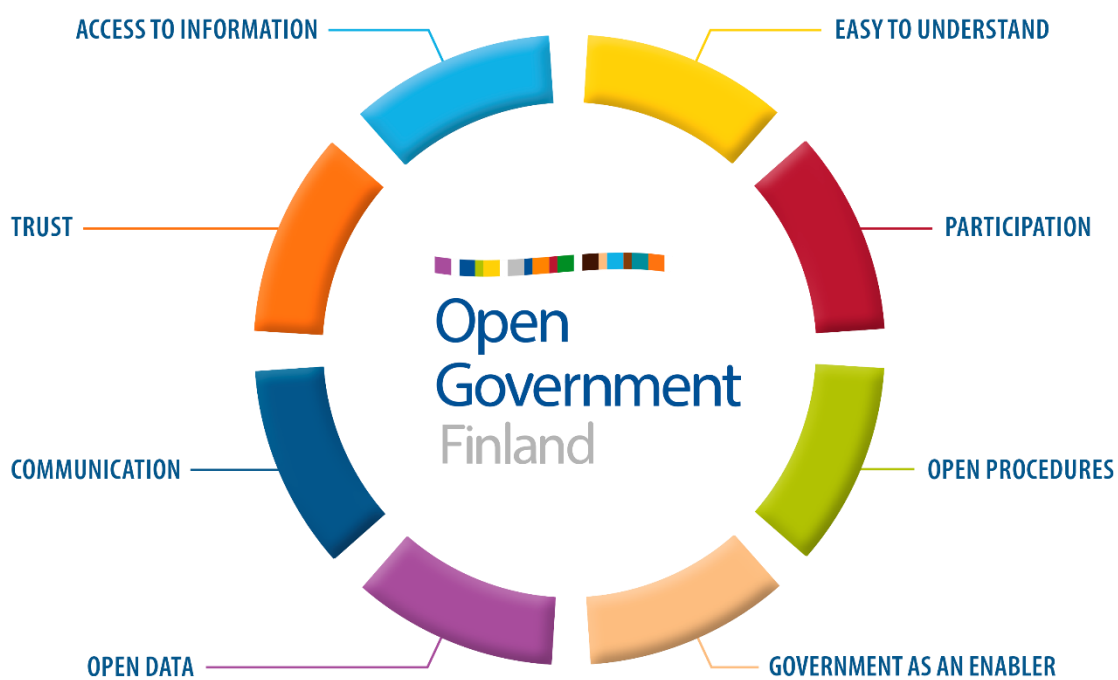


# Open government

National Action Plan for 2019-2023

Finland

24/09/2019



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## Starting points

### *As a basic value, openness is clearly visible throughout the Government Programme.*

In Finnish society and its public sector, openness is a fundamental value. This is also visible in its being one of the eight shared values that are described as the building blocks of [the central government's value basis](#).

Similarly, openness and inclusion are emphasised in the [Government Programme](#) of Prime Minister Antti Rinne. The pledges of the Government Programme on policy reforms emphasise a new kind of interaction and a need for the development of ways to engage a broader group of stakeholders in reforming society. The Government Programme explains that a new kind of interaction means both involving people much more strongly in public government activities and searching for and testing new ways of interacting (Prime Minister Rinne's Government Programme, p. 9). One of the goals set in the Government Programme is to ensure favourable conditions for inclusive practices and diverse civic activities nationally, regionally and locally. Another goal is to improve the operating conditions of civil society and to tackle inequality with inclusion. Measures will also be taken to promote equal opportunities of inclusion in meaningful civic activities and to safeguard the autonomy of NGO activities. The practices on hearing measures and assessment of impacts will also be improved and competence on civil society will be increased within the government. These objectives are interconnected with the question of trust between the various parties in society, as emphasised in the Government Programme, which is a precondition of a socially sustainable society and its reform.

### *The government activities are a shared responsibility of the entire public sector*

The open government activities apply to the entire public sector in Finland. In accordance with the OECD [Recommendation on Open Government](#), the activities are a shared responsibility of all branches and levels of government. The goals and measures of open government will be developed in cooperation with interest groups and civil society.

### *Why does openness matter?*

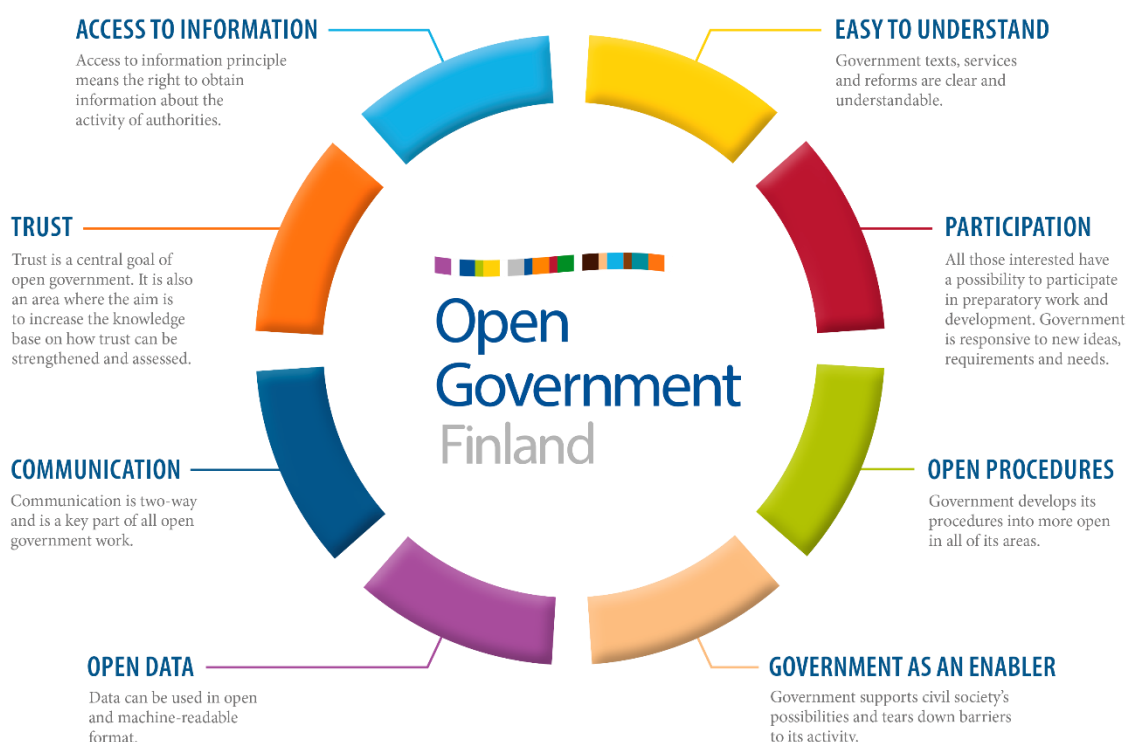
The starting points for promoting openness in the work of open government have included:

1. **Trust** - Strengthening trust between citizens and other civic actors and the government.
2. **Participation** - Promoting everyone's opportunities for participation in the development of the society.
3. **Transparency** - Ensuring the transparency of government activities by increasing the accessibility of information.
4. **Combating corruption** - Developing government openness in corruption prevention measures.

According to the OECD ([www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)) and OGP ([www.opengovpartnership.org](http://www.opengovpartnership.org)), in the best-case scenario, the open government reforms can help to

- promote innovation,
- make a difference with smaller costs,
- promote compliance with laws,
- better adjust policy outlines and services to the needs of people,
- support the government in setting more effective and profitable goals and
- promote social and economic development that enables equality and equal inclusion.

## In Finland, the open government activities are made up of eight elements



Two primary goals have steered open government activities from the beginning:

- Supporting the strengthening of trust between the various actors in society.
- Helping to secure equal opportunities for participation in society's operations and their development.

These goals were important focus areas in the preparatory process of the IV Action Plan and they were brought up in the comments, views and suggestions received from the different contributors. The Government Programme similarly emphasises, alongside openness and inclusion, trust, and states that "Trust among individuals and also among different players in society is a key condition for building a socially sustainable society." (Government Programme of Prime Minister Rinne, p. 7).

### *The traditions of promoting openness in Finland are long and deeply rooted.*

There is a long-standing, historical and strong commitment to the rule of law in Finland. In international comparison, corruption is very rare. The freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom

of assembly are secured by the rule of law and they are observed in practice. The Administrative Procedure Act and the Act on the Openness of Government Activities lay down the principles of good governance, issuing grounds for the decisions and the publicity of documents. The Finnish Act on the Openness of Government originally dates from 1776. The present-day law entered into force in 1999 and it gives citizens and media the permission to access government documents. They are primarily classified as public, unless there are specific reasons that require certain documents be classified as confidential. Furthermore, the law stipulates that public officials have the responsibility to engage in active communications.

There are over 100,000 civil society organisations in Finland, which is a very high number when proportioned to the population. The Constitution sets forth the principle of citizen participation, as its Section 2 states that “Democracy entails the right of the individual to participate in and influence the development of society and his or her living conditions” and Section 14, Subsection 4 sets forth that the public authorities shall promote the opportunities for the individual to participate in societal activity and to influence the decisions that concern him or her. The principles of openness and citizen participation are furthermore presented in a number of other acts, including the Local Government Act (410/2015), Language Act (423/2003), Youth Act (1285/2016) and Land Use and Building Act (132/1999).

Openness and public access to documents are also fundamental principles and basic rights of the European Union. EU member states and EU citizens are allowed to benefit from these existing and acknowledged principles during and in connection to the EU decision-making process.

Despite the long-standing tradition of openness, constant work and development is needed in order to promote it. In the spring of 2012, Finland decided to join the international Open Government Partnership ([OGP](#)) and was accepted as a partner in April 2013. Information about the previous Finnish Action Plans is appended to this Action Plan.

In accordance with the principles of the OGP partnership programme, Finland has prepared two-year national Action Plans since 2013. The goal in promoting openness has been to revive trust among citizens and to establish it at a high level. This is only possible if the citizens find that the structures, activities, measures, services and reforms of the government are understandable and it is possible for them to participate in the decision-making preparatory process, planning of services and development of the welfare society. The leading principle is that the promotion of openness in government must penetrate all government activities and reforms.

### ***Four-year term for the IV Action Plan IV on Open Government***

The IV National Action Plan on Open Government will cover a four-year term, as this will be the best way to support the goals of the Government Programme throughout the government term. It has been the case with the previous, two-year action plans that their term has been too short to engage in long-term activities and achieve real impact. However, an intermediary assessment will be included in the Action Plan, in which the realisation of the goals will be evaluated and an opportunity will be reserved for adding new commitments to the plan. It will also be possible to determine whether new measures must be taken, if it seems that a certain goal will not be achieved according to plan. In addition to the intermediary assessment, which will be taken half-way through the term, the impacts that the measures have on equality will be assessed from the perspective of different groups and grounds of discrimination, and the impacts on the opportunities for children and young people to gain information and participate. Based on these assessments, changes and additions needed at that point will be made and they will apply in the latter half of the term.

The Action Plan on Open Government does not contain all the measures that are taken to promote open government at the state and local level. Work for the promotion of openness is carried out

daily on many fronts. In accordance with the OGP principles, the national Action Plan contains the key elements that will be prioritised during its term. The objective is, however, that the Action Plan remains concise and contains only a limited set of goals. During the term of the Action Plan, spreading information and good practices and supporting all other work carried out in order to contribute to government openness, even when they are not indicated as commitments in the Action Plan, is an additional goal of the programme. Centralised resources worth approximately 1.5-2 man years and an appropriation of €40,000 has been budgeted for open government activities. For 2019, the appropriation was increased to €80,000.

## Commitments

The term of the IV Action Plan of Finland is four years (9/2019-9/2023). A four-year term makes it possible to engage in work in a longer term and allows being more closely connected to the goals of the Government Programme. Adding commitments to the Action Plan during its four-year term is possible. After the intermediary assessment (in 2021), a specific review will be carried out to establish whether the goals, commitments or measures of the programme need to be updated or revised.

The goal of the Action Plan is to further strengthen the three key areas that have traditionally been the cornerstones of promoting openness in Finland.

- These are openness as a shared value,
- the strong legal foundation of openness and
- continuous development of openness.

Even though the first two of the aforementioned are Finland's strongpoints, continuous development is a necessity to prevent the development from stagnating. Continuous development means that the government will continue the improvement and development of its existing practices and add to its contributions to ensure openness, inclusion and trust. This will also mean that new innovations must be introduced within the government and new opportunities introduced by technological innovations will be utilised as well as having an open approach to new ideas.

The Action Plan contains four commitments and the measures intended for their achievement.

### ***Commitment 1 Sustainable openness***

Sustainable openness means that openness penetrates all government actions and development measures. Genuine openness is impossible to achieve if the activities of the government are incomprehensible. In international comparison, Finland is a model country of openness. However, the changing world brings about new challenges. Citizens' demands towards government openness are increasing due to technological development, among other reasons. It is important to ensure that comprehensive development of openness continues and that all those involved in government operations are duly competent in this respect. When fulfilling this commitment, special attention should be paid to the opportunities of participation for people in the most vulnerable position.

Of the OGP initiatives, this commitment address all four: transparency, citizen participation, accountability and technology & innovation.

Action	Responsible party (others)	Schedule	Indicators

<p><b>Understandability - Training and support for the use of good administrative language</b></p> <p>An online course on good administrative language has been prepared. We will introduce guidelines and a programme to ensure that public officials and employees will take the course. The online course will become part of the orientation of new employees. A further goal is to ensure, in cooperation with the municipalities and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, that there is a sufficient number of people who have completed the course in local government.</p> <p>Expertise of language and communications, and a broader understanding of linguistic matters is required, not only for customer communications by officials, but also when it comes to management, decision-making and the preparatory tasks by experts in the various sectors.</p> <p>In addition to training, there is a need for constant development and maintenance of skills and support offered by the departments and at workplaces. Support is needed when new services are produced or activities reformed, but also in daily activities. The plain language programme also seeks to support the increased use of language and usability experts at public offices and workplaces. The first priority is that the language is easy to understand for the citizens.</p> <p>In addition to the online course on good administrative language, the Institute for the Languages of Finland (Kotus) is preparing a more extensive online training material of administrative language as part of its three-year (2019–2021) project.</p> <p>Plain language also means non-discriminatory language. All authorities are, by law, required to prevent discrimination and to promote gender equality and non-discrimination in all their activities.</p>	MoF	<p><b>2020 programme completed</b></p> <p><b>2021 programme implementation</b></p>	<p><b>Course completed by, classified by agency</b></p> <p><b>Survey</b></p>
<p><b>Understandability - Improving plain language skills in government</b></p> <p>In addition to the plain language skills, it is also important to further increase awareness and competence of plain language in government. There are up to 700,000 people in Finland who require plain language (Finnish Centre for Easy to Read, 2019). An online course on plain language will be organised. Preparation of marketing material that will also contribute to the purposes of the course and can be used as an introduction to plain language.</p>	MoF	<p><b>online course 2020-2021</b></p> <p><b>materials 2020-2021</b></p>	<p>A survey will be carried out to establish how many central government organisations have a plain-language introduction to</p>

<p>Plain language is in particularly needed by the authorities in the various administrative branches involved in direct customer contact with citizens or who produce different types of administrative texts, such as decisions, forms or guidelines. The goal is that increased command of plain language will also mean that it will be more commonly used and that the volume of materials produced in plain language will grow.</p>			<p>the organisation or its key services or instructions on their website.</p>
<p><b>Understandability - Wire frames</b>  In addition to plain text and speech, good visual solutions promote understandability and accessibility. A package of support materials will be produced, which will contain the practices of good visualisation and examples of successfully completed cases within the administrative branches.</p>	<p>MoF</p>	<p>support package 2021</p>	
<p><b>Understandability - Boosting the accessibility competence among public officials</b>  It will be ensured that competence on accessibility will be increased in public administration and that understandable and plain content will be highlighted in public online services. Together with Celia, a short course will be prepared on the eOppiva platform on how accessibility and plain content are connected.</p>	<p>MoF</p>	<p>Course 2020-2021</p>	
<p><b>Inclusion - NGO Academy - public officials to gain competence and NGO connections</b>  A NGO Academy Day will be co-organised by the central government and NGOs. The day is intended for everyone, in particular those public servants for whom work with NGOs is not a part of their day-to-day tasks. The goal of the day is to provide people in the government more in-depth competence on the work of NGOs, and to help public officials to make new NGO contacts in their own sector. The event will contribute to the goals of the Government Programme on boosting civil society competence in the government. Development of competence relevant to non-governmental organisations is also carried out as a part of the management development and support activities.</p>	<p>MoF</p>	<p>2020 pilot   2021 format ready and the event becomes annual</p>	
<p><b>Inclusion - The day of the Elderly Citizens Council and the day of Children's Rights will be complemented with the introduction of a day of the Council for People with Disabilities.</b>  It is important that the representatives of the councils for people with disabilities will gain additional</p>	<p>MoF,</p>	<p>2020 survey   2021 pilot</p>	



<p>opportunities for sharing competence and experiences at a national level and to carry out development activities together. The Elderly Citizens Council day has been organised for a number of years now. In the future, the Councils for People with Disabilities will be offered a similar annual event, which could partly overlap the day of the Elderly Citizens Councils. The planning work for the day of the Councils for People with Disabilities will start cooperation with the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VANE) and by hearing the wishes by members of Councils for People with Disabilities on the goals for the day.</p>			
<p><b>Enforced compliance with the Act on the Openness of Government Activities</b> The experiences by the Chancellor of Justice indicate that the compliance with the Act on the Openness of Government Activities remains insufficient. A significant number of the complaints received by the Chancellor of Justice concern the Act on the Openness of Government Activities.</p> <p>As outlined in the Government Programme, compliance with the Act on the Openness of Government Activities must be enhanced by issuing stricter obligations for government officials to comply with the Act on the Openness of Government Activities in a manner that promotes openness and by determining more explicit consequences for breaches of the law.</p> <p>The goal is to enhance the openness-promoting compliance with the Act on the Openness of Government Activities through ethical and purpose-oriented development in particular. This is because the interpretations of the Act on the Openness of Government Activities and the data protection regulations are, in many respects, genuinely borderline cases and there are strict sanctions for unlawful disclosure of confidential information.</p>	<p><b>MoJ</b></p>		
<p><b>Openness - Strengthening commitments</b>  <a href="#">The support package for open government activities and its various language versions</a> will be updated. As part of the update, materials will be added and developed in the following fields in particular: 1) enabling and supporting the participation of young people (children and young people under 18), 2) taking into account the various linguistic groups in the promotion of government openness and development of opportunities for participation and information on linguistic rights and means to promote them, 3) the equality aspect, 4) accessibility in order to support the new law concerning accessibility (Act on Providing Digital Services,</p>	<p><b>MoF</b></p>	<p><b>Support package completed in early 2021</b>  <b>Marketing of the Openness Game 2020</b></p>	

<p>306/2019) and to ensure that people with disabilities have access to information and opportunities for inclusion. The accessibility element will be completed in cooperation with Celia and other parties that offer accessible services</p> <p>The support package will also contain information on how public officials, local government officials and public sector employees can take part in social media debates and how to face and increase citizen participation on social media, for example.</p> <p>Boosting the marketing of the “Openness Game” as a means of development and make a Swedish-language version of the game.</p> <p>A training course on openness will be produced for the eOppiva platform in Finnish and Swedish. The contents will also feature basic information on the Act on the Openness of Government Activities and such topics as personal data protection. One of the modules in the training will cover internal inclusion.</p> <p>Openness and inclusion must become part of everyday tasks. It will seek to establish the kind of opportunities and means which could be used to support public officials in their efforts to act as openly as possible in their tasks in the office. The principle is that openness is deeply rooted in all of the government’s operational methods and attitudes instead of being a separate responsibility that causes extra work.</p>		<p><b>Openness training 2022</b></p>	
<p><b>Communications - Supported by management commitment</b></p> <p>A regional tour will take place and offer a forum of dialogue for the local government management, public officials and government officials in the region and the topics will include the activities on the promotion of openness, inclusion and trust. The goal is to strengthen cooperation and communication between authorities that promote openness.</p>	<p><b>MoF</b></p>	<p><b>Regional rounds 2020</b></p>	
<p><b>Communications - Sharing best practices</b></p> <p>Collecting and additionally highlighting Finnish and international best practices and tools for promoting open government.</p> <p>One important element in sharing best practices is the availability of information and its accessibility as laid down in legislation concerning accessibility (306/2019) through websites and other means.</p>	<p><b>MoF</b></p>	<p><b>continuous plans communications etc. 2020</b></p>	

Online services must comply with level AA as laid down in the accessibility recommendations.			
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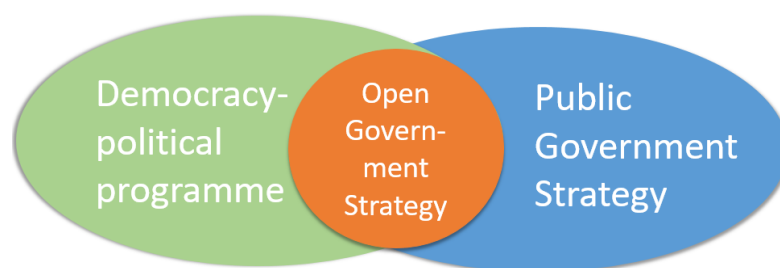
### **Commitment 2 Open Government Strategy**

Open government actions have previously been taken in Finland based on two-year action plans. The action plans have been founded on commitments and practical support measures. The Open Government Strategy will determine the direction of the work in the long term and the objectives that will be used as the basis of building future action plans. The Open Government Strategy will be used to promote stronger trust between citizens and the government.

The Open Government Strategy and its preparation will contribute to all four OGP initiatives (transparency, citizen participation, accountability and technology & innovation).

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible parties</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<p><b>Preparation of Open Government Strategy of Finland</b></p> <p>The Open Government Strategy will be prepared as part of the public administration strategy that is mentioned in the Government Programme of Prime Minister Rinne. The Open Government Strategy will constitute one of the chapters of this strategy. The Open Government Strategy will be prepared alongside the Action Plan on Democracy Policy.</p> <p>The strategic work will take into account the changes in the operational environment, which will concern electronic services, communication and exchange of opinions in particular. Developing digital connections will, on the one hand, introduce new opportunities for communication, action, participation and influence, but on the other hand they are channels that make it possible to actively erode decision-making processes and trust, with means including the spreading false information, cyber attacks and harassment of system operations.</p> <p>As part of the strategic work, it will also be explored how improved strategic observation of civil society in the work of the various ministries could be realised and when the profit goals are monitored and profitability measured.</p> <p>As part of the strategic open government activities, support is offered for the preparatory work of the ministries' NGO strategies and their updates.</p>	<b>MOF</b>	<b>2020</b>	

<p>NGOs report that ministries with existing strategies have achieved good results.</p> <p>The regional rounds mentioned in Commitment 1 are also used for dialogue on the open government strategy.</p> <p>The openness training that will be prepared on eOppiva will be used for communications and dialogue on the strategy.</p> <p>The Open Government Strategy is also one of the OECD recommendations on open government.</p>			
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### **Commitment 3 Transparency register**

There is a good legal foundation for openness in Finland. As the world changes, the legal foundation also requires supplementation. [An international comparative study on lobby registers](#) was carried out based on a commitment in the II Action Plan of open government. A parliamentary committee was established after the study and it issued an unanimous proposition recommending the establishment of the transparency register.

The transparency register will offer citizens information on the parties that seek to influence decision-making. Decision-makers will be provided more in-depth information on the roles of the parties that seek to influence them. The register will help lobbyists to provide more information about their lobbying and influencing activities in an increasingly open manner.

Of the OGP initiatives, the transparency register corresponds particularly to that of transparency and accountability.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible parties</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<p><b>Establishment of transparency register</b> In accordance with the Government Programme, a law on the transparency register will be enacted after parliamentary preparation and consultation with civil society. The purpose of the act is to improve the transparency of decision-making and, through this, prevent inappropriate influences and strengthen public confidence.</p>	MoJ	2019-	

<p>In the preparation of the transparency register legislation, the basic rights and freedoms of natural persons will be taken into account and special attention will be paid to the safety of their personal data.</p> <p>It will be established whether it will be possible to include data on the outside employment and private interests of public officials. Government officials are required to submit notifications of their private interests and outside employment. If working hours are used for the tasks of the outside employment or if it can impact the impartiality of a government official, a permit to engage in outside employment will be required. The data submitted has not been recorded in a register.</p> <p>It will furthermore be explored whether it will be possible to collect records of the parties invited to parliamentary committee hearings in a single transparency register. It could also be possible to append a list of the post-employment waiting period agreements as referred to in the State Civil Servants Act.</p> <p>It will also be established whether it will be possible to collect private interests data on a municipal level into a national transparency register.</p>			
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#### **Commitment 4 Open data**

The commitment and measures on open data contribute in particular to the OGP initiatives of transparency and technology & innovation. The measures are in line with the Act on Data Management in Public Administration, data policies and implementation thereof.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible parties</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Open data: The public sector promotes government openness by opening public interfaces if there are no specific reasons to keep them</b>	MOF		

<p><b>restricted.</b> The process will prioritise the most influential data resources. Easy-to-use, developer-friendly interfaces that follow the outlines of standard architecture will be developed to access public administration data resources. The data available on the interfaces will be recorded using standard procedures into a machine-readable and -interpretable format in order to make it easier to benefit from. The guidance needed in order to open the data and create the interfaces will be provided. A successful user experience of the data and its easy accessibility will lower the threshold of using the data and increase its usage. As a result, data producers will be more motivated to improve the quality and usability of data and data resources. The objective of this is to achieve a virtuous circle in which the quality of data will be improved and it will provide benefits, and the benefits of open data will spread far and wide inside the society, also when companies join to become producers of open data. These measures will acknowledge the outlines and development measures of European Union within this theme, including the Open Data Directive (EU/2019/1024), also known as the PSI directive.</p> <p>The requirements concerning data protection and the data confidentiality regulation will be taken into account when plans are made for opening up data.</p> <p>The project will be completed in a cross-administrative effort of cooperation, so that the cumulation of data will not put the data security of public administration at risk.</p>			
<p><b>Quality criteria: Quality criteria intended to facilitate the utilisation of data will be prepared.</b></p> <p>Quality improvement measures following the quality criteria will be primarily applied to the most significant data resources in the data opening process. Setting quality criteria and the extent of their validity will be planned to make up part of putting the quality criteria into practice.</p>	MOF		
<p><b>Ethical guidelines: A general set of guidelines on the ethical use of artificial intelligence will be prepared in order to ensure that the artificial intelligence will not utilise directly or indirectly discriminatory operational models in the AI systems.</b></p>	MOF	2020	

<p>The measures to open public sector data will promote a data and AI policy that is ethically, financially and socially sustainable. Meta data that contributes to data resources management of high quality will also contribute to the creation of unified information resources required by machine-learning and AI in our linguistic area and, subsequently, the realisation of linguistic rights in an indirect manner.</p> <p>Special groups will be consulted and the standards laid down in international human rights conventions and UN recommendations on the ethics of AI as well as data security questions will be acknowledged as a part of the preparatory process.</p>			
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## Programme evaluation

The progress of the programme will be monitored on the [avoinhallinto.fi](http://avoinhallinto.fi) website on which the information on realised measures will be posted twice a year. Membership of the international OGP programme sets the requirements of carrying out an annual self-evaluation of the programme and the IRM evaluation (Independent Research Mechanism) of the OGP.

## Programme organisation

A working group of representatives of the various partners involved in the programme (ministries, agencies, municipalities, organisations, researchers, media and corporate life) will be established to support its implementation. Similar working groups have been established to provide support for previous Action Plans.

The principles of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) entail that the work is steered by a body with representatives from non-governmental organisations and the government. The Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy (KANE), appointed by the Ministry of Justice, already exists in Finland. As with earlier Action Plans, it will also be expedient to appoint KANE as the body to which OGP refers in steering open government work also in the framework of Action Plan IV.

Furthermore, an open government network of public officials is intended to support the Action Plan into the future, to which the state organisations will appoint their representatives. The representatives will produce reports on the measures taken by their agencies and departments and post these to the network and, similarly, to the management of their agency or department of the open government measures. Several network events will be organised annually.

The Municipal Democracy Contact Network has been the network for the local authorities. These two networks will also host events together.

Another goal for the term of Action Plan IV is to improve communications of the work by the open government itself, and this will be realised by making a separate communications plan that will be more extensive than before.

## Appendices

### The preparation process of IV Action Plan on Open Government

The principles of preparation of the IV Action Plan on Open Government have followed those of the previous action plans (2013, 2015, and 2017). The Action Plan was created as a result of far-reaching cooperation and many consultations. Various parties from NGOs to agencies and municipalities have been involved. The preparatory process has also taken advantage of international expertise. The practical work in the process has included some new approaches.

The principles of the process were:

- The preparatory process includes both face-to-face meetings, workshops and electronic participation opportunities.
- The various opportunities for participation exist throughout the process.
- The electronic participation opportunities take advantage of open, shared systems that are universally accessible (otakantaa.fi and lausuntopalvelu.fi).
- Face-to-face meetings are organised for various groups involving citizens, public officials and local government officials. Meetings take place both in the events organised by the open government initiative and by other parties.
- The goal is to reach participants outside the capital region.

New aspects included in the preparatory process were:

- A [memorandum](#) was prepared to contribute to the process. The memo records the changes in the operating environment and the background of starting the preparation of the IV Action Plan.
- Matters and views that came up during the preparatory process were recorded in a memo entitled "[Mitä kuulimme](#)" ([What we heard](#)). This way, it was possible to record ideas (why being open is important, for example) that were not actual propositions for the Action Plan.
- Various parties (representatives of organisations and public officials) were interviewed as a part of the preparatory work in which the goal was to reach individuals and organisations not present at the various events.
- During the preparatory process, three events were organised in cities around Finland (in Forssa, Kotka and Jyväskylä), in which the management and representatives of these cities and local NGO activists were met.
- The English version of the Action Plan draft, which is in the service for statements, will be sent to persons responsible for the Open Government Partnership programme in the Nordic countries and Estonia. (Nordic Peer Review)





A word cloud prepared based on the ideas collected during the open government preparatory process.

The preparatory process was launched at the Avoimuuden tori (Openness Market) event where you could express your ideas and thoughts for the fourth Action Plan in various ways.

# Openness Market

Avoim  
Hallinto

## Meet you at the Market Place?

Join us at the Openness market 13.3.2019. The market is open from 8.30 to 16.30.

Openness benefits us all - How can we advance it together? Join us, tell, innovate, further develop, support and inspire. Let's make together the guidelines for the coming four years of developing openness.

## What will I find at the Market?

### Game Corner

You can develop the areas of openness by playing the Game of Openness, the Game of Participation or the Digi compass game. Games start at 10, 13 and 15 hrs and one game session takes about an hour.

### Four Corners

You can choose from the openness, publicity, easy to understand and participation workshops the one you want and use OECD's innovation tools to form development suggestions.

### Comic Corner

You can tell what you think is the most important story of open government and the most important goals for it. You can draw your own comic strip or use one of the blank comic strips.

### Interview corner

You can tell face-to-face to one of the members of the Open Government Team or leave a video message what you think should be the targets of the next open government action plan and why.

### Smoothie Bar

After the successful work you can reward yourself with a spring smoothie.

## How can I find the Market?

Come 13.3.2019 between 8.30 to 16.30 hrs and visit the Ministry of Finance Conference Centre at Mariankatu 9, Helsinki.

Please register as soon as possible, latest 10.3 at [www.avoinhallinto.fi](http://www.avoinhallinto.fi)

This event starts the process of drafting Open Government action plan and is part of the International Open Government Week.



85 people participated at the Openness Market. The event was open for everyone who wanted to join.

In the spring of 2019, a survey was submitted to the central government agencies and offices focusing on the implementation of Action Plan III. The same survey also requested ideas for the goals of Action Plan IV. 88 organisations responded. The public discussion on the website [otakantaa.fi](http://otakantaa.fi) on the goals of the Action Plan IV was launched on 15 April and remained open until 15 June 2019. A total of 30 comments were received. City day events were organised in Forssa, Kotka and Jyväskylä in May and June. These events offered a forum for dialogue between city representatives and NGO activists on the future activities on the open government and the best ways they could help support local government and organisations and what kinds of goals should be set for the years to come.

A total of 15 partners were interviewed during May and June. A list of the interviewees is appended to the [Mitä kuulimme \(What we heard\) memo](#).

In its meeting on 10 June, the Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy (KANE) discussed the Action Plan IV in a small workshop.

The Action Plan was submitted to the statement service website for the period of time from 1 to 31 August 2019. A summary of the statements and statement-specific comments will be appended to the Action Plan. A total of 65 statements were received.

During the round of statements, the commitments and the measures found under them received broad-scale support. More comments and text edits were added after the round of statements and measures were also added. There is a version of the plan in which the edits are tracked in the text; all the additions, edits and corrections are visible in the document ([link](#)). The comments received in the round of statements have been included in the plan, even though the goal has been to keep the plan concise. Some of the suggestions will be looked into before the intermediary evaluation in order to possibly add them to the Action Plan in the latter half of its term.

## Previous Open Government Action Plans

### *National Action Plan I, 2013-2015*

All of the [three previous Finnish Action Plans](#) were completed in an open preparatory process. The themes of the first Open Government Action Plan included plain language, open data, open activities and government as an enabler. The Action Plan included such goals as increasing the openness of the preparatory processes, opening data resources and converting them into a machine-readable format. Practical measures included organisation of training for public officials and local government officials on easy-to-read texts and plain language and a campaign that promoted accessibility. The use of existing phrase models in writing was brought to awareness in a seminar on the topic and working on the theme in a pilot project. The Paja seminar series furthermore featured events on decision-making based on economic models, the methods of open decision-making processes for NGOs and student organisations, impact assessment of traffic and ecological policies and the models connected to planning as well as the “Parempi Hietsu” (Better Hietsu) event for young people.

## ***National Action Plan II, 2015-2017***

A survey was carried out concerning the implementation of the second Open Government Action Plan (2015-2017). The results of the survey indicated that the principles of open government had been introduced in the various agencies in a number of different ways and at a large scale. Attempts were also made to make government activities more understandable, but there was little information on the results. Most agencies had emphasised plain language (over 80%), and these activities had been performed in many ways. Special attention was paid to the clarity of websites and online texts. There were also training sessions and customer testing and feedback were used for development purposes. The number of actual plain texts remained low, however. More than half of the agencies invested in visualisations. It was delightful to see how many agencies that responded had organised interactive online broadcasts and listening to feedback in the preparatory phase was extensive.

During the second national Action Plan, a campaign on administrative language was carried out and the Prime Minister's Office published a manual on plain language for public officials. The promotion of access to data resources took place with the creation of [avoindata.fi](#) service that contains the instructions on providing access to data and information on the data resources that have been opened. A working group that reviewed the options of removing the administrative obstacles of voluntary work prepared a proposition on removing the obstacles in various administrative branches. The Ministry of Justice set up a [website with guidelines and ideas](#) for organisations with voluntary activities and people interested in volunteering. The Broadband for All project continued in the scarcely populated areas and a total of approximately 3,200 km of broadband was built in 2015. This meant approximately 15,000 new high-speed connections. The use of electronic [demokratia.fi](#) services was promoted in administration and the civil society. Training sessions on open preparatory work and the use of services were organised for ministries and municipalities. The Democracy Awards were given out in the autumn of 2015, and the new Gateway to Information on Government Projects web application by the Government Project Register was initiated. A key goal of the Gateway to Information on Government Projects is to promote the openness of public project information for citizens. The instructions for hearing regarding the legislative process were updated and the Advisory Committee on the Ethics of State Civil Servants issued a recommendation for the central government for the use of social media on 15/06/2016.

The work on an analysis on the establishment of a lobby register was initiated with TEAS funding in early 2018. The open government co-operated with selected top projects of the government in particular to promote the participation of children, young people and the elderly. An Elderly Citizens Council day addressing questions on the housing and home care of the elderly was organised in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. An online brainstorming session for the elderly on digital services and participation opportunities was organised, with a total of 1,340 participants and the results were processed in the opinion leader workshop for the elderly.

In conjunction to the OECD Public Governance Ministerial Meeting organised in Helsinki in 2015, a Youth Dialogue event took place. National processes in the various OECD member countries preceded the Youth Dialogue event. In Finland, the national process took place in the form of various events (in Pori, Kuopio, Helsinki), through educational collaboration and the electronic participation channel [nuortenideat.fi](#). The first annual Day of Children's Rights event focusing on the hot topics of children's rights was organised in cooperation with the Ombudsman for the Children's Office, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, and the Ministry of Education and Culture, in November 2015.

In May 2016, a Youth summit was organised as a part of the Future of Municipalities project and Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland, NUVA. Over 160 young people from around the country participated in the summit. A report on listening to children and young people in the preparatory process of the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care reform was made in cooperation with the Finnish Youth Research Network. Together with the Demos Helsinki think-tank, a day for lobbying for young and elderly people was organised in Hollola.

### ***National Action Plan III, 2017-2019***

The foci of the third national action plan included understandability, public access and open counties. In order to promote the work of the open government, a concise support package for public officials and local government officials was prepared. A board game on open government was developed to support the development goals, and it was available free-of-charge on the open government website alongside a support package. A one-hour training course on plain language in administration (Kotus and HAUS) was completed on the new [eOppiva learning environment](#). Anyone in the public sector can take advantage of the course regardless of time and place.

The Elderly Citizens Council day took place on 7 November 2018. The topics at the Elderly Citizens Council day included the regional government reform and the social services reform and preparing for old age. The days on topical issues regarding the rights of children were organised on 14 November 2017 and 16 November 2018. The Ministry of Justice carried out and coordinated a pilot project to evaluate the realisation of children's and young people's right to participate in Finland using an evaluation tool developed by the Council of Europe. The Ministry of Justice has also been actively involved in the marketing of the [lausuntopalvelu.fi](#) online tool and trained central government and municipal officials and employees on its use. Nearly 2,500 organisations and over 7,000 people are registered in the service at present.

In June, 2018, the website [www.saavutettavasti.fi](#) was launched. The website is intended for communications experts in the public sector and others who write or design content for online services. The administrator of the website is Celia, an expert on accessible publishing, that operates under the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The Ministry of Justice has completed a report on the sufficiency of the public access principle at present, and if its interpretation can be extended to apply to services that companies produce. The Ministry of Justice organises two training courses annually on the Act on Openness of Government Activities in cooperation with HAUS, Finnish Institute of Public Management Ltd. In addition to these, training on the Act on Openness of Government Activities was organised in the winter 2017-2018 in a cooperative effort of the Government and the University of Helsinki. The lectures were also available online.

Government procurement data became public in September 2017. The [Tutkihankintoja.fi](#) (Explore State Spending) service is an easy-to-use, visual website for citizens, media and companies. The data available on the website is regularly published as open data, also known as raw data, on the [avoindata.fi](#) website.

A new website on the regional government reform and the county operations was launched at [omamaakunta.fi](#). With the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the AKE pilots (project on bringing the local people into focus in the regional government and social services reforms) and open government in cooperation, training sessions on open government were organised. The training sessions brought people from different sectors, including local government officials, elected officials and representatives of organisations, together around the same table.

In 2018, open government weeks and the open government date event were organised, and in 2019, there was an open government market. The Open Government programme has participated in a very large range of events (including the *Hyvä ikä*, an elderly care and ageing fair). A [map](#) was posted on the website featuring the events organised by the Open Government programme. A monthly newsletter has been one of the elements in the communications of the Open Government programme.