IMPACT OF OPEN GOVERNMENT ON PUBLIC SECTOR MODERNISATION IN EUROPE

ROME, 4° DECEMBER 2014
63rd Meeting of EUPAN Directors General
ENHANCING THE MODERNISATION OF PS THROUGH OPENGOV

Evaluation of **8 cases** according to **4 dimensions**

- Participation
- Co-production of innovative services and open data
- Transparency Accountability
- Economic efficacy

- Desk review of documents, information, web sites, reports
- Direct interviews with other experts and directors or personnel
- Blind vote from 1 to 5 for each dimension

The final score tells how the case had an impact on the modernization of the administrations
1. Norway
Electronic Public Record (OEP)

2. Slovenia
Information Commissioner

3. UK
NHS Whistleblowing Helpline

4. Italy
Opencoesione

5. Croatia
Gong

6. Netherlands
Knowledge Platform

7. France
Data.gouv.fr

8. Denmark
Statutory elected senior citizens’ council
# Enhancing the Modernisation of PS through OpenGov

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE STUDY</th>
<th>participation</th>
<th>coproduction</th>
<th>transparency</th>
<th>economic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Public Record (OEP)</td>
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<td>2,8</td>
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<td>NHS Whistleblowing Helpline</td>
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A part from three cases (Statutory Elected Senior Citizens, Data.gouv.it and Knowledge Platform), all the other cases showed a higher impact on transparency and accountability of the Public Sector.
The impact on coproduction and economic efficiency seems to be still lower than what theoretically expected, but particularly for the economic it also depends by the very few data available to evaluate it.
The experiences analysed show increasing numbers of passive or active engagement of the civil society in the initiatives.

Participation is stronger when:

a) The civil society is promoting the initiative (Gong);

b) Civil society is directly involved in decision-making or creative processes (CCS or Data.gouv.fr) and not only as the beneficiary of the initiative. Individuals seldom participate directly, unless they are qualified or skilled, but are mainly engaged through intermediary organisations.

Regarding intermediaries, they are moved by interests of doing business (rarely), public information, communication and civic engagement (more often). The role of intermediaries poses some ethical bias, as they can drive the offer and the demand of open government. Participation is weaker where pushed by the Public sector only, in particular after the end of the initial momentum of support. Causes of limited participation, apart from the digital divide, can be found in the lack of literacy skills, the quality and the fragmentary nature of data available that reduce the interest of re-use.

One case focuses on the inclusion of a specific target of people (CCS), in another case groups of citizens have been trained to become proactive (Gong), other initiatives are directed to the public in general.
The production of innovative services is inherent in open government initiatives, whether as direct output or as indirect outcome. Services are mainly funded by public resources or private donors, while crowd-sourcing has a limited impact in the production. The innovative services analysed were aimed at opening information (France, Norway, Slovenia, and Italy), at monitoring the public sector’s activities (Slovenia and Croatia), or involving stakeholders in the decision making process (United Kingdom, Denmark, and The Netherlands).

The potential production of other initiatives, in particular deriving from the re-use of opening information, remains unexpressed, and its effectiveness should be compared with the investments required for opening information. Such potential however is limited to small groups of subjects (profit or no profit organisations and firms) with sufficient ICT skills.
Open Government initiatives aim at opening information and at increasing transparency and accountability of the Public Sector. In particular, public managers and civil servants perceive openness as a key point for increasing the trust of the citizens and the quality of the democracy. Transparency is more related to the attitude of the public sector to disclose and give evidence about its decision-making processes.

Accountability lies on transparency and on the interest and capacity of the civil society to use open information for monitoring PS' activity. The openness of information requires accurate, complete, and quality data, for ensuring an effective monitoring and consequent accountability. Accountability requires the active engagement of the civil society and the citizens, which seem somehow reluctant.
The economic impact of open government is hardly measurable. One of the cases reports information about the start-up of innovative businesses, in particular in the field of geographic or environmental open data. This kind of initiatives can have a positive impact on the reduction of administrative burden for privates to get public sector information.

Active monitoring can not only help in detecting improper use of public funding, although evidence is very limited, but can also be effective in the prevention of illicit use of public resources, as civil servants can perceive to be under control. Open Government initiatives that require an active participation have an impact in processes of reallocation of resources and can enable a more efficient use of public sector budget, in particular when cuts are envisaged.
The case studies show *Countries' commitment to transparency and openness, and a growing engagement of the civil society in the different countries.*

The process of modernisation of the government analysed in the cases studies presents different levels of opening information, monitoring activities, active participation. In any case, modernisation must reduce the administrative burdens and simplify the access to information. ICT, ICT-related skills, public commitment and civic sense are drivers of the open and collaborative government, but several challenges must be accounted. The impact of modernisation of the government is not easily measurable, and it should include a cost-benefit analysis of the start-up investments required. Sustainability of initiatives deriving from, or funded by, the Public Sector, remains an important issue.

**ENGAGE AND STIMULATE CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE, ESPECIALLY IN CONTEXT WHERE CIVIL SOCIETY IS NOT USED TO.**

**PUBLIC SECTOR SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EXTERNAL EXPERTISE FOR TAKING BETTER DECISIONS.**

**INFORMATION AND DATA SHOULD BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE BY EVERYONE, IN ORDER TO AVOID THE PARADOX “TOO MUCH TRANSPARENCY CREATES OPACITY”**

**TRANSPARENCY SHOULD NOT INCLUDE “ONLY” ECONOMIC INFORMATION, BUT ALSO EVIDENCES ABOUT DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.**

**DISCLOSED INFORMATION MUST BE ACCURATE AND COMPARABLE, FOR ENSURING TO THE CIVIL SOCIETY THE FULL POTENTIAL FOR AN EFFECTIVE MONITORING.**