

September 2018



Avoin Hallinto

Open Government Partnership

National Action Plan – Finland 2017 -2019

Mid-term Interim evaluation



1. General overview of the assessment

Most of the goals under the commitments are advancing as planned. In four goals the work is running behind schedule and regarding one goal, the plans have not advanced.

That goal has not yet been disregarded and it would not be appropriate to do so at this stage of the two-year programme when there is still one year left to implement the goal. However due to resource constraints, this goal has been at this stage deprioritised to be the last one in the list in relation to other goals. This means implementation of this goal will only start when the situation of the other goals allows this.

As part of the open government mid-term assessment 2017-2019 a discussion was held at the support group's workshop in June (5.6.2018) about the joys, threats, resources and challenges of Finnish Open Government work.

The group concluded that one positive side of the open government programme and work was that there is a versatile group where different actors are involved. In the group and in the work more generally there is good co-operation and a nice atmosphere. Open government work carries out in practice the whole-of-government thinking and enhances co-operation between different actors. It has also increased visibility of Finland in the area of open government. Open Government is also a very important topic; it is inspiring and resonates with times.

Regarding the resources it was stated that the programme is poorly resourced and that to achieve wider visibility the programme would need more resources. In the future, it would be good to have also the support of marketing and communications in order to succeed in achieving greater visibility for the events. In addition, communication channels and ways of communicating should be thought through again in the future. There are a lot of projects and events. On one part this is very good but it is also straining resource-wise.

A challenge and burden is the link to the overall open government development of the OGP and how these link to each other. There is a threat that OGP becomes a bubble, where only those motivated and interested are active, but where the work does not necessarily reach wider. It is very important to get leaders and communication officers better involved in the work. To the next action plan the list of commitments should be prioritised even more strictly. The issues are difficult and thus how to be more concrete and what is the link of the assessments to the actual work, should also be further looked into.

This self-assessment does not include everything that has been done in these areas in Finland. It concentrates mostly on the ones directly linked to the project.

2. Background

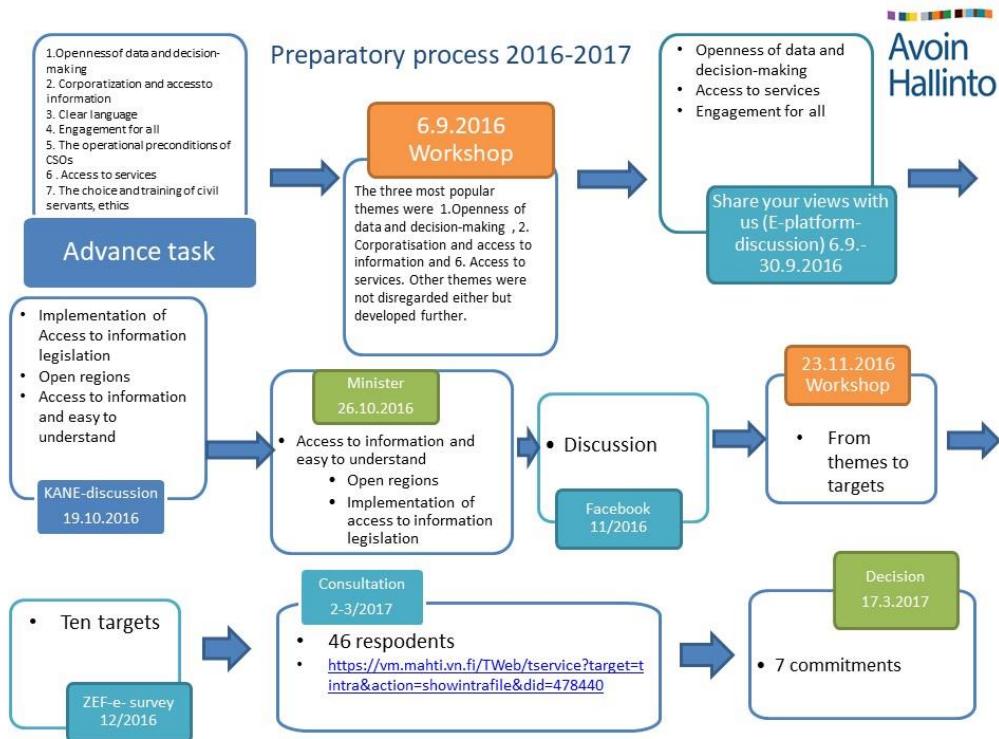
Finland joined the Open Government Partnership in 2013. The project has a Finnish name “Avoin hallinto” under which it operates. As Finland is a bilingual country, the project has a Swedish name as well “Öppen Förvaltning”. The work is co-ordinated in the Ministry of Finance, but it covers the whole public sector and thus work is done in co-operation with ministries, agencies and municipalities to open government procedures and data. The work aims at securing citizens’ and civil society organisations’ possibilities to take part on developing the Finnish society and fighting corruption.

A project group consisting of representatives from civil society organisations, ministries, agencies, municipalities, researches and journalists supports the Open government work through the term 2017-2019. The work is steered by the Advisory board for the civil society that was set up by the Ministry of Justice (KANE). In addition to these, the networks play an especially important role. The network on state administration level includes members from ministries and agencies. Through and with this network the implementation of the key targets is secured. On the municipal level, a Democracy network for municipalities is co-ordinated by the Association of Local and Regional authorities.

Public administration actors of Open Government		
	MINISTRY OF FINANCE	Ministry of Finance coordinates the implementation of the open government action plan. The Open Government Team is based in the MoF.
	KANE – ADVISORY BOARD FOR THE CIVIL SOCIETY	The Advisory Board for Civil Society works linked to the Ministry of Justice. The board is for a four year period. This board steers the open government work.
	OPEN GOVERNMENT PROJECT GROUP	The task of the group is to support the implementation of the national action plan and to activate actors in public administration to enhance open government.
	CIVIL SERVANTS NETWORK AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	There are representatives from the agencies in the open government civil servant network, who enhance open government in their own agency.
	DEMOCRACY NETWORK OF MUNICIPALITIES	Is an open network that develops and strengthens municipal democracy and offers a path for co-learning of different actors.
THE WHOLE PUBLIC SECTOR		In Finland the open government work covers the whole public sector. The basis of the work are the joint open government principles.

Picture 1. Actors in the Open government work

3. The process towards the National Action Plan (2017-2019)



Picture 2. The process of preparing the action plan

The principles of preparing the action plan

In the process of preparing the Finnish national action plan of open government for years 2017-2019 the principles that had already been applied in the previous processes were valid also for this process.

1. There were both e-platforms and consultations used as well as face-to-face meetings and workshops.
2. There were e-engagement possibilities in the beginning, in the middle and in the end of the process. In each phase, a different e-tool suitable for that part of the process was used. The main idea was to use the joint government systems (share your views with us and consultation portal). These were complemented with a ZEF e-survey.
3. Face to face –meetings were organised for different groups, both for citizens and civil society networks. They were organised by government and the opportunity to visit meetings organised by other actors was used.
4. The goal was to get participants also from outside the metropolitan region.

The principles were achieved to a large extent. However, for the next preparatory process it is good to put even more effort into reaching citizens and CSO's from outside the metropolitan region. Combining the e-consultations and organising face-to-face meetings worked very well this time also.

The process of preparing the action plan

The preparatory process started intentionally with no government input on what it should or should not include. There was no background material. Instead, the process started with an advance task for anybody wishing to join the process. This task was meant for collecting thoughts and ideas for the preparatory process and especially as background material for the first bigger open workshop on the 6th of September and thus basis for further discussions. The responses to the task were discussed at the workshop and participants gave their views as to which ones were the most important ones for future preparatory work. The three that got most attention were access to information and decision-making, access to services and engagement for all. Sixty participants attended the workshop.

After this an e-discussion was opened at the Share Your Views with us –portal. After this discussion, the themes were discussed with the members of KANE (Advisory board for the civil society). The board was being set and but not yet ready so the discussion were held with the representatives of the previous board that had just finished its term. In this discussion, the regional administration came up. The members of KANE brought up that they think it is important that the open government principles and themes are also visible in the regional reform and in the functioning of the new, coming regions.

The next step was to introduce the state of the preparatory process to minister Anu Vehviläinen, who is the minister responsible for the open government programme. (26.20.2016). The next phase was a discussion in Facebook. This was the phase of the process that got least participants and only a couple of comments.

Another open workshop was organised 23.11.2016. Forty participants attended this workshop. In this workshop commitments were developed based on the previous work and themes (at this stage the themes were access to information, easy to understand and open region). After this, it was possible to give views and comment the draft commitments created especially from the point of view of relative importance and possibilities to implement. In this, an e-tool (ZEF-survey) was used. Based on this survey and comments ten commitments were then put up for consultation at the e-consultation portal (www.lausuntopalvelu.fi). 46 consultations were received and based on them some commitment were joined together so that even though the contents did not disappear the number of commitment was now seven as three were joined with other commitments.

The draft action plan revised based on the consultation was then presented to minister Vehviläinen, who approved of the plan on the 17th of March 2017. The preparatory process of the third action plan lasted five and a half months altogether, from September 2016 to mid-March 2017.

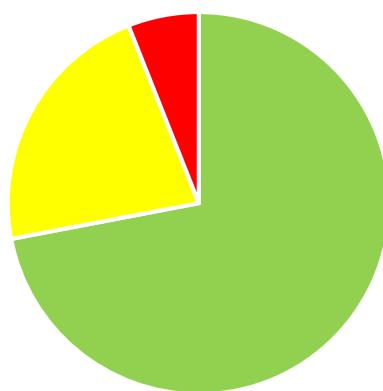


Picture 3 Themes of the action plan

4. Implementation up-date

	Completed or advancing according to plans
	Just started or advancing slower than expected
	Not yet started or not possible to achieve original target

Implementation phase, August 2018



The implementation phase describes the share of actions advancing according to plans and the share of those advancing behind the schedule or not started yet. The actions are not of equal size. In addition, there are other actions going on in the Finnish government that have to do with the three themes of the action plan. This report describes only the ones included in the OGP National Action Plan of Finland.

Easy to understand

Enhancing engagement of children and youth in decision-making preparatory work in ministries

One part of the implementation of this commitment is to further develop the day of the Children's Rights. The day of the Children's Rights was organised in Helsinki on the 14th of November 2017 in co-operation with the Office of the Ombudsman for Children and with the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare.

In this event presentations from public administration and researchers about topical child issues in the 100-year-old Finland were heard. The event handled what could be done together, so that child impact assessment would be better integrated as a tool in decision-making. The planning and organisation of the 2018 day is on the way and the day will be held in 16th of November 2018.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has a proposal for a study on the engagement practices of children and youth in ministries and in their law drafting. The financing of the project is however still open.

Enhancing engagement of people who are relatively in a more vulnerable position

As part of the Open Government week in Finland, a workshop on migrants' participation was organised on the 7th of March 2018. The discussion at the workshop concentrated especially on how to support those people, who are relatively in a weaker position to participate. It was discussed for instance that there is a need to develop existing methods of engagement, so that they would better meet the needs of these people. The work will continue in the first phase by collecting good practices, strengthening the visibility of the issue in trainings and enhancing the co-operation of the open government development work with migrant and integration issues.

The planning is on the way for the day of the councils of the elderly that will be held on the 7th November 2018. The themes of the day are the reform of regions and social and health care as well as preparing for old age. The day includes sharing of best practices, innovating and discussing ideas of the impact and effectiveness of the work of the councils of the elderly. The day will be a yearly event and the participants will include representatives from the councils of the elderly from municipalities and regions. The event is organised together with civil society organisations and other ministries.

During the action plan period also a co-operation model for councils of the elderly and of the young will be further developed for municipalities and regions. The model developed in co-operation with the municipality of Hollola will be enhanced. This work has not yet started.

Supporting different engagement and participation methods

A concise support package was made of the open government entity. One part of this package is to take up and present different kinds of ways and methods of participation. The support package is available online, but so far also 1000 packages have been distributed in paper format.

The Ministry of Justice has actively been marketing ja training the personnel of state administration and municipalities to use the joint consultation portal ([lausuntopalvelu.fi](#)). Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Environment decided 2017 that all their consultations are done through this joint e-portal. In addition, other ministries have to a greater extent moved to use this joint service also some agencies have increasingly started to use the service. The amount of registered users to the service has almost doubled during the last year. Currently the service has 2386 organisations and 7111 people. In 2016 the service was visited 29746 times and was viewed 97463, in year 2017 there were 76414 visits and it was viewed 254275 times.

Support and training for clear language

A new course on clear language has been made by the Institute for languages in Finland and the Finnish institute of Public Management to the new electronic platform ([www.eop-piva.fi](#)). The course can be used by all public sector actors regardless of time and space.

Support and Experiments for the use of different kind of communication channels

The goal is to co-operate with different actors like producers of learning materials and with You tube personalities. Not yet started.

The planning for the new Open Government game has started and the aim is to have the game ready by the end of year 2018.

Guidelines for accessibility of communication

The webpages for accessibility ([www.saavutettavasti.fi](#)) were published as beta-version in June 2018. The webpages have been aimed at public sector communication officers and others who work with or plan web content. The webpages include comprehensive practical guidelines for how to easily develop web pages accessibility. In May 2018 a workshop was organised where the webpage structure was scrutinized and the guidelines tested in practice.

The wish is to develop these web pages together with the users. For this purpose, a face-book group has been set up. The wider communication of the guidelines and bigger launching is planned in the beginning of autumn 2018.

Access to information

Widening the access to information principle to public services that are incorporated.

As part of the safeguarding of open and transparent decision-making one action is to widen the access to information –principle also to apply to those public services that are produced in an enterprise/company format. The Ministry of Justice has started a study on whether the principle in its current format is wide enough and can it be interpreted to apply also to services produced in enterprises/companies. This study will be finished by the end of the year 2018.

Preparing guidelines on how open government principles will be included in the contracts made with the service producers

The goal is to draw up guidelines about how to include the open government principles into contracts made with service producers. There will be guidelines to regions and models to service producers about contracts by the end of 2018. There will also be a campaign to take up what are the benefits coming from access to information/publicity (the point of view will be for instance: the decision-makers have the necessary to make decisions, public sector accountability, the impartial treatment of businesses) Also this campaign will take place end of year 2018.

Strengthening the skills and knowledge of access to information legislation in the public administration

The Ministry of Justice will organise together with the Finnish Institute of Public Management two courses a year about access to information legislation. In addition to these during winter 2017-2018 in cooperation with the council of state and University of Helsinki access to information legislation training has been organised. It was possible to attend this training on-line. The new digital e-learning platform (eOppiva.fi) offers in the future an opportunity to widen the training available online.

Also in the end of the year 2018, a simple checklist will be prepared for those responsible for policy preparation. Examples of how access to information and openness benefit law drafting and legitimacy of decision-making.

By the end of the action plan term (6/2019) possibilities to bring access to information knowledge more into secondary education will be mapped.

Publishing state government purchasing data to citizens

State purchasing data is now published as open data. The information content of the services are the public data of the procurement that reveal what state organisations bought and where the purchases were made. The service (tutkihankintoja.fi) was opened in September 2017 and the service has been further developed according to the feedback received. In late 2017 language versions (Swedish and English) have been added, new kind of ready-made visualisations and reports and an open interfaces creation to the procurement data.

Also new possibilities to increase the data in the service have been clarified, also the possibility to publish the date concerning the tender process in this service.

Open Region

The "Get to know your region" – campaign is going on. A website www.omamaakunta.fi was created to communicate about the reform as well as of the functioning of the regions. A guide for the co-operation between regions and organisations has been written in co-operation with Ministry of Justice, Association of Local and Regional Authorities, SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health and Social security organisation.

In July 2018 a report commissioned by the Social and Health Ministry was published (One-man committee Ms Tuija Brax: The role of civil society organisations in the regional and social and health care reform Report 26/2018 www.julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi). Ms Brax assessed in this report the possibilities of organisations and other third sector actors to function in the new social and health care system. The review deals with those non-profit organisations that have as their mission to enhance health and social wellbeing.

The question of organisations has also been dealt with in the democracy and participation network of the reform's support group for change.

Training about open government principles and ways of working will be given to regional actors. The open government principles will be updated to apply also to regional actors.

Training has been organised in co-operation with the pilot regions, the Association of Local and Regional authorities and with the Open government programme. There are eight pilot regions. In the trainings, different actors from the regions have been invited to join around the same table. The trainings have and will use the support material provided by the Open government programme as well as good practices and examples from municipalities and other actors.

About communication

In the communication about the open government work, different network meetings have had a key role. There have been five meetings of the national level network. There is also a monthly Open government newsletter and different kinds of events and gatherings. In March 2018, Finland had the Open Government week during which special emphasis was put on communication. Part of this communication were the videos and other greetings received from partners (OGP, OECD, City of Oulu, Open Knowledge Finland, and Ministry of Justice). During the week, an Open Government Fair was organised, where 11 different open government actors were displaying their open government work. These were the Association of Local and Regional Authorities, City of Helsinki, Institute for the languages of Finland, Innovation network, Hansel, Ministry of Justice, avoindata.fi/open data, Population Register, the Regional and Social and Health Care Reform, ethics work and open government. The open government fair was an event open to everybody, where it was possible to get information, relax and learn about the different kinds of open government tools.



Picture 4 The advertisement for the Open Government Fair