epp
group

Data democracy:
Opening up government data
at the local and regional level

Guidebook for Europe's towns, cities and regions for opening up data to achieve more efficient public services and engaged citizens

Foreword
by Michael Schneider

President of the EPP Group
in the European Committee of the Regions

During the past few years, open data has transformed itself in our awareness from an abstract concept into a useful tool for administration, business and citizens. As you will read from the examples from all over Europe, opening up data offers not only efficiency and other calculable benefits – but most important of all, a channel for us to better engage with our citizens as well as create new business opportunities through the connections.

In the EPP Group, we believe that data made public by local and regional authorities increases the transparency and accountability of them. At the same time, it enhances the active participation of citizens, since once they are better informed on aspects that matter in their everyday life, they can be more involved by taking action in ameliorating it.

Open data is interesting for local and regional governments because it can give us a better understanding of the places we live and work. Public data has significant potential for re-use in new products and services such as applications which facilitate citizen's daily commute.

Our small contribution to this phenomenon comes through this publication, a guidebook for Europe's cities and regions for opening up data. Through a concise presentation of what open data is and best practice examples, as well as encouragements from European Commission Vice President Andrus Ansip and European Committee of the Regions' President Markku Markkula, we hope to inspire more local and regional authorities into actively starting to open up municipal and regional data from public services, traffic, planning, education, budgets and decision-making.

The planning for this publication started with our Winter University event in November 2016. Open data was on the spot through focusing on data journalism and the links between public authorities opening up data for better European storytelling and journalism. This event left us thinking that we should make open data more known among our own Members – the regional President, city Mayors and local Councillors or Europe – as well as other local and regional authorities. So we hope that you get inspired by the best practices and examples in the guidebook!

Foreword
by Andrus Ansip

European Commission Vice President for the
Digital Single Market

I have been a strong supporter of open government for many years.

If we can use digital technology to support and increase public involvement, that is good for legitimacy, accountability and – ultimately – people's trust in government.

Government can act as much a barrier as a facilitator. It can be exclusive or inclusive; expensive or efficient. To achieve the better one of each of these options, it is clear to me that digital is the way forward.

That is why our strategy to build a Digital Single Market (DSM) calls for Europe's public sector to be digital, open and cross-border – all at the same time, all by default. These are the principles that underpin our plan to promote e-government and create an inclusive digital society.

The public sector produces and gathers a wide range of information. If this is made accessible and available as open data – free for use and re-use – then the community, individuals as well as companies, benefit hugely.

And the public sector benefits in return.

The more we share, the more we gain. Studies expect billions of euros of economic gains from open data.

The European Data Portal estimates the direct market size of open data in the EU-28 at €55.3 billion for 2016. By 2020, this is projected to rise by 37%.

Our regions, cities, towns and villages have a major part to play in building the DSM as governments and administrations make more use of open data to provide digital services.

They are where things are really put into practice, at grassroots level.

They are the starting point for our ultimate digital success.

This handbook will be a valuable tool to help us turn our DSM vision into reality.

Foreword
by Markku Markkula

President of the European Committee
of the Regions

We need to build a united European Union by listening to all citizens while delivering a digital Europe. One of its key goals is opening up data as a resource for government transparency and innovative products and services in Europe. Against the backdrop of a still recovering economy, we have the momentum to roll-out the 'open data' approach at EU, national, regional and local levels, and address societal challenges and foster sustainable growth and transparency.

EU cities and regions see many benefits from opening up their data, from efficient public administrations and services to boosting local economies and improving the lives of individuals. The Helsinki Region Infoshare is a pioneering example of opening up all regional data, which incorporates my own city of Espoo as well as neighbouring Helsinki, Vantaa and Kauniainen. By making regional information quickly and easily accessible to anyone, it becomes possible to work on the data, to visualise it in a map or a portal and to inform others about public issues like transportation, the real-time locations of road closures or snow ploughs.

Our imagination is the only limit to our potential. The open data approach creates favourable conditions for start-ups and all industry sectors. It also enables citizens to follow the decisions being made and the issues discussed in their own regions, municipalities and in small communities of practice.

As elected politicians, we have a responsibility to boost transparency, accountability and the efficiency of EU policies. We welcome the European Structural and Investment Funds Open Data Platform which allows an evidence-based evaluation on the policy implementation and overall performance. Open data can play a significant role in creating more sustainable growth and communities for the future. Under my mandate, the European Committee of the Regions has made the case for the 3-s's: smarter cities, smarter government and smarter citizens. All of these rely on better access and use of public data.

I am committed to building up a Europe for and with the citizens – so, don't hesitate to open up your public data and let citizens co-create the future of our cities and regions!

What is open data?

Open data = machine-readable, licenced data that **anyone** can **access**, **use** and **share**.

Data is raw material, shaped into **information** through collection and presentation, and finally transformed into **knowledge** when personalised through choices.

Open data means that there are **no limitations** – anyone can use, modify, combine and share the data, even commercially.

Data must be **free to use** – but not necessarily **free to access** – a reasonable reproduction cost of the requested data unit can be charged.

What are the benefits from opening up data?

The biggest benefit from open data for towns, cities and regions lies in **transforming government** into one which is more **efficient**, **transparent** and **engaged** with its citizens. Fully utilising open data also leads to **a more targeted** and **effective**, **results-oriented public policy**.

- Greater **efficiency** in processes and delivery thanks to open data is estimated in 2020 to **save** the EU28+ public sector **1,7 bn euros** in costs.
- Public administration is often the first re-user of its open data – in 2020 the **value** from open data is estimated to amount to **22 bn euros**.
- Improved public sector **transparency** – everyone can see where **public finances** are used and how **legislation** is drafted and implemented.
- **Citizens** and the **business community** can be **more involved** in local and regional policy-making and co-creation through **direct feedback**, **input** and **action**.

Opportunities for government:

Supporting growing economies – publishing key datasets that support the emergence of new data-driven business as well as the growth of existing ones.

Improved service delivery – available detailed open data contributes to improving the delivery of services at a local and regional level.

Cost savings – especially in healthcare, education and utilities sectors.

What about data protection?

One of the biggest questions related to opening up data is the **protection of personal data**; in many cases it is even illegal to publish it. **Anonymising datasets** is the common way to overcome the issue, while making sure that the risk of reversing the process is low. **Risk aversion** is the best approach.

The three pillars of a successful and sustainable open data programme:

Moral:
data publisher considers the privacy of data subjects.

Legal:
data protection laws are respected.

Pragmatic:
public confidence is maintained.

8 recommendations on data protection for open data:

1. **Understand the data.** Consider potential use cases, the value of the data and the potential risks.

2. **Consult.** Engage stakeholders about the publication programme, be mindful of additional risks that are identified.

3. **Remember the three pillars of privacy, data protection and public confidence.**

4. **Be very sure of the grounds for publishing personal data.**

5. **Anonymise data well and thoroughly.** Follow guidelines for anonymising personal data.

6. **Remember utility.** There is no point in publishing data which is devoid of serious content.

7. **Don't release and forget.** Anonymisation and open data are not cheap options.

8. **Have a plan in place in the event of a problem.** Be not only transparent, but also transparent about your transparency.

Want to know more how?

€1.7
billion saved
in costs EU28+ for Public Administrations in 2020

Find the necessary tools and further instruction on how to open up data from:

The European Data Portal
www.europeandataportal.eu

The EU Open Data Portal
https://data.europa.eu

DG REGIO open data portal on ESIF
https://cohesiondata.eu.europa.eu

Need to act at all levels: local, regional national and EU level

The policy overview

The Directive on the re-use of public sector information provides a common legal framework for a European market for government-held data or public sector information. It is built around two key pillars of the internal market:

• **transparency**

• **and fair competition**

This Directive encourages the Member States – at national, regional and local levels, such as ministries, state agencies, municipalities, as well as organisations funded for the most part by or under the control of public authorities – to make as much information available for re-use as possible. However, in 2011, the European Commission proposed that this was not enough, highlighting the risk that Europe might miss out on the opportunities offered by open data, and will lag behind other regions where open data policies are well established. Local and regional authorities were, and continue to be, among the main target groups for measures under the EU Digital Agenda, which include the 2011 Communication on Open Data.

Responding to this Communication, the European Committee of the Regions agreed its position on Open Data in October 2012 stating that **Open Data has the potential to become valuable assets for citizens, businesses and public authorities**. The CoR has also welcomed the European Union Open Data Portal, which was launched in December 2012 as well as for measures to ensure research funded by Horizon 2020 is made openly accessible after an embargo period.

In June 2013, the EU endorsed the G8 Open Data Charter committing to implementing a number of open data activities in the G8 members' Collective Action Plan. Within this context, **the EU is committed to**:

• Identifying and making available core datasets held at EU level

• Identifying and making available high-value datasets held at EU level

• Publishing data on the EU Open Data Portal

• Promoting the application of the principles of the G8 Open Data Charter in all 28 EU

• Member States through the revised PSI Directive and guidelines to Member States

• Supporting activities, outreach, consultation and engagement

• Sharing experiences of work in the area of open data.

The objective is for the European to be at the forefront of public administrations in terms of openness in relation to its own documents.

The potential to help create jobs and improve the quality of public services requires a change in mindset as well as strong political commitment at the highest level. EU level support exists for open data pilots and open data competitions, in particular those targeting the development of cross-border products and services e.g. through the Open Data incubator, which assists small and medium-sized enterprises in building sustainable business ideas on the basis of Open Data (opendataincubator.eu).

EPP-CoR Winter University 2016:

Using European open data for more efficient and engaging cities and regions

The changing and fast-paced communication and media scene, especially through social media, makes **enhanced cooperation** between **journalists** and the **public sector** more pertinent than ever. The EPP Group in the European Committee of the Regions brought together 60 journalists, journalism students and media makers in November 2016 to discuss the **role of open data** and **data journalism**.

European data journalism is up and coming especially with the rise in discussion on **post-factual societies** and **politics**. The role of **accessible data**, **fact-checking** and the **media literacy of citizens** are key elements for media to combat the issue: the more open and reliable data is available, the easier it is to do this.

EPP-CoR President **Michael Schneider** emphasised that "in the EPP Group, we believe that data made public by local and regional authorities increases the transparency and accountability of them. Simultaneously, it enhances the active participation of citizens - as they are better informed on aspects that matter in their everyday life they can be more involved in taking action to ameliorate it."

Key conclusions from the seminar **for local and regional authorities** included:

- Open data should be seen more as an infrastructure than as pure information, and the **reliability of data** is a key component in the matter.

- Local and regional authorities should embark on opening data with **comparable** and **harmonised datasets** to ease comparison between towns, cities, regions – and even cross-border.

- **Not all statistics need to be economic** – social data is also vital for open data development.

- Data must not only be accessible but it must also be **understandable**.

In the future, it is likely that elements of data journalism will seep into the work of almost all journalists as **data skills are needed across topics**. Data in itself is useless - the information drawn from data is useful and gives relevance to the citizens. Therefore, metaphors, gamification and visualisation of data will increase as data journalism becomes more common.

With local and regional authorities moving towards opening up their data, more cooperation between them and the media can help in bridging a partnership for better media reporting on local issues while strengthening the link between decision-makers and the citizens.

Best Practices: Open Gdansk

Brief description

Gdansk is one of the few Polish cities that runs an open data program. There was a need for greater transparency and increasing trust among citizens and local government. Since 2014, Gdansk has been developing its **openness policy**. There is a strong belief in the city leadership that publishing information in open, structured formats can contribute to greater efficiency and transparency. Openness fosters social engagement, and helps manage cities in a better way.

Objectives

At the beginning there was a diagnosis: we need citizens to get more involved in the life of the city and we need to spread knowledge on how the local government works. Another necessity was to build in Gdansk the economy of the future, based on knowledge and processing of open, public data.

The Open Gdansk project was established, with one main goal of providing open city data to all interested parties with no charges or licensing restrictions. Data is provided in accordance with the widely accepted standards of open data.

Achievements so far

Benefits of the Open Data program for Gdansk:

- More transparent decision-making process
- Building trust with external stake-holders, like media and NGOs
- Growing engagement of residents, active participation
- Better quality of life—full access to information can shorten time a

resident has to spend when contacting the city hall

- Better image of Gdansk outside the city, as a smart city opened to modern technologies
- Stronger working relations with international organizations, like What Works Cities or Open & Agile Smart Cities

Pawel Adamowic

The most ground-breaking part of Open Gdansk remains the daily register of city expenses, which is being published since 2015. It is available at: http://www.gdansk.pl/smartcity/Publikacja-wydatkow,a,39710 , the only initiative of this kind in Poland and only one of a few in Europe.

Want to know more?

The Open Gdansk http://otwartygdansk.pl/

Full and transparent register of public information requests and answers: http://bip.gdansk.pl/urzad-miejski/informacja-publiczna?archiwum=rw

Pawel Adamowicz, Mayor of Gdansk:

"The introduction of the policy of openness is a project that requires a large commitment – it involves structuring of large amounts of data and their consistent sharing. Perhaps for this reason, so far no other city decided to create a formal document regulating the issues of access to urban public data. The City of Gdańsk sees open data as an opportunity to strengthen the city's image as a modern and innovative – that's why it decided to announce an openness manifesto."

Best practices: Open Helsingborg (SE)

Objective

Open Helsingborg is a long-term project of the city of Helsingborg to **make data from the city freely available to all** by publishing it as open data. The city of Helsingborg as well as companies and organisations in Helsingborg have **large amounts of data** about all sorts of topics - **from traffic information to school meals**, from the citizens to the visitor. Much of this data is currently public but it is hard to access and to make use of the data.

At a time **when most people have a smartphone in their pocket** and use the Internet daily, we want to **make sure** that this **data can be used in various ways** to provide the ability **to make smart decisions** in **their everyday life**. For instance by releasing school meals as open data, parents in Helsingborg can plan their evening meals based on what their children ate for lunch using the app "Skolmaten". Another example is open road data as a complement to traffic data and ongoing construction work allowing travellers to plan their trip in real time with the app Waze. In this case we extend the use of open data through a data partnership to maximize the number of end-users and advantages within the city.

We believe in **data transparency** both as a fundamental of democracy and as a stepping-stone for innovation. **Peter Dan-**

Peter Danielsson

ielsson, the Mayor of Helsingborg, states that

"The possibility for citizens and business to make use of our data will enable them to understand and participate in official decision-making processes. Therefore, openness of information is crucial for a democratic organisation like the City of Helsingborg".

Helsingborg likes the idea of a **change in management** – outsourcing work by providing data to others to create new services. **Open data has in itself no value** - the **value is** only **reached when** the **data is consumed by users** of the applications **and services** that are built with the help of this data. **The goal** of the Open Helsingborg **is to maximise the number of end-users by including as many people as possible** in the project and to give them the opportunity to influence what data would be made available and how it would be done. This ongoing discussion is held with those who are developing new services based on open data as well as with the consumers of those services, both internally and externally in the publishing organizations. Open Helsingborg is also finding various ways to **support those who are developing services** and those who are about to publish open data, mainly through knowledge and support.

Achievements so far

The city has **published open data since 2015** in various themes and types. Among these are the Helsingborg basemap, aerial photographs, fault reports, property borders, parkings, schools, event/incidents information, school meals etc.

Before releasing a dataset we have made **considerations about** several issues such as **integrity** and **privacy** issues as well as **legal rights** and **financial issues**. The pre-release work has also involved discussions regarding format, platform and how to spread the word. Recently we started to raise the question of **service aspects** in these discussions as well, for instance how to encourage more actors to make use of the data and how to facilitate the creation of new services in order to increase the number of end-users. Already we can see that **open data can in fact replace some services** being facilitated by the city.

- Open data being used by local newspaper.
- Open data being used by organizations like Open Street Map and Esri.
- Open data being used in apps like "Skolmaten" and "Parkera i Helsingborg" (Parking in Helsingborg).
- Faster customer servicer – "grab what you need from the shelf".
- Unburdened administrators.
- Customers who used to decline high quality products can now afford them.
- Winner in the category "Public organization" in the Open Knowledge Awards 2016.

Challenges

With the end-goal of releasing as much data as possible, the **challenge** has been **to convince decision-makers** that **there is no harm or danger in releasing data**. Early on in the process we therefore made sure to properly take integrity discussions into consideration and hold discussions on the balance between privacy and transparency. But as the founder of Open Helsingborg use to say – **oftentimes the worst that happens is that no one cares**. For that reason we normally publish data and correct it con-

tinuously rather than spending too much time assuring that all is perfect before giving it a go.

We aim to reach a **best practice in using standards**, **data** and **terminology**, when there are several or no standards available. Further on we will focus on **developing common criteria** towards program and application suppliers and common internal data principles in order to simplify the ambition to become an open and digital city.

Onwards the city **aims to set a model** throughout its administrations **that data is open by default** – unless integrity, security or business questions arise. With the current work in progress to be a smarter city this will be an important fundament to build a sustainable platform for co-working and the sharing of data and services.

Story: Basemap

The city planning office maintains a high detail base map with features like roads, parks and houses. This data is usually put to work when planning, granting building permits, in construction projects or other internal city applications. However, now any person or company can use the base map for free as it was released as open data by January 2017.

Several hundred downloads are registered and examples of usage and innovation but also cheaper in-house administration are expected to arise over time. Data is already feeding the OpenStreetMap which in turn supplies thousands of apps with geographic base data - one example of this is PokemonGo.

Want to know more?

Öppna Helsingborg:
http://oppna.helsingborg.se

Best practices: Castilla y León (ES): Open Data Portal Link

Brief description

In 2012, the Regional Government of Castilla y León implemented the Open Government Model based on the principles of **transparency**, **participation** and **collaboration**. One of those initiatives is the **Open Data Portal**, where the Administration makes **information accessible to citizens and companies**. This information is free, updated, well-structured and available in formats that facilitate its reuse. The portal was launched with 80 datasets and **currently contains more than 300 datasets**.

Objectives

- Greater transparency and accessibility in the information offered by the Administration

- Providing data to citizens and companies that allow them to develop new applications and services, improving the collaboration between administrations, citizens and companies.

Achievements so far

- Encouraging the dissemination and dynamisation of the use of the data included in the portal by organising training sessions attended by companies and educational centres.

- Open Data Competition: http://www.datosabiertos.jcyl.es/web/jcyl/RISP/es/Plantilla66y33/1284380753564/_/_/_
  - Two editions were made in 2013 and 2014 with more than 50 projects submitted. In 2017, there will be a new one. This competition has facilitated to disseminate what Open Data is and, in particular, the existence of the Open Data Portal of the Regional Government of Castilla y León. This venture is how the private sector has become aware the possibilities handling public data.

- Enabling citizens and businesses to ask for new data sets, in addition to using existing data. The Regional Government of Castilla y León consider each request we received and if the data are available and we can afford transforming them into open formats with our own resources, those data are integrated into the Open Data Portal.

- To keep on improving the quantity and quality of data: improving the existing datasets, the constant incorporation of new data sets, or the launch of a tool for visualization and exploitation of the main data sets of the platform.

Challenges

The lack of knowledge both within the regional organisation and by the citizens about the concept of open data and its possibilities.

The dissemination of the existence of the Portal in our large community (94.225 km2) and with a very low population density (almost 2.5 million inhabitants).

Juan Vicente Herrera Campo, President of Castilla y León

"The Open Government Model, launched in 2012, has materialized with the development of the following actions: a) To allocate a specific space for the Open Government on the corporate Website of the Regional Government of Castilla y León. b) Start an Open Government Blog as a place of communication and debate between the citizens and the Government, on these issues. c) Create an Open Data Portal of Castilla y León that includes the collection of public data that the Regional Administration makes available to citizens. d) Publish unified information of the Regional Government transparency,

following transparency indicators of the Transparency International Organization. e) To establish, in the space allocated for Open Government, a tool that allows certain draft laws, plans, programs, strategies and public initiatives of interest to the entire community, to be debated and supported with the opinions of the citizens of Castilla y León. f) To promote the participation of the Government on the most popular social networking sites."

Want to know more?

Open Data Portal
http://www.datosabiertos.jcyl.es

Juan Vicente
Herrera Campo

Best practices: Open Sofia

Brief description

Sofia is the first Bulgarian city that started opening up data in 2015. On opensofia.info portal, created under a project supported by the Fund for Innovations (Sofia Development Association) and Europe Program of Sofia Municipality, the first sets of data were published in 2015.

Also published were the Sofia Municipal budget from 2012 to 2016, Public Procurement Register from 2011 to 2016, Register of donations, List of licensed appraisers, Register of local referendums, Register of associations of owners of buildings in condominium, etc. The open date sets were published also in the government open data official page https://opendata.government.bg from 2016.

Achievements so far

Currently Sofia Municipality has published more than 25 sets of data and the process continues.

Based on this initiative, Sofia Municipality organised in 2016 the first Municipal 24-hours Hackathon. 600 students from 7 Universities took part in it. Twenty teams succeeded in managing their presentations and creating minimum viable products which they demonstrated to the audience and jury. The winner project was Your Sofia: multilingual application for smart phones, with which everyone has the opportunity to search and find information, create their own routes to the place where they want to go, in accordance with their interests and opportunities. The Sofia municipality undertook to implement the winning project. The multilingual application will be presented at the Webit festival in April, 2017.

The city is increasingly generating big data from connected sensor networks, particularly in the field of environment (air quality sensors, noise pollution), jobs and skills in the local economy (a mix of sources, including job portals, job adverts on enterprise websites and job vacancy data from third party sources), mobility and transportation. The most well developed city big data infrastructure is in the area of urban mobility, which includes sources like in-ground parking sensors, digitalised parking fees, smart traffic lights, smart public transport, digitalised public transport stops. Sofia has full coverage with LoRaWAN network.

Want to know more?

Open Sofia www.opensofia.info

Malina Edreva, Sofia local Councillor

"Sofia is the first Bulgarian city that started open data in 2015. The city Sofia is increasingly generating big data from connected sensor networks, particularly in the field of environment (air quality sensors, noise pollution), jobs and skills in the local economy (a mix of sources, including job portals, job adverts on enterprise websites and job vacancy data from third party sources), mobility and transportation. The most well developed city big data infrastructure in in the area of urban mobility, which includes sources like in-ground parking sensors, digitalized parking fees, smart traffic lights, smart public transport, digitalized public transport stops. Sofia has full coverage with LoRaWAN network."

Malina
Edreva

Best Practices:
Helsinki Region Infoshare

Brief description

The **Helsinki Region Infoshare (HRI) service** aims to make regional information quickly and easily accessible to all. Essentially, HRI is a web service for fast and easy access to open data sources between the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen. The data published is mainly statistical, giving a comprehensive and diverse outlook on different urban phenomena, such as living conditions, economics and well-being, employment and transport.

The data can be used in research and development activities, decision-making, visualisation, data journalism and in the development of apps. The data may be used by citizens, businesses, universities, academies, research facilities or municipal administration. The data on offer is ready to be used freely at no cost.

The main operational activity is to support the producers of information in opening their data and to increase its utilisation by multi-channel communication. More information about the operational areas can be found here: http://www.hri.fi/en/about/project-sectors/

Objectives

- Open data can be used by citizens, businesses, universities and municipal administration.

- Open data is useful raw material in research and development activities, decision-making, visualisations, data journalism and in developing user-driven mobile apps.

Achievements so far

The open data sets have been utilised in many ways by different stakeholders. You can check out many cases on HRI app gallery. The most downloaded open data sets in Helsinki Region are the City of Helsinki procurement data, historical aerial photos and postal code areas. One of the most successful innovation based on open data is a smartphone app Blindsquare which helps blind people to navigate in urban environment.

Want to know more?

Helsinki Region Infoshare
http://www.hri.fi/en/

Sirpa Hertell, Vice Chair of the Espoo City Council

Sirpa Hertell

The Helsinki Region has been at the forefront of opening up local and regional data for all users already for a number of years and the benefits have been numerous. Citizens feel that their participation and voice makes a difference and entrepreneurs as well as businesses are able to take the data that we provide as local and regional authorities and transform it into new business models and more efficient city management. Open data truly gives something to us all.

Best practices: Public consultation and Livestream in Harghita (RO)

Objective

The objective of the initiative is to involve citizens in the decision-making process by providing information on certain topics and seek for opinions on how to deal with issues of importance.

Brief description

The President of the Harghita County Council, **Csaba Borboly**, launched his first **public consultation** on his **social media platform** at the beginning of 2016. The **aim** of the public consultation **is to provide information on specific topics/public issues** and to **make people's voices heard** in upcoming activities of the local administration. In order to contribute to an effective public administration and management based on a bottom-up approach through the public consultation, **citizens have the opportunity** to **express their opinion, make recommendations, amendments** or to **vote** on different approaches on how to deal with an issue. After a consultation ends, the results are analysed, published, and disclosed with the members of the Council and the staff of the department responsible for the issue.

Public consultation focuses on a **wide range of areas**, such as **local economy,** **tourism, education, youth policy, infrastructure, investments** and so on.

Similarly to the public consultation, the president of the County Council has launched his first **livestream** in the beginning of 2016. So far citizens have been **informed on public issues** and **public decision-making processes** through 72 livestreams, covering topics related not only to local public issues, but also in what concerns the political decisions of the European Committee of the Regions (as he is a Member). The **main idea** of this is to **inform** and **involve people in "real time"**, to ensure transparency in decision making and to open up data at all levels.

Csaba Borboly, President of the Harghita County Council

"I believe that simply making information available is not sufficient to achieve transparency and accountability in decision making process. We need to focus on the strong and active involvement of citizens by providing tools for opinion sharing at every possible level."

Want to know more?

The Facebook page of "Konzultáció Borboly Csabával" ("Consultation with Borboly Csaba") can be accessed at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/groups/641571599341625/

Livestreams can be followed on https://www.facebook.com/borbolycsaba/

Csaba Borboly

Best practices: Fix My Street, Brussels (BE)

Fix My Street is an **app** that offers people the **possibility to report problems** they encounter on the **public highway** in Brussels. These problems may range from a pothole in a road to a cycle path covered with leaves or a defective street lamp. The application sends the **report to the street system manager** or the person in charge. The **user is** then **kept informed** as to the status of the solution being found to the reported problem.

The app Fix My Street is very popular in Brussels with **more than 30.000 reported incidents** in a year. From 2017 onwards it will also be possible to report public cleanliness issues via Fix My Street.

The app Fix My Street had been launched in 2013 by **Brigitte Grouwels**, the former Minister of the Brussels-Capital Region, responsible for Mobility, Public Works and Informatics. Brigitte Grouwels: *"The success of Fix My Street clearly indicates that the people of Brussels want to contribute to the construction of a more high-performance Brussels Region, in close collaboration with the government."*

Want to know more?

Fix My Street is available free of charge via the Apple Store and Google Play. An internet version of the app can also be used via the addres www.fixmystreet.brussels. Technology federation Agoria already gave the app their Smart City Award.

Brigitte Grouwels

Best practices: Transparency and Open Government Portal & Participatory Budgets of CARM 2017, Murcia (ES)

Transparency and Open Government Portal

Brief description

The **Transparency and Open Government Portal** of the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia is the website that **gathers all contents** of active publicity established **in the regional legislation** on transparency in a **clear**, **structured** and **understandable way for all citizens**, in order to enable all citizens to obtain quality information and easy access to it.

It is framed within a process that aims to introduce the culture and practice of the Open Government into the Public Administration of the Region of Murcia, as it gives access to transparency information and also to specific portals in terms of public participation and open data of the Region.

Objective

Bringing Administration close to citizens through the accountability and transparency practice and citizen participation in the administrative activity of the Regional Administration.

Achievements so far

* All public-sector entities with all their transparency information are included on the regional portal.

* Number of visits to the transparency portal: 257,557 pages seen | 63,768 sessions.

* It is a portal that, during the independent and external bi-annual evaluation carried out by the non-lucrative organization of reference in the sector, Transparencia Internacional España, the Region of Murcia has obtained the highest score for the qualitative evaluation conducted (Level A). In such evaluation, aspects like reuse, a clear and accessible explanation, presence of graphics, periodicity of updates, etc. were taken into account.

Action and management of transparency from the government must be essential to the system of rights and freedoms. We must insist on our commitment to the culture of the demand for information and accountability as a way of showing the unequivocal will of this Administration to implant the culture of open government in all aspects.

Want to know more?

http://transparencia.carm.es

Participatory Budgets of CARM 2017

Brief description

Participatory Budgeting constitutes a **tool of citizen participation** and **participatory democracy**, through which **citi-**

zens can allocate a part of the public resources and **prioritise** the **best solutions** for existing needs.

The Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia has started a pilot experiment of citizen participation in the elaboration of a draft autonomous budget for 2017, framed in the principles of **representative democracy**, **transparency** and **efficiency**. Experiments at a local level already existed in the Spanish State, but not at a regional level. This is indeed the first experiment ever conducted in Spain at a regional level.

Participatory budgets have been achieved **through public consultation** containing an **online questionnaire** that allowed citizens to prioritise action projects. This public consultation was based on the results obtained from face-to-face meetings with representative collectives and associations in each sector. Likewise, it is expected that all actions, selected through this tool, are taken by the Administration and monitored on the Transparency Portal.

Objective

Facilitating citizen participation in the decision-making process for the elaboration of regional budgets for 2017. We may prioritize the expenditure on certain projects of the budgetary programs of 2017 and build trust in institutions and transparency in the design, development or execution of public policies of the Region of Murcia.

Achievements so far

- 7,250,000 € has been subjected to a public consultation, in which citizens will prioritize the expenditure of 90 specific projects.

- In such public consultation, 3,173 citizens, as well as another 144 entities or representative associations of the sectors affected have participated.

- A total of 44 projects, subjected to public consultation, have been incorporated into the regional budget of 2017.

Want to know more?

All the information about participatory budgets of the CARM is available at the following link:

http://transparencia.carm.es/presupuestos-participativos

Pedro Antonio Sánchez López, President of the Region of Murcia

"Even though this is certainly a step further, we are not going to stop here, this is no political opportunism or a mere legal requirement but an absolute conviction, as it represents a benefit for the new region.

Our aim is to offer more detailed information, so all citizens can know about the decisions we make and how public resources are used. This way, the Region of Murcia will be an example in terms of transparency, citizen participation and open government, as accountability is a synonym for honesty, responsibility and vocation towards public service.

The objective is to illustrate trust but with capacity of assessment, analysis and public scrutiny, a responsibility we take on because we know we are accountable."

Pedro Antonio Sánchez López

epp group
in the european committee of the regions

European Committee
of the Regions

The European People's Party Group in the
European Committee of the Regions

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