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# **Open Governments: Building Capacities on the Ground**

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Annual meeting, 20-21 February 2014, Caserta, Italy

OECD Network of Schools of Government  
**Summary**



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In a competitive and increasingly open world, public services need to be innovative and willing to lead, try new ideas and engage with citizens about what matters to them most. With the advent of social media, the public service is expected to be creative in how it engages and communicates with citizens and other stakeholders. In addition, governments around the world are under mounting pressure to become more transparent, effective and accountable, with institutions that empower citizens and are responsive to their aspirations.

Most OECD countries have adopted laws on access to information, introduced consultation with external stakeholders and civil society, and made extensive use of ICT in communicating with and engaging citizens. Countries are also joining efforts to share innovative practices in public management and open government, as part of the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation. Many OECD and non-member countries united in a global effort to open up governments through the Open Government Partnership, which aims to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.



National academies and schools of public service have a critical role in helping to enable governments to ensure that public servants have the necessary competencies, knowledge and skills to deliver on these priorities. In this context, the meeting of the OECD Schools of Government Network in Caserta provided a platform for discussing opportunities and challenges related to opening governments and implementing related policies, needed respective capacities in the public sector, and strategies to strengthen capabilities of

public organisations and individual public servants to effectively deal with these policy priorities.

This event brought together representatives of national schools of public administration and other training and research institutions, policy-makers, international, regional and national associations of schools of public administration, the OECD secretariat, and other stakeholders. In addition to the discussion of building capacities in open government, the meeting provided an opportunity to shape the next steps in the partnership of the OECD and National Schools of Public Administration. Finally, the meeting helped explore synergies with the members of the Advisory Committee of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme's International Training Centre in Caserta.

## I. Towards a partnership between the OECD and Schools of Government

### Key messages

- An effective and efficient public sector is essential for stimulating economic growth and social welfare. Strong institutions, skilled employees and strategic capacities are needed to design and implement reforms. Both current and future public servants must develop the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively respond to these challenges.
- The schools of government and other national training and research institutions are pivotal both in ensuring responsiveness to changing policy priorities and public sector needs, and in facilitating sustainability of policy- and capacity-building initiatives.
- The OECD could play an important role by disseminating its policy advice on a broader scale and helping bring closer research, training, policy advice and practice on the ground.
- The partnership between the OECD and Schools of Government is important in strengthening dialogue between policy-makers and schools of government.
- This partnership could bridge the gap between international policy dialogue discussions and capacity building activities on the ground through annual dialogue among schools, as well as between schools and policy-makers, and the sharing of latest policy materials.



The opening session on February 20, 2014, chaired by Professor Giovanni Tria, Director of the National School of Administration of Italy and Mr Rolf Alter, Director of the OECD's Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, underlined the importance of the proposed Network to bring together Schools of Government to discuss policy priorities and capacity-building needs in

national governments. The OECD has a strong role in promoting international policy dialogue, but implementation can only truly be successful if the OECD works hand-in-hand with national governments and schools of government.

This Network would be open to all institutions and organisations involved in public sector capacity-building activities and research, in OECD countries and beyond.

## II: Open Government: Policy Trends from Local to Global

### Key messages

- Open Government is critical to help restore trust in governments in the aftermath of the crisis. Open government should be the “new normal” for the way governments operate.
- Open governance implies open data, open services and open decisions. Budget transparency, access to information, citizen engagement and proactive disclosure are important tools for open government. Key indicators, innovation, sound national frameworks and trust in national administrations are essential for implementing open government.
- Citizens and civil society need to be included in the policy-making process at all stages.
- Many OECD and non-member countries united in a global effort to open up governments through the Open Government Partnership, which aims to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.



This session discussed the evolution of policy trends in open government from the local to the global level. It featured interventions from Mr Rolf Alter, Director, OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development; Prof. Geert Bouckaert, President of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) of the Public Management Institute of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven of Belgium; Dr Refat Abdelhalim Al Faouri, Director General of

the Arab Administrative Development Organisation (ARADO); and Ms Ludmila Gajdosova, Vice-President for Regional and International Cooperation of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA), and Executive Director of the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee).

The **OECD** underlined that, while governments remained major players in national economies and labour markets in OECD countries, they had recently suffered from a loss of trust due to the crisis. Consequently, greater openness and accountability of governments is a way to regain that trust. The OECD’s aim is to provide governments with a framework to achieve these goals, which includes an analysis of a given country’s open government efforts, policy recommendations and good practices from OECD members, as well as assistance in capacity-building and implementation.

The **IIAS** noted that open governments and open societies went hand-in-hand, and that a global culture of openness was needed within countries. The concept of open government should be



perceived as something to actively pursue, with governments learning from the failure of other systems as a test of openness. Circular reasons and circular practices (e.g. the quality of governance is poor because there is no trust and vice-versa: there is no trust because the quality of governance is poor) can only be overcome if governments and societies are open. The implementation of policies needs to be open to consultation by citizens at the design, decision and evaluation stages, and conversely, there needs to be a willingness to participate on the part of either citizens or customers, depending on whether policies focus on rights and duties, or supply and demand. In either case, openness is needed. This willingness to participate has to be cultivated by increasing trust in governments, but there has not been much research on this topic. Opening a system depends on learning, accountability and feedback mechanisms. The challenge of information security when striving for openness was also noted.

The **IASIA** noted that there were different dimensions to open government, illustrated by a recent study of EU countries, which can be found on the UNPAN network<sup>1</sup>. The recent crisis has created new challenges by undermining people's trust in governments, which means that increased openness is now more important than ever. However, according to the study, as things now stand, only 10% of citizens are willing to participate in governmental processes, while 50% would be willing to participate if the required preconditions were set up. Therefore, setting up these preconditions is now the main task that schools of administration need to deal with. Another important issue to address is how to conciliate openness with data security.



The **ARADO** explained that MENA states were very diverse, and that some were still struggling with the very concept of state and issues of service delivery, which means that implementing a unified system of open government in the region is very difficult.

Participants stressed that better training and awareness would help to increase openness and raise trust in governments. Schools can help with the way that data is released to the public. It is also important to assess how social media impacts governments' decision-making. Culture and values are moving slowly, while fashion and expectations are moving faster; governments are between the two and need to get the balance right. Moreover, the costs of implementing open government are tangible and immediate, while the benefits are ambiguous and spread out over time. Civil society needs to be taught how to use the information it receives, because, as experience shows, requests for open information are usually made with the goal of discrediting public figures, and public contributions often take the form of complaints, especially during electoral periods. This is why the development of open government and e-democracy needs to be put into context. Mentoring, coaching and advising can be of great help in dealing with information, as can be policy papers, which is where the OECD can specifically be of great help.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.unpan.org/DPADM/EGovernment/OpenGovernmentDataandServices/tabid/1536/language/en-US/Default.aspx](http://www.unpan.org/DPADM/EGovernment/OpenGovernmentDataandServices/tabid/1536/language/en-US/Default.aspx)

### **III: Building Capacities for Open Government: Driving Citizen Engagement**

#### **Key messages**

- Citizen engagement is a core value of policy-making and public service.
- Policy-making needs to be seen as a source of interaction, and citizens must actively participate in all its phases. Social media presents an important opportunity, but also a challenge.
- Schools of government play a key role in capacity-building, which is crucial for effective citizen engagement. Further discussion is needed to determine which capacities need to be built in each country, according to supply and demand.

Engaging citizens is one of the core pillars of the OECD Open and Inclusive Policy-Making Principles and the Open Government Partnership. This session explored the capacities needed in the public sector to engage citizens in the policy-making and programme delivery processes. It featured interventions from Dr José R. Castelazo, President of the National Institute of Public Administration of Mexico; Mr Goran Pastrovic of the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA); Dr Richard Boyle, Head of Research in Publishing and Corporate Relations at the Institute of Public Administration of Ireland (IPA); and Ms Carmen Gonzalez Serrano, Deputy Head of the International Relations Department at the INAP in Spain.

**Mexico** stressed the importance of an equal participation between governments, citizens and other stakeholders, such as NGOs, politicians or public servants, in the policy-making process, based on an organised scheme of shared responsibility. It also explained that Mexico concentrates on three dimensions to ensure public participation in its policy-making process: the legal level, with citizen participation being enshrined in the Mexican Constitution; the political and administrative level, with mechanisms for citizens to be included in all policy-making phases—from design, to supervision, to sanctions; and the social level, which covers the way in which organised society, civil associations, NGOs and the media all contribute to building citizen participation. A recent innovation in the sphere of open government in Mexico was the creation of an autonomous institution for free access to public information, which includes new actors as political partners in the governance process, such as unions and private organisations which receive public funding. The role of national schools of public administration is to build capacities and help create networks of public servants, all the while focussing on innovation as a crucial factor of progress.



The **ReSPA** aims to contribute to transparency reforms in the public sector. It has attempted to gather different stakeholders in the Balkan region and to conglomerate their different needs with an integrative approach. It is also trying to have its trainers specialise in different thematic areas, such as learning tools, public consultation and participation, lobbying or e-government. Concerning citizen engagement,



the ReSPA features different methodologies and capacity-building activities on its website, and its main objective is to foster a participative civil society culture.

**Ireland** underlined that key methods to increase citizen engagement included citizen participation in policy deliberation, the development of digital service channels, open government and data sources, as well as legislative reform. The four main capacities needed for effective citizen engagement were defined as exemplary public service values (treating citizens with respect, equity and transparency), collaboration and communication, specialist expertise and a cultural shift towards risk management. The Institute of Public Administration of Ireland itself contributes to this process via courses, incorporating citizen engagement into its programmes, providing networking opportunities, research on good practices (both national and international) and facilitating policy consultation processes.

**Spain** noted that it had recently implemented a draft law on transparency to regulate citizen access to information from the Public Administration, and make provisions for “active advertising” of institutional, organisational and planning information, as well as legal, economic, budgetary and statistical information. This law also creates a Transparency Portal and an independent Council of Transparency and Good Governance, which can inflict sanctions on officials in cases of conflict of interest, or disciplinary, economic and budgetary management infringements. In addition, the Ministry of Finance has launched an Administration and Public Service Improvement Plan (2012-2015). The INAP has developed a range of programmes contributing to greater transparency of the public sector.



## IV: Building Capacities for Open Government: Maximising the ICT, Open Data and Social Media Potential

### Key messages

- ICT is a major component of rebuilding trust in government and modernising the public service, and therefore all schools of government play a strong role in ensuring the necessary capacities in the public service.
- Social media is a key tool to foster openness in governments, yet it also presents a major challenge to governments, as combining transparency with information security is a complex process. Public servants should have proper training, guidance and skills to maximise the benefits of social media.

This session explored the competencies necessary in the public service for maximising the potential of Information Technology, Open Data and Social Media. It featured interventions from Mr Peter Allen, Deputy Dean of the Australian and New Zealand School of Government; Mr Maciej Gron, Director of the Information Society of the National School of Public Administration of Poland; Ms Jinane Doueihy, Training Director at the Institut des Finances Basile Fuleihan of Lebanon; Dr Ali Sebaa Al Marri, Executive President of the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government of the United Arab Emirates; and Dr Fani Komseli, Deputy Secretary General and Director of the Institute of Training of the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA) of Greece.



The **ANZSoG** underlined that ICT was a key component to respond to mounting pressure on public services to do more with fewer resources. Australian government agencies are now increasingly using social media to improve their communication and engagement with stakeholders. Accountability and transparency are facilitated by independent comparative reports and progress reports on performance. In 2013, 75% of Australian public service agencies reported using some form of social media to support business outcomes, but also social media awareness-raising campaigns, conferences and disaster management. Most agencies also have guidelines on the use of social media, and 49% provide formal training to their employees to ensure that they are properly qualified to use social media in a professional environment. The problem, however, is determining where the limits are in social media in terms of what can be shared, who decides what can be shared and based on what criteria. The ANZSoG engages in research on government as a social machine to understand how governments can interact with communities to produce joint outcomes; how technology facilitates this process and how problem-solving can be facilitated via the internet. Other themes being explored are how to increase citizen confidence and how to make human-computer interfaces more intuitive and seamless.





**Poland** highlighted several major initiatives underway to promote ICT training in civil service, as open data needs a good legal framework, but will not work without the right infrastructure and cooperation, which it is therefore crucial to put into place. The Digital Poland of Equal Opportunities Programme is aimed at providing ICT training to citizens aged 50+. Efforts are underway to provide modern IT training to and raise the awareness of public servants, including through the establishment of a Council of IT Directors as a semi-formal think tank to address IT issues in policy-making. Seven principles have also been set out to govern public consultation (good faith, universality, transparency, responsiveness, coordination, predictability and respect of general interest). Poland is also planning to launch a Central Repository of Public Information, a portal to make available information resources from public institutions in order to provide citizens with the information and tools necessary to make informed contributions to the consultation process. NGOs have also created a service for open government legislation that allows people to express their opinion on draft laws.



**Lebanon** noted that for a small country whose public service faced great difficulties (skilled personnel drain, difficulties in recruitment, obsolescence of positions, no legal framework regulating capacity-building in the public sector), the role of the Institute of Finance Basil Fuleihan goes beyond capacity-building, and also involves facilitating the creation of a policy framework. The Institute is focusing on capacity-building and upgrading the skills of existing personnel, sharing knowledge and best practices, reinforcing the rule of law, advising on the placement of new staff and providing them with leadership development, rallying stakeholders and providing information about its vision as widely as possible, including via electronic means. It has trained more than 7,000 civil servants in IT in 16 years. The main questions it considers crucial to address are which capacities and knowledge are needed to use social media effectively, and what kind of training should be given to public servants for the use of social media. Officials also need to keep in mind whether they are speaking on behalf of the government or of their own accord when communicating via social media.



The **UAE Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government** in turn uses internet as a lab of ideas. It organised a national brainstorming session online, where 65,000 ideas were received via Twitter. The key challenge is to sift through these ideas. Nevertheless, a number of initiatives in education were adopted as a result of this session. Responsiveness is a key component of open government, and ICT can help a lot in this sphere, but it can also help to develop awareness about open government and foster a culture of transparency among citizens.

**Greece** outlined the main challenges within the Greek public administration (reform, redesign, reorganisation and workforce changes). The main reforms focus on the fight against corruption, reinforcing transparency, improving competitiveness, making the administration more efficient and



SNA



opening governance to the citizens. These challenges are an opportunity to develop new forms of training through the use of ICT. The EKDDA/INEP supports the implementation of openness via consultation workshops and providing support to the [opengov.gr](http://opengov.gr) website, as well as data for the online [datagov.gr](http://datagov.gr) archive. It also organises training activities on issues pertaining to the main reforms and strives to decrease digital illiteracy, and promote e-governance and web2 technology skills. It does all this in close cooperation with the public service. One of its main objectives is the creation of a unified web portal, accessible 24-7 with free access to educational resources and scientific studies.

**The Netherlands** noted that dialogue between governments and citizens should not be a double monologue, but required open-mindedness, real content and evidence, so that evidence-based policies can be developed. Governments need to not only meet people's expectations, but shape them as well. Social media can be an important source of information in this context, but the question is how to collect this information. With this in mind, the Dutch Institute for Public Administration has put in place a summer course for elected officials and workshops for senior administrative officials, which allow them to begin developing a framework for working with IT. However, they will need more time to come up with standards.



## V: Building Capacities for Open Government: Transparency, Accountability and Citizen Access to Information

### Key messages

- Citizen access to public information can be a vector of new policy solutions and new jobs by broadening people's understanding of policy-making and giving them new opportunities.
- Citizens need to be consulted on a regular basis at all stages of policy-making.
- Public services need to be streamlined, accessible and adapted to citizen's needs for increased efficiency.
- Government officials need to receive appropriate training to be able to work effectively with citizen input.

This session focussed on transparency, accountability and citizen access to information. It featured interventions from Mr Pierre Thénard, Director of International Relations of the National School of Administration (ENA) of France; Dr Hyug Keun Ahn, Research Fellow and Coordinator of the Office of International Cooperation and Public Relations of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA); Ms Mariette Baptist, Advisor and Trainer at the Dutch Institute for Public Administration; Ms Magdalena Mendoza, Senior Vice President of the Development Academy of the Philippines; and Mr Carlos Carranza Villalobos, Director of the School of Public Administration of the University of Costa Rica.

In **France**, given its history of tension between a strongly centralised state and the public, the idea of Open Government is still an ongoing process. Despite this work in progress, developments are positive, with a new 2013 law on the transparency of elected officials. France also places great emphasis on the development of e-government tools, such as e-public service platforms. It has notably established an information platform to disseminate public data ([data.gouv.fr](http://data.gouv.fr)), a website to publish the judgments of the State Council ([ariane.web](http://ariane.web)) and an e-administration website ([service-public.fr](http://service-public.fr)). In this context, the ENA positions itself as a central vector of training for high-level public servants, more as a sounding board than an incubator. It considers transparency, accountability and access to information as central principles of its education programme. It is also very active in supporting public sector capacity-building in partner countries like Morocco.



**Korea** presented its latest approach to Open Government, dubbed "Government 3.0". The main focus is full provision of information to citizens to help them make informed decisions and to establish online public-private "cooperative spaces" for the provision of feedback on said information, thus creating an



exchange of information between the government and the public. This access to public information can facilitate the creation of new jobs (e.g. mobile applications) and is promoted in the Korean legislation. The other main specificity of “Government 3.0” is the provision of customised public service, adapted to the specific needs of each citizen, which can be achieved by providing online guides for various public services, promoting customised entrepreneurial activities and one-stop shops for public service provision, all this with the use of advanced IT. Conversely, the effectiveness of the government can be improved by data collection, performance analysis and knowledge sharing via cloud computing.

In the **Netherlands**, the relationship between the government and the citizens is based on three pillars: transparency, collaboration and accessibility. To measure the social benefits of this approach, a set of indicators are to be developed over the course of 2014 and 2015, as part of the Open Government action plan. However, political pressure, developing citizens’ perspectives, training of civil servants to make a difference, integrating the principle of openness into



public organisation and collaboration between the different levels of the administration will be critical to the successful implementation of this Action Plan. The Institute also presented a serious game as an example of inter-organisational, collaborative decision-making to deal with population decline; the intended effects were to broaden people’s understanding of the problem to facilitate negotiations between the government and stakeholders, and to develop different options from different perceptions of the problem by the participants. The role of the Dutch Institute for Public Administration is to support the public sector open government reform, notably by connecting governance and IT, developing people and organisations, providing expertise on information management, HRM and leadership, administrative burden reduction and e-government for EU and international projects, as well as audits, reviews, research, project management, traineeships and coaching for public servants.



The **Philippines** stressed the necessity for effective performance management systems in the implementation of transparency. The government introduced a requirement to integrate transparency as a criterion into the performance management system. The results are being published on websites. Ms Mendoza also stated the importance of citizen and local government participation in the planning and monitoring of government programmes, and that simply having the internet was not a guarantee of transparency. It is crucial that officials develop the right knowledge and skills to attain these objectives, which is where the OECD’s help could be useful (for mapping supply and demand on the ground).



SNA



Finally, **Costa Rica** indicated that, in Central America as a whole, the social capital needed to be strengthened and teaching-learning dynamics needed to be incorporated into public policies. Transparency in Costa Rica has steadily improved since 1949: citizens have more legal recourses, better access to ministerial information and a stronger presence in decision-making processes. Public employees need to declare their assets, there are reports on budget managements, and citizens must be consulted on regulatory matters pertaining to water, energy and transport tariffs, as well as the quality of services. In the area of accountability, however, capacity-building work remains to be done.



## **VI: Next Steps and Role of the OECD**

Looking ahead, participants agreed that further dialogue will be useful to determine which skills, knowledge and capacities are needed to effectively implement open government policies, as well as specific ways in which schools of government can support the development of these capacities.

Participants reaffirmed the value-added of the OECD and underlined that it can contribute to the building capacities by sharing policy papers, undertaking operational benchmarking and providing a platform for dialogue. The OECD will explore the possibility of creating an online platform specifically to share OECD information with schools and facilitate exchanges among them. As appropriate, the OECD will extend invitations to its events to school members in order to promote further interaction and cooperation between policy-makers and schools of government. Regular meetings of the Network will help to keep track of progress made and new initiatives among its members. A summary action plan will be prepared in consultation with the Network members, defining the objectives, activities, and next steps of the Network.

In the area of open government, the OECD will collect information on specific activities of the schools to facilitate the exchange of lessons learned and good practices. The OECD will continue sharing its policy materials in this area, disseminating good practice studies and reviews of national practices, as well as highlighting potential dangers and challenges.