GREEK Action Plan

Open Government Partnership

April 2012, Version 1

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I. Introduction

We often come across incidents of corruption, both in the financial and the administrative sectors[1]. A series of political issues causes widespread public mistrust that contributes to the establishment of long standing tendencies of cynicism, civic disengagement, and finally to a deep feeling of disillusionment for the administrative inefficiencies. In particular, the citizens of Greece feel estranged towards the current public administration model. This fuels corruption and less participation, which in turn makes the citizens feel even more alienated. Thus the vicious circle of cronyism, political clientelism and lack of citizen involvement cannot break.

The Greek government has recognized the critical factor of transparency, accountability and citizen engagement to enable the transition to a new public administration model that is looking for new ways to continuously improve the services provided to citizens. The government has introduced a set of open government initiatives aiming to introduce significant levels of transparency, accountability and citizen engagement within all levels of the Greek public administration and to establish a new "social contract" between the citizen and the state.

The major challenges that the open government initiatives will address in the next two years are: **Improving Public Services, Increasing Public Integrity** and **More Effectively Managing Public Resources.**

The implementation of this Action Plan aims to enrich the Open Government framework in order to enforce the principles of transparency, participation, collaboration, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency. Focus is also given to the qualitative upgrade of the public services through citizen participation and everyday interaction with the public sector along with the efficient management of public resources and the effective usage of funding products and knowledge transfer and support programs for implementing the strategy for the Electronic Government.

The planning of a national strategy for open government actions depict the importance of the collaborative projects in order to produce high quality services, the importance in access and use of open public data, transparency, the citizens and enterprises partnership in the development of a high organized Policy for the Electronic Government.

Improving Public Services

Despite the increased amount of effort, the public services offered have not significantly improved during the past years. This is partially due to the existing unfavorable financial situation. Citizens often have to resort to services offered by the private sector, especially for health and education.

In order to improve the quality of public services, as well as offer any additional ones required, the government will work in close collaboration with social partners and citizens alike. Their

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[1] The Global Corruption Report, 2009, Transparency International

input is required, in the form of suggestions, complaints, ideas, and comments. This will be a valuable feedback, as well as a control mechanism, for the process of improvement.

Increasing Public Integrity

Corruption in the public sector is highly extended and there is significant development cost associated with the poor governance - mostly in the financial sector. These appear in the form of lower growth and lower efficiency, as well as greater risks of instability, social exclusion and poverty, and this is why focus is given to Increasing Public Integrity.

In order to increase public integrity, a series of measures will be taken towards an open access to information, as well as the accountability of each public servant, each public administration organization (in any level), and each decision maker of the government.

More Effectively Managing Public Resources

A series of measures undertaken for the national strategy for open government include actions that address the efficient management of the State budget and Public Procurement processes also focusing on the effective usage of foreign assistance and financing either through funding products for ICT businesses or through knowledge transfer and support to design and implement this strategy.

In addition, measures will be taken towards the restructuring of the Greek Public Sector with focus on the provision of a Human Capital Management System aiming to shift bureaucratic culture to citizen-oriented culture, cut down on budget costs and administrative burden deriving from disproportionate organizational structures, coordinate in a uniform and transparent way all human capital management policies and develop public servants to meet current citizens' needs.

II. Efforts to Date

Greece has implemented important innovative actions towards open governance, basically aiming to promote transparency, to reinforce citizen participation in governmental decision making, to provide free and unobstructed provision of public information, to implement a single point of contact for services to citizens and businesses as well as other actions to empower participatory democracy through electronic governance. In addition, the law on e–governance (http://egovplan.gr), approved by the parliament on the 24th of May 2011, introduces many innovations, such as the right of citizens to transact with public authorities using ICT and forms a robust legislative framework for the use of ICT throughout the public administration. Following are the most important actions aiming open governance. Further information on all relevant actions could be found at ogp.opengov.gr.

1. The Transparency Program (Di@vgeia)

The Transparency program is the **flagship transparency initiative** of the Greek government. It is a combination of legal (Law 3861/2010) and technical (et.diavgeia.gov.gr) measures to

enforce the mandatory publishing of all government decisions, across all public bodies, beginning October 1st, 2010. **Each document is digitally signed and assigned a unique Internet Uploading Number (IUN)** certifying that the decision has been uploaded. Government decision cannot be implemented unless they have been first uploaded on the Di@vgeia website.

The Transparency program introduces unprecedented levels of transparency within all levels of the Greek public administration, establishing **a new "social contract" between the citizen and the state**, reaffirming the social mandate for accountable governance.
The main objectives of the program are:
- To safeguard the transparency of governmental actions
- To assist in the elimination of corruption by exposing it more easily when it takes place
- To provide an accountable decision making process for the public administration
- To reinforce the citizens constitutional right to participate in the Information Society
- To provide all governmental decisions in formats that are easy to access, navigate and comprehend, regardless of the knowledge level of the inner processes of the administration by the average citizen

The most important innovation of the Transparency program is its **holistic approach towards e-Government**. The program is not only an ICT system, but rather a combination of closely interrelated legal frameworks, operational processes and technological instruments. Another innovation of the program is that it's deeply founded on collaborative, bottom-up governance policies, which cultivated and established deep cultural changes in the public administration.

Further, the technological implementation model of the Transparency program is based on an agile strategy embracing "open content" and "open architecture". In this way, citizens and enterprises are able to build added value applications and services using the program's open content api (opendata.diavgeia.gov.gr). The platform was developed in-house, by [GRNET](https://) (Greek Research & Technology Network) using open source software and is hosted on virtual machines, by repurposing existing infrastructure already owned by the public sector.

Critical Success Factors for the Transparency program were, among others, the **collaborative development** and **work ethic**, the **involvement of the Civil Society**, and implementation of tools for **Public Sector Information (PSI) re-use and access**.

Statistics
4.102.137 : Published Decisions / 3.296 : Institutions obliged to publish their decisions
15.000 decisions / per day: Upload rate 17.000 / Active users

Visit: http://et.diavgeia.gov.gr

2. Open e-deliberation and recruitment (opengov.gr)

Opengov.gr is designed to serve the principles of transparency, deliberation, collaboration and accountability. It includes two basic initiatives: **Open calls for the recruitment of public administration officials, and Electronic, open-deliberation for participatory rule making.** The citizens' needs for timely information as well as their participation into public affairs, consist the central scope of the opengov project.

Draft legislative acts and governmental policy initiatives are posted to a blog like platform for deliberation, prior to their finalization. Citizens and organizations are invited to post their

comments, suggestions and criticisms article-by-article. All submitted comments are collected and processed by the relevant authorities and in many cases they are incorporated in the final text.

In October 2010 Labs.OpenGov was launched, as a new experimental attempt in engaging corporate and non-corporate users into generating sophisticated and immediately applicable ideas for crowd-sourced policy making in the field of ICT. It is an open innovations web laboratory that brings together experts from the technological community and institutions that manage information technology projects for the public sector and citizens.

The OpenGov platform was developed in-house, by the GRNET using open source software and it is now supported by the Greek Centre of Public Administration. It is hosted on virtual machines, by repurposing existing infrastructure and underutilized ICT resources already owned by the public sector.

Statistics
239: Deliberations/ 76.601 : Comments
14: Ministries / 140: Open Calls / 2.010: public administration positions / 38.866: Applications
3.111 : Members / 850 : Documented proposals / 2.009 : Comments / 5 : Thematic Cycles

Visit: http://www.opengov.gr

3. GeoData

Geodata.gov.gr is a catalogue and a web mapping framework providing open geospatial data to citizens.

Geodata.gov.gr during its first days of operation was one out of eight governmental services worldwide providing open geospatial data to citizens. Operating for less than 20 months, geodata.gov.gr has succeeded in providing savings of more than 20M Euros for the public administration (data re-use), and has aided hundreds of SMEs, engineers, and researchers in their work.

The service aims to achieve economies of scale for geospatial data through data re-use, enhance the repurpose and efficient exploitation of government owned infrastructures through virtualization technologies, and improve environmental protection. Geodata.gov.gr promotes the national and European agenda towards open Public Sector Information (PSI) in the framework of Digital Europe / Digital Greece 2020.

The service is designed, developed, and maintained by the Institute for the Management of Information Systems / "Athena" Research Center , and is built exclusively on open source technologies and standards.

Statistics
330.000 unique visitors /109 countries /1000 unique daily visitors
350GB geospatial data / 179 datasets / 18TB data served
20M Euros direct savings for public sector / 50% use geodata.gov for business related activities

Visit: http://Geodata.gov.gr

4. Startup Greece

Startup Greece is an information, networking and collaboration space, aimed at creating a new generation of entrepreneurs in Greece. Through Startup Greece, citizens, organizations, associations, research institutes, social and economic entities, are invited to share their valuable knowledge and experience and add value to the Initiative with their people and ideas. It is supported by the Ministry of Regional Growth and Competitiveness and the Greek Government in collaboration with communities of young entrepreneurs.

The project:
- provides entrepreneurs with the information necessary to start their own business (motivation, funding, legal framework, research material)
- utilizes social media to bring together people, ideas, corporations, universities, organizations, and create creative partnerships and investment opportunities
- provides citizens with valid and timely answers
- promotes online democracy, dialogue and accountability

Visit: http://www.startupgreece.gov.gr

5. Government Portal ERMIS

The Government Portal ERMIS provides information and secure e-transactions to citizens and businesses. Its main purpose is to collect and organize the public sector's available information in a structured way so that it can be made available to all citizens and businesses. This means that ERMIS aims to serve as the single point of contact for the transactions between the citizens and businesses and the various Public Administration Authorities, utilizing integrated and secure e-Government services. In order to uphold the aforementioned role, ERMIS is based on open standards and interoperability principles.

From an operational point of view, the work is based on three fundamental axes that involve:
- The complete collection and organization of all required information from all the Public Administration Organizations and subsequently its distribution via the Internet.
- The development of essential infrastructure facilities for providing and supporting interoperability between the different Public Administration information systems. Also the development of electronic services and their provision from a single central point.
- The deployment of different authentication methods to deal with requirements that the use of e-services dictates. These methods vary from the common username - password scheme to the strongest method of digital certificates combined with the use of smart cards. Regarding digital certificates, the following are provided for citizens / businesses and for civil servants:
  - Certificate for Digital Signatures and Authentication: used for qualified electronic signatures.
  - Certificate for Encryption: used for providing confidentiality on exchanged data and documents.

Statistics
3.900: Service Documents & Forms / 217: e-Services (Levels 3 & 4) / 13 :(Level 5)

Visit: http://www.ermis.gov.gr

6. Financing assistance for ICT investments in Greece

A set of Funded Risk Sharing Products are offered to facilitate Greek businesses to access financing, in order to invest in technological innovation, in an outward-looking perspective. Equities (Seed and Early Stage funds), loans with special interest rates and direct grants are the **tools which Greek Government utilizes to achieve a new ecosystem for ICT investments in Greece**.

In particular, in collaboration with the **European Investment Fund (EIF)**, managing the implementation of the **JEREMIE** initiative in Greece, three agreements have been signed with three Greek banks providing total lending of EUR 180m to SMEs, operating in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector or making ICT related investments. These products are co-financed and risk-shared by the Operational Program "Digital Convergence" (NSFR 2007-2013) and the selected banks on a 50%-50% basis.

Regarding direct grants, a new state aid action of 120m EUR under the Operational Program "Digital Convergence", named **ICT4GROWTH**, was recently released aiming at supporting innovative investment projects, from 300,000 to 20M Euros in the field of ICT, with particular emphasis on services. More specifically, the main purpose is to **support investment projects in the design, development and commercialization of innovative products and value added services, related to or based on Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**.

7. The Open Taxation Data initiative

The Open Taxation Data initiative aims to improve the accountability, reduce the bureaucracy and increase the transparency of Greece's taxation system. As part of the initiative, the General Secretariat of Information Systems of Ministry of Finance, have published extensive statistical data from the year 2000 onward. In addition, they has made available on a daily basis each regional tax office's outstanding and has handled cross-checking cases.

Visit: http://www.gsis.gr

III. OGP Commitments

This section identifies the commitments that the Greek government has chosen to undertake. Choices were made on the basis of national strategy for e-governance, in combination with the suggestions and comments given by the public through online deliberation, along with the results of relevant workshops that took place.

Boost Public Engagement

The Greek government initiated use of online tools in order to engage citizens and organizations in discussions on issues of public interest, such as legislative acts and public policies. The first steps had encouraging results, hence it is important to foster public engagement. Setting this as

a target / commitment on the OGP Action Plan was both **a requirement of the national strategy for e-governance**, as well as **a result from the online deliberation conducted**.

Target: Boost Public Engagement

Goal 1:	Increase number of legislative acts going through online deliberation
Goal 2:	Capitalize on citizen comments and suggestions

Goal 1: Increase the number of legislative acts going through online deliberation
Currently online deliberation is limited. Among the goals set for the year to come is doubling the number (percentage) of legislative acts that will go through this process, as well as increase of the public engagement and the feedback received.

Goal 2: Capitalize on citizen comments and suggestions
Currently there is no predefined process of handling all the comments and suggestions citizens / organizations make. The group organizing, or in overall control of, the reception should develop an audit trail through the process, to explain what criteria were applied when weighing up the evidence from the process, and therefore how the views of those involved in the participatory process has improved the result.

Enhance Public Resources Management

The Greek government focuses on enhancing public resources management, in order to achieve a more efficient result. **A European Union Task Force supports Greece in the process**, by mobilizing relevant expertise from international organizations, promoting a sound and sustainable regulatory environment.

Target: Enhance Public Resources Management

Goal 1:	Operate central E-procurement information system
Goal 2:	Operate central ERP information system
Goal 3:	Operate central HRMS information system

Goal 1: Operate e-procurement information system
The Greek government has acquired the necessary e-procurement information system, in order to unify and centrally manage the procurement process for all ministries. The software is currently being installed, while at the same time a business process re-engineering project is running. In one year the system will be operational covering part of project scope. In two years the system will be fully operational, covering all ministries.

Goal 2: Initiate ERP information system

The objective is the adoption of a common chart of accounts and the implementation of an ERP system across all ministries and governmental agencies. Currently funding has being secured, a standardized budgeting system is being compiled and the procurement process for the whole project has been initiated. During the following year, key issues will be decided regarding the necessary process re-engineering, as well as asset valuation methods, costing model and KPIs. In two years time, the system pilot will be operational.

Goal 3: Initiate HRMS information system
Currently each public sector organization has its own system for managing corresponding human capital resources. A registry of all organizations and all civil servants has recently been compiled. The goal for the next year is the design and activation of a central, unified, Human Resources Management system (HRMS), both in terms of procedures, methods and IT infrastructure. Human capital management policies will be applied efficiently in a transparent way, promoting authorities accountability and optimal use of expertise.

Open (Up) Data

Open government data is a tremendous resource that is as yet untapped. The government produces and collects a vast quantity of high-quality data as part of its ordinary working activities. If this data is made open, it can have huge potential benefits - as **commented by the private sector**, during the online deliberation of this action plan. Hopefully informal partnerships will be fostered among the actual stakeholders of open data with the purpose to provide applications and services that have measurable positive effects on real people's lives, inspire innovation and stimulate financial growth.

Target: Open (Up) Data

Goal 1:	Open data regarding prices, as collected by Prices Observatory
Goal 2:	Resolve legal issues regarding state geo-data
Goal 3:	Offer additional taxation data

Goal 1: Open data regarding prices, as collected by Prices Observatory
The Prices Observatory is a governmental organization which daily collects prices for all every day products. Although the information is collected, it is still difficult to search and study it. During the next year, the goal set is the exporting of all this information in a machine readable (and easily exploitable and processed) format.

Goal 2: Resolve legal issues regarding state geo-data
A variety of geo-information has continuously been gathered and stored in a single point (site) of reference. This effort will continue until all relevant data is stored. However use and redistribution of this information is still difficult, due to lack of the necessary legal framework. It is of imperative importance to clarify the arising legal issues.

Goal 3: Offer additional taxation data

Planned actions to the existing open taxation data initiative include the quarterly publication of taxpayers in arrears, the monthly publication of regional tax office key performance indicators, and a web service providing the registration details of professionals and companies.

Enhance Transparency

Enhancement of transparency in the public sector's decisions and actions will **boost citizen confidence** towards the government and increase accountability of the public servants and decision makers. It will also **augment other countries confidence** towards our country, thus raising the potentiality for foreign investments.

Target: Enhance Transparency

Goal 1:	Augment functionality of the Transparency Program
Goal 2:	Publicise Public Sector procurement information
Goal 3	Enable open, transparent and safeguarded document circulation

Goal 1: Augment functionality of the Transparency Program
The Transparency Program constitutes a huge database of administrative acts - as such it requires the necessary functionality to capture, store and disseminate information efficiently. The program will evolve from a technological point of view in order to offer advanced services to citizens with the focus being on enhanced search functionality and information customization. The goal also includes setting the electronic connections (interoperability) to and from other public administration IT systems.

Goal 2: Publicize Public Sector procurement information
Information pertaining to the procurement cycle of all public sector entities and organization will be posted to a pre-specified site (agora.gov.gr). The information recording will start from the initial expression of necessity and will continue up to the moment of procurement completion and payment.

Goal 3: Enable open, transparent and safeguarded document circulation
Existing electronic protocols will collaborate and interoperate with the National Printing House, the Transparency Program, 'better-regulation' information systems and the central electronic Ministerial Decree composition system.