

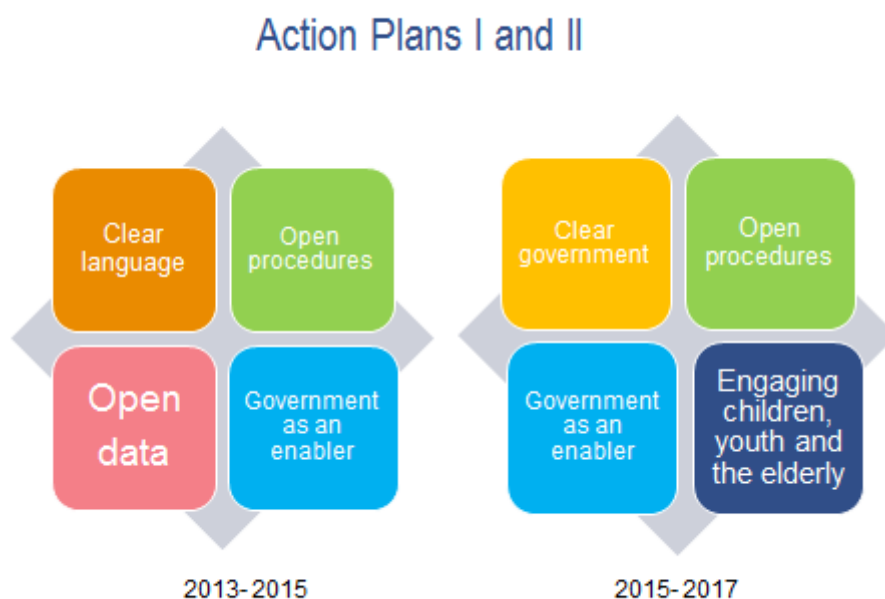


**Open Government III Action Plan
2017–2019
Finland**



Foreword

Finland joined the Open Government Partnership in 2013. The first national action plan was approved the same year. Finland's first action plan (for years 2013-25) and Finland's second action plan (for years 2015-2017) both had enhancing citizen engagement as their core target. Both action plans had four themes.



The goal is to increase the trust of citizens towards government and to stabilise it on high level. This is only possible if the structures of the government, its functions, the services it provides and its reforms are understandable to citizens and if participation in policy-making, service planning and in the development of the welfare society is possible. Enhancing open government needs to be part of all work and development of the public administration.

In Finland the open government action plan covers the whole public sector. When the third action plan starts there are huge public administration reforms going on. It is important that these changes and the new kind of public administration that will be their end result can be described and explained clearly and understandably. It is also important that the new regional administration in its daily practices and in its attitude is as open as possible already from the beginning. Openness and access to information go hand in hand. The Finnish access to information legislation is an excellent basis. Care needs to be taken that it is comprehensively implemented and that its development needs are taken care of.

III National Action Plan 2017-2019



Part I – Themes and commitments

The III Finnish Open Government Action Plan aims at enhancing citizen engagement. The themes for 2017-2019 are: easy to understand, open region and access to information. Under the themes there are seven commitments to be implemented. Their realization will be monitored and evaluated during the implementation of the plan and after its finalization.

1. Supporting everyone's possibility to participate.

Enhancing citizens' possibilities to participate in the preparatory work of public administration's decision making and development projects.

Taking care of the accessibility of engagement and the availability of participation possibilities. The different forms of participation function only if citizens can find them. The engagement possibilities of especially those who are in a vulnerable position, like children and special groups, will be strengthened.

Supporting the use of different forms of participation side by side. Different ways of participation can be for instance digital channels and services, different kinds of events and workshops, experiments and events.

Securing the comprehensive use of the consultation portal (lausuntopalvelu.fi) in the state administration and enhancing its use in the regions and municipalities.

2. Taking care that there are clear descriptions of the reforms and services being prepared by the government

Providing clearer and easy to understand information about the on-going preparatory work and the services provided by government. Using information and visualization models that have been proven to be clear and accessible.

Paying attention to multichannel information, clear language and plain language.

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

To secure open and transparent decision-making the access to information principle will be widened to apply also to those public services that are produced in a company format.

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

Taking care of the know-how of the access to information legislation and of the legal praxis that guides its interpretation. This is a way to secure that the interpretation principles are as consistent as possible in the administration. Access to information needs to be the main rule also in practice. Here it is important however to note that there are special areas and special legislation, as an example the security issues of police related to general and individual security.

Supporting the know-how of access to information legislation by taking care that it is included in civil servants training and education. At the same time attention will be paid to understandability. Information is not genuinely public if it is not presented in an easy to understand way.

5. Publishing state procurement data to citizens

Publishing openly in the net the information regarding what the state buys, with what money and from where. The state procurement data will be published in spring 2017 as open data. At the same time an open service will be created with access to everyone and where citizens and businesses can follow almost in real time the use of public money in state procurement. The contents of the service are the public data of procurement where it can be seen what state organisations are procurement and from where.

6. Making a clear and easy to understand description of the regional administration and informing clearly what changes due to the regional reform and why.

During the regional reform care will be taken that clear information about the content and reasons behind the reform will reach also those people who do not have a possibility to use electronic channels.

It will be tested with citizen, customer and expert groups whether the information and descriptions are easy enough to understand. .

7. Organising training to actors of the regional administration about open government principles and ways of working.

Updating the open government principles in co-operation to also cover the regional administration actors.

The material from the open government support package is used in the training as is also especially the experiences and practices of the region's municipalities.

Part II

Implementation, support, networks and international co-operation

The open government III action plan is implemented on all levels of the public administration in Finland: in the state administration, in the regions and in the municipalities. Special emphasis is paid in the third action plan to enhancing open government and citizen engagement in the regional administration that is being built during the implementation phase of the third action plan. The clarity and understandability of administration, the openness of information and citizens possibilities to participate are being built as part of the preparatory work of the new regions. This preparatory work will be supported by a support package, where the basic level of openness: what at least should be done so that this new regional administration from the beginning would be easy to understand, its information open and the possibilities of citizens to participate secured.

In the state government and municipalities the already well going enhancing of openness and citizen participation will be continued by sharing good practices and experimenting with new ways of engaging. Support will be given by organising theme seminars and by producing material for the open government support package.

The state Open Government Civil Servants' Network has members from most ministries and agencies. The role of the members is to enhance open government in their own agencies. Sharing practices that have proven to work well, taking the open government principles to the leadership and management groups in the agencies and reporting of the work done in one's own agency to enhance openness. Experience info cards are made of those practices that have proven to be working well. The civil servants' network is functioning well and its work will be further strengthened in the implementation of the third action plan. The open government civil servants network meets 4 to 6 times a year in network events. Agencies and ministries are organising events where ongoing projects are being presented from different angles of open government. Topical information is shared in these meetings as well as international experiences of open government. The work of the open government civil servants network is planned and developed by an open government working committee.

The Finnish Association of Local and Regional authorities co-ordinates the work of the Municipal Democracy Network. The Municipal Democracy Network consists of members from municipalities, state administration and civil society. The network develops and strengthens municipal democracy and offers a way to different actors for peer learning. The network is also a platform for sharing information and experiences, good practices, development ideas and supports development through network meetings and through an online development platform Innokylä (Inno Village)

The open government network of the state administration and the municipal democracy network co-operate together by sharing information and organising joint events.

Finland takes part in the international activities of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) especially through Nordic co-operation. Finland is also actively involved in OECD's (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development) open government work, where a new international definition and indicators are being developed for open government.

To support the implementation of the Finnish Action Plan an annex implementation plan will be produced. In this plan the different commitments and actions will get a timetable framework, it will lay out the responsibilities and the indicators chosen for the follow-up. The realization of the action plan will be assessed through key indicators linked to the commitments. For assessment on an individual organisation's level a concise check list will be created based on the CAF assessment tool used in the public administration organisations. For the agencies, municipalities and future

regions an easy to answer online questionnaire will be produced to collect information on how the action plan has been put into action in the different organisations.

International (e.g OECD Governments at a Glance) and national indicators will be used to assess how the citizens' trust towards government develops during the implementation phase. These indicators do not directly tell of the impact of the action plan, but they give a view towards what should be in particular emphasized in the next fourth action plan.

A self-evaluation is part of the OGP process and it will be done within a year's time from the start of the action plan and after that starts the external assessor's independent assessment by OGP (IRM Independent Reporting Mechanism).