones only on a small-scale that had limited impact. With the exception of the updated consultation guidelines, which have yet to be published, the commitment would do little to decrease government barriers. Government and civil society had trouble finding common ground. Civil society actors wanted stronger wording for the campaign, focusing on mistakes and bad practices in public administration, while government representatives argued for a more positive approach. Additionally, the campaign lacked a budget and clear communication channels between government and civil society representatives.

End-of-term: Limited

By the end of the reporting period, the remaining two milestones were not completed:

- 4.1.2: The IRM researchers were unable to confirm from public information sources whether the consultation guidelines had been published or if other ministries implemented them.
- 4.1.3: The IRM researchers were unable to confirm from public information sources whether open data applications are reported to the government.

The government's internal survey did not mention progress on this commitment.

Did it open government?

The overall impact of this commitment in opening government was greatly hampered by the inability of government and civil society to find common ground on how to promote awareness of barriers to access. The two other milestones, updating consultation guidelines and reporting on open data applications, had limited completion. That limited their ability to change the status quo of access to government. Therefore, the IRM researchers found this commitment to be only a minor step towards opening the government.

Carried forward?

The consultation guidelines should be updated as planned, including making monitoring and reporting on open data applications publicly available.

4.2. Proactive presence and accessibility of civil servants

Commitment Text:

We will create a voluntary openness agent's role in the Year 1 of the Action Plan and spread the concept to all agencies. The civil servants can register voluntarily to become openness agents. All agencies will be informed of openness and leaders and managers will be asked to commit to being openness leaders. Openness agents and leaders are available to citizens and keep contact with each other to promote openness in public administration.

Starting in the Year 2, a yearly prize is given out to a representative from each level of the public administration, possibly in connection with democracy prize. The basis for the reward is that the person has enabled civic society action in his/her own work. The reward is given yearly to one representative from municipal, one from regional, and one from state central administration. Civic organizations will offer training to civil servants in engaging citizens in consultation process. Civil servants are encouraged to participate in this training.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): Association for Local and Regional Authorities, Ministry of Justice, Open Ministry (CSO), Open Knowledge Finland

Start Date: 1 July 2013................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: High • Potential impact: Minor	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
4.2. Overall			✔				✔		
4.2.1. Create an openness agent's role and enroll agents				✔				✔	
4.2.2. Award a civil servant enabling civil society action				✔			✔		
4.2.3. Education about engagement in consultation	✔						✔		

Policy aim

CSOs can find it challenging to respond to calls about consulting on legislative drafts, and citizens can feel that the government only informs them of public administration projects at a late stage. The proactive presence of civil servants can provide CSOs and citizens with better opportunities to participate. The commitment to the proactive presence and accessibility of civil servants aims to promote openness in public administration.

Status
Midterm: Substantial

Prior to the OGP process, civil servants' contact information was already publicly available. After OGP action plan implementation, the situation is largely unchanged, as the efforts were small-scale. Two outputs, openness leaders (milestone 4.2.1) and a prize for civil servants (milestone 4.2.2), did not exist prior to OGP and are direct results of the commitment. However, the government did not always implement the milestones for this commitment in the way specified in the action plan.

- Milestone 4.2.1: The government appointed an openness official for each agency rather than keeping the position voluntary. Interviewed government officials saw this as a more effective way to bring open government principles into agencies.
- Milestone 4.2.2: This milestone was completed when officials awarded the prize for year two for the first time in 2013 during Democracy Day.
- Milestone 4.2.3: CSOs organized trainings for civil servants in addition to the Open Knowledge Roadshow 2013. More specifically, in Spring 2014, Open Knowledge Finland arranged a "master course for open government data,"[1] but its focus does not match the commitment's focus. Interviewed government representatives were unaware of any other effort.

End-of-term: Substantial

By the end of the reporting period, the IRM researchers could not find evidence of further implementation. While milestones 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 were completed, the third milestone on civil society trainings for civil servants was not carried out as planned (as indicated above).

Did it open government?

The network of open government civil servants that was created as a result of one of the milestone has no doubt had an impact on the openness of the participating state agencies. However, as the overall commitment outputs have not made a significant change in proactive presence and accessibility of civil servants, which was already quite high to begin with, the commitment as whole can be considered only a minor step towards opening the government.

Carried forward?

This commitment should be carried forward, but the wording of the milestone allows for substituting it with other policy measures. Training of civil servants on engaging citizens could be organized in an alternative way that focuses specifically on public consultation processes.

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[1] "Avoin Julkishallinnon Data – Mestarikurssi," Open Knowledge Finland, http://bit.ly/1zqveiW

4.3. Providing web tools and training to civil society organizations

Commitment Text:

The needs for web tools and training of the civic society and organizations will be mapped out in the Year 1 of the Action Plan. Organisations and representatives of civic society will be offered training as well as web tools and training linked to those through, for example, the e- participation portal/environment of the Ministry of Justice.

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Finance

Supporting Institution(s): Open Knowledge Finland

Start Date: 1 July 2013.................   End Date: 30 September 2014

Commitment Overview • Relevance: Clear • Specificity: Medium • Potential impact: Minor	End-of-term completion				Did it open government?				
	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	Worsens	None	Minor	Major	Transformative
4.3. Overall				✔				✔	
4.3.1. Mapping web tools and training				✔			✔		
4.3.2. Arranging training on use of web tools				✔				✔	

Did it open government?

While it is difficult to assess the impact of the specific OGP-related activities on e-participation as a policy area, e-participation tools now are used widely by CSOs, which indicates that the commitment has been a major step in opening the government.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Commitments are clustered based on the original OGP action plan. This report is based on a desk review (public policy documents, laws and regulations, agendas and protocols of meetings of the government and its ministries and agencies, and information found on state and local government administration) and analysis of the commitments. The government did not provide an end-of-term self-assessment report before the IRM assessment, but the IRM researchers were given a draft document, including the results of the government internal survey. As many of the action plan commitments focused on internal government improvements, nongovernmental stakeholders were not able to provide independent verification of completion for commitments.

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