



# CITTÀ DI PALERMO

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Dear OGP Local team,

My name is Antonio Le Donne. I'm Secretary General of the Municipality of Palermo. I write on behalf of the Mayor, Leoluca Orlando, who appointed me as the responsible for the participation in the Italian Open Government National Action Plan and for the implementation of the commitment taken by our local government. This responsibility brought me, in accordance with our Mayor, to start our candidacy to OGP Local. I write this letter to confirm our local government willingness and commitment to take part in the program.

Palermo is the capital of the autonomous region of Sicily. The population of Palermo urban area is estimated at 855,285 inhabitants (source: Eurostat), while its metropolitan area is the fifth most populated in Italy with around 1.2 million inhabitants. The city is an international symbol in the fight against corruption and organized crime. It has been for decades the stage of Mafia wars and attacks to rule of law. In response, citizens have been showing strong civic pride, participating as engaged actors in the process of civic renaissance known in the early 90's as the "Palermitan Spring". At that time, our Mayor was one of the political leaders of this "civic renaissance". Today, during his fifth mandate as Mayor of Palermo, our administration wants to confirm a full commitment to defend and enhance democratic values. Palermo will continue to hit the interests of organized crime, fight corruption and foster a culture of lawfulness to achieve an inclusive urban development.

In this regard, we are well aware of the importance of citizens' engagement as a pivotal condition to build an open, fair and inclusive society. For these reasons we fully endorse the Open Government Declaration and we commit to uphold the principles of open and transparent government by increasing the access to information about governmental activities and to new technologies for openness and accountability, by supporting civic participation and by implementing the highest standards of professional integrity throughout our administration. Joining OGP Local would represent a significant milestone in this ongoing process and a set of fundamental benefits in order to continue to nurture cultural change amongst public servants and Palermo's citizens, not only by appealing to their moral sense but providing tools, networks and methodologies to improve internal procedures and activate forms of external collaboration. Along with what OGP Local provides for participants in terms of wide and international recognition, qualified support, access to knowledge, resources, experiences and expertise, this is at the core of our will to participate in OGP Local. From our side we secure a full alignment with OGP's strategic priorities, such as

national and local cooperation and multi-stakeholder approaches. In this regard, it is important to mention our collaboration with non-governmental stakeholders, such as Parliament Watch Italia<sup>1</sup> (PWI). Together (see also PWI's letter of interest in joining OGP Local as non-governmental stakeholder) we have co-designed our anti-corruption and open contracting approach, based on fostering civic monitoring practices. Together with PWI we are already working to shape in Palermo a civic monitoring community, strongly rooted in local civil society and counting on national and international relationships. This could represent a first basis to build in the city a multistakeholder forum which plays a great part in drafting the Palermo's Action Plans, according to the OGP's methodology.

During the co-creation of its first Action Plan, the Municipality will dialogue with the Local Forum about some specific thematic policy areas, such as anti-corruption, open contracting, transparency and accountability, right to information and inclusion of marginalized communities.

**Anti-corruption.** The Municipality of Palermo has a specific commitment in the 2019-2021 Italian NAP. It consists in applying Integrity Pacts (IP) in at least one pilot public procurement to allow citizens' oversight on a strategic public work. A set of already approved municipal resolutions regulate the IP implementation. The IP model adopted by the Municipality stems from the DG Regio pilot program "Integrity Pacts: civic control mechanism for safeguarding EU funds" model adding some innovative features co-designed with Parliament Watch Italia. On July 10th, during an online public meeting, the Municipality officially announced that the IP will be applied on the renovation and technical updates of one of the most symbolic places in the city, its main theatre: the Teatro Massimo. The project allows the municipalities and an adequately trained local civil society to collaborate in the framework of a virtuous and self-sustainable process. The project wants to show that, even in a problematic context such as Palermo<sup>2</sup>, small investments in citizens' involvement are a valuable strategy both in economical and societal terms because they can produce better implementation of resources and sustain civil society infrastructuring: through a concrete civic monitoring action, citizens are brought again to new forms of trust.

**Open Contracting.** As a second commitment, the Municipality will adopt the civic-tech tool AppaltiPop, designed together with PWI and the local CSO OnData, to share its public procurements data. AppaltiPop allows for the translation of Italian public procurements' data into Open Contracting Data Standard and for a clear data visualization, highlighting specific parameters with "red flags" for a closer analysis in terms of corruption risk, impact and spending quality. Depending on the impact of the project's action, the Municipality will consider to institutionalize the red-flagging mechanisms and to establish more stable and longer-term citizens' feedback mechanisms.

**Transparency and accountability.** As a third commitment, the Municipality will develop an innovative measure, the "Local Public Group", already included in the Anti-Corruption Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Parliament Watch Italia is a CSO founded in 2016 with the mission of fostering open government and civic monitoring practices at the local level. PWI builds creative and impactful alliances, aimed at increasing transparency, collaboration and openness, between public administrations and social actors such as educational and research institutions, media, civil society organizations and active citizens. Civic monitoring of public expenditures is the focus of PWI's pilot project. The project is in collaboration with three Sicilian PAs: besides the Municipality of Palermo, the University of Messina and the Sicilian Region are involved.

<sup>2</sup> Palermo, as well as other cities in Sicily and Southern Italy in general, trails the rest of Italy on most development indicators. Cohesion policies are designed to reduce this gap. The large portfolios of funds dedicated to the city of Palermo, and the unsatisfactory funds absorption rate – to date only 2,7 billions spent out of 6,5 billions in the last two EU multiannual Financial frameworks (Source: OpenCoesione) – explain why a civic monitoring action, aimed at an impact on funds implementation, could play a role in the city's development strategy.

It provides that the Secretary General will monitor the fulfilment of the obligations that subsidiary companies have to abide by with regards to transparency / publicity obligations required by law, the integrity of business management, the quality of services offered to civil society and an assessment on accounting obligations.

**Social inclusion**, reception strategies and involvement of marginalized communities. The municipality created a migrants' forum that is officially empowered to address proposal to the city council and government for the destination of economical resources to projects that aim non only to the passive integration but to an active contamination of cultures, renovating the traditional role of Palermo as a point of contact and exchange between mediterranean culture. Moreover, the municipality has long since joined two national programs that recently have become operational: Design and implementation of accompaniment services to give a home to marginalized communities (Roma, Sinti, Caminanti); Inclusion and integration of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti children: this project is carried out in three Palermo schools.

The Municipality of Palermo has appointed me, as Secretary General, responsible for the co-creation and implementation of a local OGP action plan. I will lead a dedicated team, composed of employees from different offices. It will count on one resource from my office (who is also responsible for anti corruption and transparency policies) and on employees from offices working on public procurements, supply management, EU Funds, technology; one more resource, specialized in anti-corruption, collaborates with the Municipality as a trainee under the master set up by LUISS and A.N.A.C. on "compliance and prevention of corruption in the public sector".

The Municipality is willing to allocate and invest economic resources to the implementation of the action plan. A first part has already been identified in the funds for participatory democracy actions, according to the regional law n°5 of 28th January 2014. PWI will contribute to sustain from the civil society side the civic monitoring activities thanks to the funds coming from the DG Regio call "Support for citizen engagement in the implementation of cohesion policy", won with a project dedicated to build a civic monitoring lab in Palermo.

About a possible dissemination strategy, we can collaborate with two networks: Anci Sicilia (association of Sicilian Municipalities), whose president is the Mayor of Palermo, Leoluca Orlando; Union of Municipalities' secretary generals. As vice-president of the Union, I'm willing to share with my colleagues the results of this initiative.

At the international level, our dissemination strategy will allow us to present the project to important stakeholders, such as: Open Contracting Partnership, already aware of the AppaltiPop experimentation, built on their Open Contracting Data Standard; EU Commission, and specifically DG Regio, who already invited the Municipality together with PWI to present this path of reforms. The Municipality takes part in many other networks where OG principles, specific approaches and results can be disseminated, such as the Network of Intercultural Cities, the Global Network of Learning Cities, The Green City Network, Urbact and others. PWI can help the dissemination strategy by building links with other civic monitoring communities already operational in our Region and throughout Italy.

Palermo, 30 settembre 2020

Il Segretario Generale  
Dott. Antonio La Donne

