

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Netherlands End-of-Term Report 2016- 2018

This report was prepared by the IRM, with a collaboration from Dr. Caroline Raat LL.M until December 2018.

Table of Contents

Overview: The Netherlands	2
Consultation with Civil Society during Implementation	3
About the Assessment	4
Commitment Implementation	6
Commitment 1. National Open Data Agenda (NODA)	7
Commitment 2. Stuiveling Open Data Award (SODA)	10
Commitment 3. ROUTE-TO-PA: Re-use of open data	12
Commitment 4. Active publication of information	14
Commitment 5: Open about finances	16
Commitment 6. Publication of open data standard	18
Commitment 7. Develop the skills of public sector staff	20
Commitment 8. Informal Approach to Freedom of Information Requests	23
Commitment 9. Support to other public sector organizations: Expertise Centre (LEOO)	25
Methodological Note	27



Overview: The Netherlands

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) End-of-Term Report 2016–2018

The second Netherlands action plan focused mainly on open data. The strength of this action plan was its implementation, with overall substantial completion. Moving forward, the IRM recommends that the drive for implementation is met with more ambition in the action plan design.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a review of the activities of each OGP-participating country. This report summarizes the results of the second year of implementation from July 2017 through September 2018.

The OGP process in the Netherlands has been coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK). Though civil society organizations (CSOs) were consulted during the action plan development, the commitments were chosen by the government. CSOs were not involved during the implementation period.

Two commitments were carried out by the Open State Foundation. One of them, detailed open spending data, was rewarded by OGP in 2016. The results of this commitment look promising for the near future. Most open data commitments need more than the two-year life span of the action plan to show considerable results.

At the time of writing, the government had not published an end of term self-assessment report. While specific commitments from this action plan were not carried over to the 2018–2020 action plan, some policy areas like open government and transparency at the municipal level continue to be present.

Table 1: At a Glance		
	Mid-term	End of term
Number of Commitments	9	9
Level of Completion		
Completed	0	2
Substantial	5	5
Limited	4	2
Number of Commitments with...		
Clear Relevance to OGP Values	8	8
Transformative Potential Impact	0	0
Substantial or Complete Implementation	5	7
Did It Open government?		
Major	1	
Outstanding	0	
Moving Forward		
Commitments Carried Over to Next Action Plan	1	

Consultation with Civil Society during Implementation

Countries participating in OGP follow a process for consultation during development and implementation of their action plan. There was no consultation with civil society during the implementation of the second year of the action plan. However, as part of Commitment 1, the lead institution held regular user meetings. An additional development to the institutional context of OGP in the country was that on 19 September 2018, the government’s point of contact told the IRM researcher that there is a budget for open government activities.¹

Table 2: Consultation during Implementation

Regular Multistakeholder Forum	Midterm	End of Term
1. Did a forum exist?	No	No
2. Did it meet regularly?	No	No

Table 3: Level of Public Influence during Implementation

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) “Spectrum of Participation” to apply to OGP.² This spectrum shows the potential level of public influence on the contents of the action plan. In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire for “collaborative.”

Level of Public Influence during Implementation of Action Plan		Midterm	End of Term
Empower	The government handed decision-making power to members of the public.		
Collaborate	There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda.		
Involve	The government gave feedback on how public inputs were considered.		
Consult	The public could give inputs.		
Inform	The government provided the public with information on the action plan.	✓	
No Consultation	No consultation		✓

¹ According to the e-mail from 2017, there was a small budget for OGP activities, € 70,000, and only 1 FTE.

²“IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum”, International Association for Public Participation, 2014, <https://bit.ly/2oZsFYd>.

About the Assessment

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.¹ One measure, the “starred commitment” (★), deserves further explanation due to its particular interest to readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top among OGP-participating countries. Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- Starred commitments will have “medium” or “high” specificity. A commitment must lay out clearly defined activities and steps to make a judgment about its potential impact.
- 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.
- The commitment would have a “transformative” potential impact if completely implemented.²
- The government must make significant progress on this commitment during the action plan implementation period, receiving an assessment of “substantial” or “complete” implementation.

Starred commitments can lose their starred status if their completion falls short of substantial or full completion at the end of the action plan implementation period.

In the mid-term report, the Dutch action plan did not contain starred commitments. At the end of term, based on the changes in the level of completion, the Dutch action plan did not contain starred commitments.

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

About “Did It Open Government?”

To capture changes in government practice, the IRM introduced a new variable “Did It Open Government?” in end-of-term reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation.

As written, some OGP commitments are vague and/or not clearly relevant to OGP values but achieve significant policy reforms. In other cases, commitments as written appear relevant and ambitious, but fail to open government as implemented. The “Did It Open Government” variable attempts to capture these subtleties.

The “Did It Open Government?” variable assesses changes in government practice using the following spectrum:

- **Worsened:** Government openness worsens as a result of the commitment.
- **Did not change:** No changes in government practice.
- **Marginal:** Some change, but minor in terms of its effect on level of openness.
- **Major:** A step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area but remains limited in scope or scale.
- **Outstanding:** A reform that has transformed “business as usual” in the relevant policy area by opening government.

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

Readers should keep in mind limitations. IRM end-of-term reports are prepared only a few months after the implementation cycle is completed. The variable focuses on outcomes that can be observed in government openness practices at the end of the two-year implementation period. The report and

the variable do not intend to assess impact because of the complex methodological implications and the time frame of the report.

¹ “IRM Procedures Manual”, Independent Reporting Mechanism, Open Government Partnership, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm>.

² The International Experts Panel changed this criterion in 2015. For more information, visit <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5919>.

Commitment Implementation

General Overview of Commitments

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. The tables below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on the “Did It Open Government?” metric. For commitments that were complete at the midterm, the report will provide a summary of the progress report findings but focus on analysis of the ‘Did It Open Government?’ variable. For further details on these commitments, please see the Netherlands IRM Progress Report 2016–18.

The plan’s primary thematic focus was on open data, and therefore had a heavy relevance to access to information. In general, the implementation of the action plan had substantial or complete progress. However, progress during the second year of implementation increased in only three out of the nine commitments. As for overall changes in government practice, many of the commitments actions focused on pilot programs that have not been scaled up yet and results are yet to be seen.

Table 4: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1. National Open Data Agenda			✓		✓					✓				✓					✓		
2. Stuiveling Open Data Award				✓	Unclear					✓					✓						✓
3. ROUTE-TO-PA		✓			✓				✓						✓			✓			
4. Active publication of information				✓	✓					✓					✓				✓		
5. Open about finances				✓	✓					✓					✓				✓		
6. Open data standard			✓		✓						✓			✓					✓		
7. Civil servant in energetic society		✓				✓				✓				✓				✓			
8. Informal approach to information requests		✓			✓					✓				✓				✓			
9. LEOO		✓			✓					✓				✓				✓			

Commitment I. National Open Data Agenda (NODA)

Commitment Text:

In the manifesto *Onze Overheid, Onze Informatie* ('Our government, our Information'), various civil society organisations call on the government to accelerate the process of making data available and accessible. Open data will certainly make the government and its processes more transparent for the general public. It will also allow the private sector to develop new applications, products and services. All ministries are therefore working to make the data they hold available to society at large. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK), in association with those other ministries, must establish frameworks governing how the data is to be made accessible and the quality requirements it must meet. We shall do so by means of the National Open Data Agenda. The Ministry of BZK will also support and assist other public sector authorities and the (re-) users of the data. The online portal <https://data.overheid.nl> serves as the central access point for all government data.

Milestones:

1. The portal <https://data.overheid.nl> is fully accessible and its datasets are 'usable'
2. The government-wide inventory of datasets is to be repeated and updated regularly
3. The ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations will monitor progress in publishing datasets through the data.overheid.nl portal
4. The ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations will assist other governments in publishing data
5. The ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations will offer assistance registering, finding, and re-using data
 - a. Visitors of the data portal data.overheid.nl can submit requests for the publishing of specific datasets by the government. The ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations will publish these data requests and the corresponding results on the data portal.
 - b. An open data users group is to be set up to assess the functioning of the portal. A public session will be held at least 4 times a year, in which data owners, re-users, developers and civil society organisations meet and exchange experiences and ideas.

Editorial Note: This is a truncated version of the milestone text. For the full commitment text, please see the Netherlands national action plan (<https://bit.ly/30UBDHL>).

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
I. Overall			✓		✓					✓				✓					✓		

Commitment Aim

This commitment aims to increase the number and quality of free, reusable, open government-published datasets on data.overheid.nl that aligns with the open data standard. Also, it includes an inventory of datasets, monitoring progress, and providing assistance to other agencies to ensure their datasets conform to universal standards.

Status**Midterm: Limited**

By September 2017, 11,676 datasets were published on data.overheid.nl, of which 97.9% of the links were correct. However, only a minority of government agencies participated in publishing their data on the site. In early 2017, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations carried out a government-wide inventory that was sent to Parliament. The team-initiated user group meetings that were open to the public. For more details, please see the IRM 2016–17 Progress Report.¹

End of term: Limited

Since September 2017, there has not been much progress on this commitment. While there were some additional actions taken, overall completion remains limited. The data portal was completed before the start of the second action plan period. According to e-mails from lead institution's spokesperson to the former IRM researcher on 18 and 19 September 2018, a government-wide data inventory in 2018 was done, but the results could not be disclosed yet. On 27 September 2018, 13,174 datasets were accessible on data.overheid.nl. This implies that during the second action plan year, 1,498 datasets have been added. A total of 153 dataset-owners, out of around 1,600 public authorities, have published their data on the website. This means that there is not much increase in the number of datasets, and that less than 10% of all public authorities participate on the portal. Therefore, the overall completion remains limited. There was no other monitoring activity that could be assessed other than the automated 'counter' on the website, so Milestone 3 has to be assessed as not changed since September 2017.

Though the lead institution initially stated that it offers assistance to requesters that fill in online data request forms, the spokesperson wrote in his e-mail that this means that the data-managers of the portal help the requesters to find the data, and that they keep up with the progress of the requests. With the information collected by the former IRM researcher, it is unclear what progress has been made to monitor progress and provide assistance to other governments regarding data disclosures. On 3 September 2018, the statistics page of data.overheid.nl states that the government has handled 394 data requests since September 2017. Since September 2017, two user-group meetings were held.² The spokesperson wrote that four meetings a year was considered normal. Therefore, assistance activities to support search and reuse of data have substantially taken place.

In 2018, government priorities may have shifted, impacting the implementation of this commitment. According to the website, the emphasis has shifted to High Value datasets, reference data and visualizations.³ The latter would especially be welcomed by the general public and CSOs, since they asked for more usable information rather than more open data.⁴ Also, government reports that the website is being prepared for the latest version of the EU standard for metadata, DECAT 1.1.⁵

Did It Open Government?**Access to Information: Marginal**

By introducing and using data.overheid.nl as the open government data portal, the quality of open data, in terms of meeting the same standards and opening data in the same manner, has improved, compared to having no centralized data portal. The option for data users to file requests in a single portal is helpful. It is not possible to assess whether more information was disclosed, since most of the information was, according to the Dutch Court of Audit, already published on other websites, such as the site of the Central Bureau of Statistics and local government websites.⁶ Along with the fact that a small minority of agencies use the portal, the changes in government practice is marginal.

According to the Open State Foundation, it is getting challenging now to open more government data, since the easier-attainable data has already been disclosed. They also note possible hesitation and a lack of widely spread knowledge on data technology among public-sector workers. Another challenge is aligning the information demand from society and the quality and quantity of the supply from government agencies.

Carried Forward?

This commitment is not carried forward in the 2018–2020 action plan. This does not mean that efforts to continue opening data have ceased. The new action plan carries on with the open data agenda at the municipal and provincial level.

¹ “Netherlands IRM Progress Report 2016-17”, Independent Reporting Mechanism, Open Government Partnership, <https://bit.ly/2LKp9Px>.

² data.overheid.nl/nieuws-0.

³ Idem.

⁴ waag.org/nl/article/manifest-voor-een-open-overheid, rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2015/06/27/advies-burgerpanel-actieplan-open-overheid-2016-2017.

⁵ Ilse Ambachtsheer, “Open Government Action Plan update 15”, Open Overheid, 3 July 2018, <https://bit.ly/32XbwBS>.

⁶ “Trend report open data 2016”, Court of Audit, available [in Dutch] at <https://bit.ly/2K0njlo>.

Commitment 2. Stuiveling Open Data Award (SODA)

Commitment Text:

The government will make as much data as possible freely available to the general public and the business community. If the data is in a form that permits simple re-use and processing, it becomes possible to develop useful new applications in areas such as education and healthcare, or to promote democracy and good governance. As an incentive to the development of new applications, products and services, the government is to introduce the ‘Stuiveling Open Data Award’ (SODA), which will be presented to a public or private party who has used open data in an innovative manner to address current societal challenges. The award will encourage both the public and private sectors to learn from each other’s experiences.

Milestones:

1. An annual contest to promote the re-use of open data. Each year the winner will receive an amount of €20,000. The Stuiveling Open Data Award will be awarded up until 2020 (five times in total and twice during the duration of this action plan).
2. There will be an annual presentation ceremony.
3. To promote and support the competition, a website is to be launched in 2016. It will highlight best practice examples of the re-use of open data. All entries that meet the competition requirements will be shown on the website (the competition requirements are available online). And the finalists and winner will be showcased more elaborately.

Editorial Note: This is a truncated version of the milestone text. For the full commitment text, please see the Netherlands national action plan (<https://bit.ly/30UBDHL>).

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?					
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
2. Overall				✓	Unclear					✓					✓						✓	

Commitment Aim

This commitment aims to incentivize the public and private sector to develop useful applications based on government-provided data to address societal challenges. It includes the creation of an annual contest, an annual awards ceremony, and the development of a website to raise awareness of the SODA and highlight best practices.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

On 12 December 2016, the Minister of the Interior presented the SODA during the How Open? Festival, which was visited by about 400 people. The website, SODA 2016.nl, was launched in March 2016. It briefly shows the 2016 Award winners and “best practices.” The winner of the SODA 2016 was Bleeve. Bleeve developed a site, HouseScan, that allowed homeowners in Netherlands to search quick and easy to read information about energy-saving measures for their specific home.

End of term: Completed

This commitment has been completed on time. On 16 November 2017, the Consumers' Union (Consumentenbond) received the SODA and the accompanying € 20,000 for the further development of “What does my healthcare cost?”¹ With this tool, people can compare the costs of medical treatment at various hospitals and insurance companies. This data is being collected from hospitals and insurers and via website visitors that are willing to upload their billing information in an anonymized manner. The billing information can be disclosed on request by the insurance company only to the insured person. The award was presented at the Platform Information Society (ECP) annual conference.² All 31 candidates and 5 finalists were highlighted on the SODA website.³ The third edition of SODA 2018 was presented on 4 October 2018.⁴

Did It Open Government?

Access to information: Major

While the mid-term report concluded that the commitment as designed was not clearly relevant to OGP values, as implemented the SODA award has promoted re-use of government held data. The winner of SODA 2016 used data from Netherlands Statistics (CBS), the Basic registrations of Addresses and Buildings (BAG) and the Actual Elevation file for the Netherlands (AHN) to feed their site HouseScan. The site is still functioning and according to the user counter on the site, 5, 537 users have benefited from tailored advice on energy saving measures for their homes.⁵ The app “What does my healthcare cost?” uses data from the Netherlands Health Authority. The jury report also mentions that it uses data generated by publicly-funded organizations (hospitals).⁶ Both hospitals and health insurance companies are private organizations, even though health care is legally regulated. This award has helped to bring private sector and government together using government open data and privately generated data to provide citizens with useful applications that are relevant to their daily lives.

Open State Foundation was the winner of the third edition of SODA in late 2018. According to the President of Netherlands Court of Audit, who was part of the jury in the latest edition of SODA, the app PoliFLW “makes following local politics easier and fun.”⁷ The app PoliFLW is powered by over 500,000 articles and 3,000 sources, including social media and government open data available through Almanak.Overheid.nl. Users can search information by date, location, source or by text.

Although this commitment did not disclose more or improve quality of existing information, it did create a new approach for government to engage with private and social sector in Netherlands. The government itself is promoting, proactively encouraging and supporting innovative uses of government open data so it can be turned into useful information for a wider audience and with public value. The limitation of this commitment is in the continuity of the initiative and of the government’s practice to promote re-use of its open data beyond 2020.

Carried Forward?

SODA was not carried over to the 2018–2020 action plan.

¹ “What does my care cost?”, Consumers Association, www.consumentenbond.nl/acties/wat-kost-mijn-zorg.

² “HIGHLY ATTENDED ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF THE ECP ANNUAL CONFERENCE FOCUSED ON BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A RELIABLE DIGITAL SOCIETY”, Platform for the Information Society (ECP), 20 November 2017, <https://bit.ly/3ZtMQce>.

³ “PoliFLW wins SODA2018”, Stuivering Open Data Award, Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, www.opendata-award.nl.

⁴ “Search: Events”, Stuivering Open Data Award, Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, www.opendata-award.nl/evenementen.

⁵ HouseScan site available <https://greenhome.nl/huisscan>

⁶ “Jury report SODA2017”, Stuivering Open Data Award, Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, available [in Dutch] at <https://bit.ly/2YtSoZ3>.

⁷ SODA website news on 2018 edition winner <https://www.opendata-award.nl/actueel/nieuws/2018/oktober/4-oktober/poliflw-wint-stuivering-open-data-award-2018>

Commitment 3. ROUTE-TO-PA: Re-use of open data

Commitment Text:

The province of Groningen has joined local governments and other stakeholders in the public and private sectors, civil society organizations and individuals, to explore ways in which open data can help to address and resolve social issues. The project is part of a three-year European Horizon 2020 innovation project entitled ROUTE-TO-PA, in which the social and societal impact of open data is to be assessed. The key objective of the project is to promote the re-use of open data using new IT applications. This will not only make government more transparent but will create new opportunities

Milestones:

1. A social platform for open data (SPOD) which facilitates interaction between government and the users of open data with regard to one or more societal issues.

2. The development of a Transparency Enhancing Toolset (TET) for government and open data users to accompany the social platform.

3. Formulating guidelines and good practices (GUIDE) on the basis of the project results to ensure more effective use of open data in addressing various societal challenges.

Editorial Note: This is a truncated version of the milestone text. For the full commitment text, please see the Netherlands national action plan (<https://bit.ly/30UBDHL>).

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
3. Overall		✓			✓				✓						✓		✓				

Commitment Aim

This commitment involved a three-year European Horizon 2020 innovation project, consisting of activities run by an international consortium with stakeholders to explore ways in which open data can help to address and resolve social issues by developing a social platform for open data, a transparency enhancing toolset, and guidelines and good practices.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

According to the government self-assessment, this commitment had been substantially implemented by third-party organizations. The development of the Social Platform for Open Data (SPOD) was in an advanced stage,¹ and its development was being led by the University of Salerno, one of the partners of ROUTE-TO-PA.² For more information, please refer to the IRM Netherlands 2016–2017 Progress Report.

End of term: Completed

During the review process for this report, the lead institution provided documentation via email and additional clarifications during a phone call with the IRM, regarding this commitment. The lead spokesperson clarified that the University of Salerno developed the Social Platform for Open Data

(SPOD) and the University of Galway developed the Transparency Enhancing Toolset (TET) and GUIDE. All three of these products were developed on the basis of continuous feedback by users. The users included the pilot cities across Europe. Utrecht University was responsible for the Dutch case. The Dutch case consisted of two participating government organizations: The Province of Groningen in the first two years of the project and of the City of Utrecht in the third year of the project. Both, SPOD and TET were completed in May 2018. All deliverables can be found on page <https://project.routetopa.eu/public-deliverables/>.

The Dutch case has also been published in academic articles highlighting the lessons from this initiative to understand how current open data portal's design fail to take into account the complexity of democratic processes.³

GUIDE was released 31 May 2018 and contains recommendations for designing and managing future open data initiatives. There are two versions of GUIDE, a full version⁴ available on the project's site along with all other deliverables and a simplified version in the form of a booklet.

There is also publicly available Dissemination Report that reflects the different deliverables from the project.⁵

Did It Open Government? Access to Information: Did Not Change

The commitment's implementation did not result in concrete changes in government practice. As implemented, the commitment did not disclose more government information or improve the quality of the information being disclosed to the public. The commitment's design was mainly focused on learning and research around open data. While the results from the initiative are valuable to improve future open data practices, the commitment did not have the scope to put in practice some of the recommendations and findings of the studies during the duration of the action plan period. Therefore, it is not visible yet to what extent government practices have changed as a result from implementing this commitment.

As future action plans are developed, the IRM encourages the government and civil society to discuss and use the findings from this experience to inform future open data commitments. Particularly, build on the key recommendations of the GUIDE to understand the public value of data when deciding what data should be disclosed. As well, as building a community of users to increase uptake in the data.

Carried Forward?

ROUTE-TO-PA is not included in the 2018–2020 action plan. A similar approach, however, is included in the new action plan's commitment on digital democracy.

¹ "Midterm Self-Assessment Report 2016-2018", Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, September 2017, <https://bit.ly/2K7YAkf>.

² SPOD, <http://spod.routetopa.eu/>.

³ Erna Ruijter, Stephan Grimmelikhuisen, Albert Meijer "Open data for democracy: Developing a theoretical framework for open data use" January 2017 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740624X17300011>

⁴ Deliverable D6.4 GUIDE https://project.routetopa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Policy_Guide-_v1.pdf

⁵ "Raising Open and User-friendly Transparency-Enabling Technologies for Public Administrations", European Commission, <http://service.routetopa.eu:8000/f/7ea9518595/>

Commitment 4. Active publication of information

Commitment Text:

Under the current action plan, the pilot projects commenced under its predecessor are to be continued and expanded to other ministries, as requested by various civil society organizations. These pilot projects involve the publication of research reports. Activities to date have shown that there is no standard approach with regard to the publication of feasibility assessments. Not all are made public; those that are appear in various forms and through various channels. Accordingly, efforts will now focus on creating greater uniformity. Financial data, such as information about procurement and the award of grants and subsidies, is already being published to the greatest extent possible, whereupon no additional action is required under the current action plan.

Milestones:

1. Five Ministries will make their research reports available online (at www.rijksoverheid.nl). The research reports are made available online within four weeks of the report being finalized.
2. The results of these pilots are to be assessed by or on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The House of Representatives will be informed of the findings during the latter half of 2016.
3. The extended pilot projects will form the basis for active publication of reports, and for the government-wide implementation of the approach thus developed.
4. On the basis of the pilots, a manual will be made available to assist other departments with the development and implementation of the new work process.
5. The Ministry of the Interior will support the government-wide implementation of the new method of working by:
 - a. organising four knowledge sessions (in 2017);
 - b. developing and making available communication tools such as posters and banners;
 - c. and by evaluating the government-wide active publication of research projects.
6. A further investigation of opportunities to publish feasibility assessments in 2016. The House of Representatives will be informed about the outcomes in January 2017.
7. Based on the results of this investigation, a standard procedure for the active publication of feasibility assessments will be developed under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Security and Justice (V&J). In addition, the government's online legislative calendar (<https://wetgevingskalender.overheid.nl/>) will be improved, so that for each legislative file all relevant documents are accessible.

Editorial Note: This is a truncated version of the milestone text. For the full commitment text, please see The Netherlands national action plan (<https://bit.ly/30UBDHL>).

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm End of Term		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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4. Overall				✓	✓				✓						✓			✓			

Commitment Aim

This commitment aims to expand a pilot from the first action plan on disclosing two categories of documents: research reports under procurement and feasibility assessments.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

On 21 November 2016, the government informed Parliament that during the pilot period, 100 out of 178 research reports were disclosed within the promised 28 days, and 66 were published later on. There was no evidence yet of the roll out of the project on research reports to all ministries. The manual to assist other departments was available, and two knowledge meetings took place in the spring of 2017. Government stated that the publication of feasibility assessments was complicated but had not yet been delayed.

End of term: Substantial

In the later months of 2017, Berenschot, an independent management consulting firm, evaluated the method of actively disclosing research reports. Berenschot's main conclusions were:

- All departments support the idea of active disclosure of public information;
- There is little capacity to work on active disclosure due to limited knowledge on the Freedom of Information Act (Wob);
- A fast rollout is not to be expected;
- Most departments were not able to give insight in active disclosure of research reports;
- Many issues are unclear;
- The project needs better monitoring, management, and awareness.¹

Regarding the disclosure of feasibility assessments, the government shared with the IRM a letter to the House of Representatives that stated that "...the government will publish reports and other source documents that contain information about the feasibility of a bill on the legislative framework". The letter also described what was considered a source document.²

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

In September 2018, some 200 research reports under procurement conditions were actively disclosed.³ However, these reports represent a relatively small category of government information. During the implementation period of this action plan the projects were in a pilot phase, which means that they were not rolled out over the whole government and therefore the scale of changes in government practice were positive, but marginal. Significant changes are yet to be seen. Since the closing of the action plan implementation period the project is not in pilot stage anymore and is being implemented in all ministries.⁴

Carried Forward?

This commitment is not carried forward directly into the next action plan. The 2018–2020 action plan does continue efforts to disclose public information in commitments like "Open by Design Pilots."

¹ "Report on the state of affairs active disclosure of research reports", Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, 22 December 2017, available [in Dutch] at <https://bit.ly/2Yt9zhe>.

² Letter to the House of Representatives, TK-brief Transparantie van het wetgevingsproces p.5

³ "Documents: Reports", Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, <https://bit.ly/2yibwyj>.

⁴ Comments from lead institution to IRM, during the review process of this report.

Commitment 5: Open about finances

Commitment Text:

Since 2015, provincial authorities, water management authorities and local authorities (the municipalities) have made their financial ‘Information for Third Parties’ (IV3) available through Statistics Netherlands/CBS and the website www.openspending.nl. BZK commissioned the Open State Foundation (OSF) to conduct pilots, that have been successful: all stakeholders see added value in standardizing financial information at this more detailed level. OSF is now working to implement a system in which all provincial authorities, local authorities and water management authorities use a common publication standard. The original ‘detailed open spending data’ programme has been extended to include these various decentral authorities.

Milestones:

1. A handbook, an instruction video and a promotion video. The handbook will be sent to participating municipalities. The video’s will be made available online on the websites <http://openspending.nl> and www.open-overheid.nl.
2. Three thematic pilots with local governments, to add context to the detailed open spending data. A minimum of three local governments will participate in the pilots. The pilots will be evaluated in a final report. The results of the pilots will also be published on the website: <http://www.openspending.nl>.
3. Two national workshops on ‘Open Spending Data’ (one in 2016 and one 2017).

Editorial Note: This is a truncated version of the milestone text. For the full commitment text, please see the Netherlands national action plan (<https://bit.ly/30UBDHL>).

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm End of Term		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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
5. Overall				✓	✓					✓					✓				✓		

Commitment Aim

This commitment aimed to provide more insight on income and expenditure to make Open Spending Detail Data the new standard for financial transparency. The lead institutions assisted local governments to release their detailed financial information on Openspending.nl. The commitment involved three milestones: 1) a handbook, an instruction video, and a promotion video; 2) three thematic pilots with local governments to add context to open data; 3) two national workshops.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

The handbook was distributed among all municipalities, and the instructional and promotional videos are online. The first national workshop was held. The open-spending portal was rewarded by OGP in December 2016. For more information, please refer to the IRM Netherlands 2016–2017 Progress Report.

End of term: Substantial

OSF received € 25,000 from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations in order to improve the quality of detailed open spending data, which is the main aim of Milestone 2 that was completed. In the final report on this project, 2017 and 2018, two provinces and five municipalities participated. With this activity, OSF responded to feedback from users that they need more explanatory context to the financial data. In order to be relevant to Right to Challenge and neighborhood budget projects, OSF found that location data also had to be added. Both “lessons learnt” meet CSO and respondents’ wishes reflected in the mid-term report, that stated that the people do not ask for more data but for more information and explanation, so they can use the data. This means that the pilots, though not technically scaled up yet, have been useful for learning. They gave insight to what has to be done in order to upscale the pilots.

Since September 2017, a setback occurred in the roll out of the pilots. In April 2018, OSF concluded that the method that was used in the pilots to publish detailed open-spending data was not scalable. It was labor-intensive and error-prone. The data was not standardized and lacked useful context. Together with interested parties, OSF worked with the Central Bureau of Statistics to find a method to unlock detailed data in a smarter and more structured way so that the scalability and usability of the information increases.¹ At the time of writing, OSF reports in an e-mail to the IRM researcher that a possible solution is expected soon.

A workshop was held on 22 May 2018.² The IRM was unable to identify if a second workshop, as stated in the commitment took place.

During the review process for this report, the lead institution noted that a new pilot project would be financed by the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations. This project would address the issues encountered during implementation of this commitment. The new pilot project is led by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and Open State Foundation.³

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

Though the participating agencies may have more public data available of a better quality, it is still in a pilot phase, so the extent of changes in government practice are marginal at this time. If the project succeeds and a nation-wide roll out takes place, the results and effects on government practice to disclose financial information could be greater.

Carried Forward?

This commitment is not carried over to the next action plan.

¹ Ilse Ambachtsheer, *ibid.*

² “Municipalities of the Future supports local governments”, *Governments of the future*, <https://bit.ly/3l47h62>.

³ “Pilot for Future Exchange of Financial Data” <https://openstate.eu/en/2019/03/nederlands-pilot-toekomstbestendige-uitwisseling-financiele-data-gemeenten-en-provincies/>

Commitment 6. Publication of open data standard

Commitment Text:

Open local authority decision-making

Much of the ‘council information’ currently available to the general public and their elected representatives is unstructured and not in an open, machine-readable format. The information on which decisions have been, or are to be, based is difficult to find. Moreover, it is not possible to compare information produced by different local authorities, even when relating to the same topic. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) have therefore commissioned the Open State Foundation to run a pilot project in which five local authorities will produce and publish information in a standardised, machine-readable format (as open data). This pilot project will create a basis for the publication of such data nationwide.

Milestones:

1. *Development and adoption of a standard for the publication of information as open data, in a form which is reliable, reusable and permits ready comparison.*
2. *The standard will have been implemented by all Dutch municipalities by June 30th 2018.*

Editorial Note: This is a truncated version of the milestone text. For the full commitment text, please see the Netherlands national action plan (<https://bit.ly/30UBDHL>).

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency &	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
6. Overall			✓		✓					✓			✓		✓				✓		

Commitment Aim

The Open State Foundation (OSF) runs a pilot with five local authorities to provide and publish information in standardized, machine-readable format. The commitment lists two milestones: Milestone 1 aims to develop and adopt the standard for the publication of information as open data. The first version of this standard was due to be decided in 2017. Milestone 2 aims to implement the standard in all Dutch municipalities by June 2018.

Status

Midterm: Limited

This commitment was limited in completion by midterm. Though the lead institutions reported that 100 out of 388 local governments took an interest in the project, there was no evidence of action yet. By September 2017, 16 local governments published their data in open format on a website.

End of term: Substantial

According to the website waaroverheid.nl, which uses the information that is being uploaded to the Open Council information website, 108 out of 380 municipalities are active on Open Council information. A test by the IRM researcher in her home town on a neighborhood level showed that it is a visually-oriented and easy-to-use website. She could click on the map and all the relevant

documents for the particular neighborhood were shown. After that, she could open the documents of her choice. This is useful for citizens who do not have to try to find documents by query in the municipality's website search engines or by other more advanced search methods anymore. Milestone 1 promised the standard to be adopted by all municipalities. Since there is no finalized standard yet, and a minority of local governments are participating, this milestone cannot be considered to be complete.

In July 2018, VNG Realisatie (formerly known as KING) invited municipalities to discuss a model of the standard (model 1.0) and the use of Open Council information.¹ The messenger standard is expected to be finalized at the end of 2018. Since there is no standard yet, Milestone 2 is therefore substantial in completion. Overall, the completion level is assessed as substantial.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Marginal

The number of participating municipalities raised from 16 to 108. According to the information on the website, half a million documents, which were extracted from the original municipality's websites, can be found on the website. Centralizing the information and increasing the number of participating municipalities is a positive shift in government practice. However, it is still marginal, considering the total amount of municipalities aspired to adopt the standard under this commitment.

Carried Forward?

This commitment was carried forward in the 2018-20 Action Plan as part of the commitment "Open Decision Making at Municipalities and Provinces".

¹ "Open Council information", VNG Realisatie, modified 6 June 2019, <https://www.vngrealisatie.nl/producten/pilots-open-raadsinformatie>.

Commitment 7. Develop the skills of public sector staff

Commitment Text:

The public officer as professional within the civil society

The government is expected to ‘work and learn alongside the people’. The civil society partners have called for greater investment in the public sector staff, and specifically in the development of the skills they need to interact effectively with today’s network society. The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment continues to pursue the ambitions set out in the former action plan and is devoting considerable attention to developing the skills of staff and managers. All activities focus on the attitudes and behavior needed to perform effectively within today’s network society.

Milestones:

1. Professionalisation course “The Art of Connecting”: in 2018, all policy staff within the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment will have attended a professionalisation course
2. Work processes: By the end of 2017, all work processes will have been adapted.
3. Approach Strengthening Professional Skills: in 2017 the Approach Strengthening Professional Skills will start.
4. Communities of Practice: staff who have followed the professionalisation course “The Art of Connecting”, will come together in a peer review setting and, based on actual case studies, exchange experiences of acting in the different roles.
5. Management professionalisation: by the end of 2017, all managers within Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment will have received training in interaction with their networking staff.
6. Providing input for formulating ambitions for the public sector as a whole.

Editorial Note: This is a truncated version of the milestone text. For the full commitment text, please see the Netherlands national action plan (<https://bit.ly/30UBDHL>).

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm End of Term		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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding	
7. Overall		✓				✓				✓				✓				✓				

Commitment Aim

The main objective of this commitment was to professionalize public officers in the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment to interact with civil society. The six milestones outline the specific course, activities, community of practice, and general training of staff.

Status

Midterm: Limited

According to the government mid-term self-assessment report,¹ six out of the 11 planned tranches (groups) of the course “The Art of Connecting” (Milestone 1) had taken place by June 2017. The self-

assessment report stated that in the second half of 2017, the work process (Milestone 2) in some 10-15 policy files would be adapted. The third milestone was included in a revised version of the action plan in early 2017. In 2016 and 2017, two Communities of Practice (Milestone 4) were held. The report on Milestone 5 is unclear. As for Milestone 6, an “Energetic Civil Servant” workshop was held during the How Open? Festival on 12 December 2016.² The project leader told the former IRM researcher at that time there were no (publicly-available) records on any of the milestones, because the nature of this commitment was about process and culture change.

End of term: Substantial

On 27 September 2018, the lead institution’s spokesperson provided the former IRM researcher a table that showed that 87% (around 825 people) of the policy officials have followed the workshop “The Art of Connecting” in Milestone 1.³ According to the lead implementing institution, by that time all 11 tranches had taken place.⁴ There are two external pieces that record the workshops taking place⁵. The lead implementing agency shared an evaluation report of the workshops with the IRM that highlights lessons from the series of courses.⁶

The lead institution reports that Approach Strengthening Professional Skills started early 2017 and continued in 2018.⁷ Activities continued after the end of the implementation period of this action in 2019.⁸ (Milestone 3).

According to the lead institution, three communities of practice took place during the last year of implementation.⁹ The Beter Benutten case study is captured in a comprehensive report that includes lessons and recommendations.¹⁰ There are also studies available for NOVI and Lansingerland.¹¹

As for the training of managers, during the review process for this report the lead institution noted that a new Leadership Program was being developed for middle management, that included cooperation across borders and the ideas from the workshops. This initiative would continue through 2019.

Though the lead institution reports that the knowledge and experience acquired by the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment in the learning pathways is shared in various ways (Milestone 6), they also confirmed they did not have concrete evidence to share at the time.

Did It Open Government?

Civic Participation: Did not change

Though the eventual aim of this commitment is for civil servants in the Ministry to interact with civil society, the relevance to civic participation was closely linked to the possibility that this approach would enable more participation.

So far, the activities seem to be internally-oriented. How government uses the internal trainings and skills to improve quality of engagement with civil society or create more opportunities for participation remains to be seen. To that extent, the lead institution agreed that this is a long-term process of organizational development and that the commitment contributes only with some influence.¹²

Carried Forward?

This commitment is not carried over to the next action plan. However, as noted in the end of term completion update, this is an ongoing initiative in the Ministry.

¹ “Midterm Self-Assessment Report 2016-2018”, *ibid*.

² “Program How Open? Festival”, Open Overheid, <https://bit.ly/2Yo1aM4>.

³ “Annual Report 2017”, Operational Management IenW 01, 26 March 2018, <https://bit.ly/2MvsCBI>.

⁴ Government response to IRM report during pre-publication review.

⁵ “Werkateliers Vakmanschap ‘Kunst van verbinden’”, Publiek Versnellers, available [in Dutch] at <https://bit.ly/3I6T3RP>; and

“Workshop Craftsmanship, art of connecting: Contact”, Van Vieren, <https://bit.ly/2Kaqxrs>.

⁶ The government of the Netherlands shared the evaluation report with IRM staff during the pre-publication review of this End of Term report.

⁷ The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment Team “Strengthen Craftsmanship for the Energetic Society” for 2017 and 2018 were shared with the IRM staff during the pre-publication review of this End of Term report.

⁸ Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment Team "Strengthen Craftsmanship for the Energetic Society"
<file:///Users/denissemiranda/Downloads/VVES%20Jaarplan%202019.pdf>

⁹ NOVI, Beter Benutten and Lansingerland.

¹⁰ Theo van Bruggen, Rens Dautzenberg, Teun Groenen, Victoria Dekker, Jacques Handelé, Els Snel, Gita Maas,
Case Study Beter Benutten, April 2018.

¹¹ The government of the Netherlands shared the reports with IRM staff during the pre-publication review of this End of Term report.

¹² Comments provided by lead institution during the review process for this report.

Commitment 8. Informal Approach to Freedom of Information Requests

Commitment Text:

The Public Administration Act (Wet Openbaarheid van Bestuur) entitles a ‘stakeholder’ (usually a member of the public) to submit an application requesting certain information. In many instances, a request for information leads to unnecessary bureaucracy and can seriously strain the relationship between the applicant and the government department concerned. Such problems can be prevented by adopting an informal, personal approach. This approach has been applied in practice as part of the ‘Pleasant contact with the government’ programme and has been shown to result in decisions of better quality, fewer objections and appeals, more efficient processes, greater public confidence and enhanced satisfaction on the part of both citizens and government officials.

Milestones:

1. A handbook setting out the informal approach, listing interventions, process optimisations and best practices.
2. Assistance to public sector authorities in adopting the informal approach, by means of a pilot in one organization and at least 4 workshops for public sector authorities.
3. Monitoring, analysis and reporting with a view to further increasing the effectiveness of the informal approach. A report on the informal approach will be sent to the House of Representatives.

Editorial Note: The commitment text mistakenly refers to the Public Access to Government Information Act (Dutch Freedom of Information Act) as the “Public Administration Act.” This is a truncated version of the milestone text. For the full commitment text, please see the Netherlands national action plan (<https://bit.ly/30UBDHL>).

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm End of Term		Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency &	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
8. Overall		✓			✓					✓				✓			✓				

Commitment Aim

In response to formal Freedom of Information (FOI) procedures (which often lead to unnecessary bureaucracy) and the costs and dissatisfaction related to the way requests are handled, this commitment aimed to offer a quick way to handle information requests. The activities intended to aid public sector authorities in their efforts to implement the informal approach to information requests.

Status

Midterm: Limited

At the time of writing the progress report, the IRM researcher did not find publicly-available information, other than what the self-assessment report stated. The handbook was not available online. Though the government mentioned that the pilot was carried out at the National Police, no results were disclosed or provided to the IRM researcher. The report on the implementation of the

informal approach was not published either. For more details please see IRM Netherlands 2016–2018 Progress Report.

End of term: Limited

Overall, evidence on implementation of this commitment since the year-one assessment is unclear, therefore its completion remains limited. From the former IRM researcher's web explorations, since September 2018, there were no activities on the Appropriate Contact with the Government project (PCMO) website pcmo.nl, other than a few links to other institutions.¹ The former IRM researcher reached out to the lead institution's spokesperson on 19 September 2018, however the former IRM researcher did not receive any further messages.

Unlike all other lead institutions, PCMO stopped blogging about the commitment and the progress on the milestones on the LEOO website in December 2017. The last entrance mentions that a workshop on PCMO was given during the international OGP meeting at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations in October 2017.²

The handbook is not published on the website or anywhere else. There is no disclosed information on the pilot. During further explorations, the IRM did not find evidence that the pilot has taken place at the National Police or anywhere else. The same can be said about the workshops in Milestone 2. According to the parliamentary website, no letter or report was sent to Parliament.³

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did not change

Given the lack of evidence and limited completion of this commitment, the IRM cannot adequately assess the extent of changes in government practice.

In addition to the lack of evidence of how this commitment was implemented, the language of the commitment does not provide clear criteria or descriptions of the intended informal approach.

Carried Forward?

This commitment is not included in the next action plan.

¹ "Appropriate Contact with the Government", The Responsive Government, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, www.prettigcontactmetdeoverheid.nl.

² Ilse Ambachtsheer, "Successful international Open Government meeting at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations", Open Overheid, 1 November 2017, <https://bit.ly/2OnyBuo>. The storify link does not work, so this could not be assessed. See also: Ilse Ambachtsheer, "Using Open Government to Build Trust", Open Overheid, 19 October 2017, www.open-overheid.nl/open-overheid/ogp-bijeenkomst-den-haag.

³ zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/zoeken/parlementaire_documenten.

Commitment 9. Support to other public sector organizations: Expertise Centre (LEOO)

Commitment Text:

The Leer- en Expertisepunt Open Overheid (Open Government Expertise Centre; LEEO) identifies relevant issues and assists public sector organizations in arriving at an appropriate response. LEEO collates and disseminates relevant knowledge and (co-) organises various meetings about Open Government. Through LEEO, the Ministry of BZK wishes to strengthen the position of all public sector organizations as they implement policy and legislation. LEEO will provide support based on three distinct functions: knowledge broker, facilitator and platform which helps to increase the visibility of Open Government activities.

Milestones:

1. 10 (2016) and 6 (2017) further knowledge instruments, such as a factsheet about the new Reuse of Government Information Act 2015 and a self-scan Open Government. All knowledge instruments are published on the website www.openoverheid.nl/
2. 40 meetings to include one major conference attended by at least four hundred delegates, a year event Open Government (in 2017) and meetings for all lead implementing agencies.
3. Personal coaching processes and one-to-one meetings for managers and government staff.
4. 5 (2016) and 4 (2017) training modules and support programmes for educational institutes.
5. 120 additional national or international initiatives dealing with Open Government.
6. New interviews and other content to be published on the Open Government website every two or three weeks.

Editorial Note: This is a truncated version of the milestone text. For the full commitment text, please see The Netherlands national action plan (<https://bit.ly/30UBDHL>).

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm End of Term		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	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
9. Overall		✓			✓					✓					✓		✓				

Commitment Aim

The Open Government Expertise Centre (Leer- en Expertisepunt Open Overheid, LEEO) aims to identify relevant issues in the field of open government and assists public sector organizations to deal with these issues. The main goal of LEEO is to support lead agencies in the action plan and other public sector organizations by brokering information, advising, and increasing the visibility of open government activities.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

All knowledge instruments were published on open-overheid.nl. The How Open? Festival was organized. The number of meetings exceeded the numbers mentioned in the milestones by far. Milestone 4 was under way; LEOO had participated in learning networks. Milestones 5 and 6 were also fully complete.

End of term: Substantial

Milestones 2, 3, 5, and 6 were already completed at midterm, which left Milestones 1 and 4 to be assessed. The former IRM researcher received information on a self-scan from the lead institution's spokesperson. This was the only pending knowledge instrument from the year-one implementation assessment.¹ According to the implementing entity the commitment intended the five training modules and support programs already underway during the midterm assessment. During the second year of implementation, blogs, entries, and other content continued to be placed on the Open Government website.

Did It Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

LEOO's activities orient toward other public sector organizations. The government did not directly disclose more information or improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public. While this commitment intended to improve the government's capacity and knowledge around open government and the Reuse of Government Information Act, actual changes in practices as a result of this capacity building are not yet evident.

Carried Forward?

This commitment is not carried over to the next action plan. Nonetheless, the LEOO will continue to support new commitments in the 2018–2020 action plan, like the Pioneer Network of Open Government Municipalities.

¹ Drs. A.G. Terlien, "Quick scan openheid en transparantie", Open Overheid, 27 September 2016, available [in Dutch] at <https://bit.ly/2YanXeR>.

Methodological Note

End-of-term reports are based on desk research and interviews with governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders. The IRM reports build on the findings of the government’s self-assessment report; other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector or international organizations; and the previous IRM progress report.

For this report, the IRM collaborated with Dr. Caroline Raat LLM, an independent researcher, until December 2018. Dr. Raat informed an initial draft of this report, which IRM staff used to build on and produce the final IRM report.

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

