



Ministry of the Interior and
Kingdom Relations

Open Government Partnership

Self-Assessment Report The Netherlands 2014



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Introduction

Society is changing. Rapid advances in such diverse fields as information and communication technology, education and media, internationalization and individualization are reshaping citizens' expectations of their government. In response, the Dutch government is taking steps aimed at opening up the relationships between government and citizens. These steps include: more active gathering and use of ideas and views of citizens; greater transparency about the workings and aims of government; providing citizens with more appropriate and simpler information; making more data available for re-use in order to promote innovation and entrepreneurship; and being more open to innovation. All these initiatives are being carried out in the conviction that the relationships between government and citizens can and should be made more open than has so far been the case.

When the then Member of the House of Representatives El Fassed (*GroenLinks*: Dutch Green Left Party) asked the government why the Netherlands had not yet joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP), as initiated by such high-profile leaders as US President Obama and UK Prime Minister Cameron, the OGP was perceived as a good opportunity to achieve within a broader framework the ideals that were already being pursued with open data, digitization and citizen-focused projects.

Accordingly, an Open Government programme was started up in the Netherlands at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. After consultation with citizens, civil society organizations and civil servants, the ministry drew up a vision document and an action plan in 2013 that was presented to the House of Representatives on behalf of the cabinet. This 2014-2015 Action Plan is currently being put into action. This first self-assessment report sets out how the plan was developed as well as the progress made with the implementation so far.

The Netherlands' participation in the OGP is a powerful source of energy and opportunities to learn from the experiences in other countries. At the same time, it imposes an obligation on the Netherlands to meet specific conditions and reporting requirements. This self-assessment, for instance, stems directly from the OGP requirements.

However, we are happy to fulfil our obligations as participants in the OGP, as we know that this can help to advance the Dutch efforts towards more open government. A self-assessment makes it clear what has been achieved and what can be done better.

Moving towards Open Government

Before joining the OGP and starting the Open Government programme in 2014, the Netherlands was already engaged in several initiatives to achieve more open government. Research and advisory councils explored how the government could and should become more open¹; various private initiatives were being undertaken to realize public objectives; and projects and strategies were being taken in hand across the public sector with a view to making government more open: more responsive, more informative, more public, more service-minded, more transparent and more accountable. The Open Government programme seeks to connect and concentrate the vast amount of energy that is being put into all these initiatives in a single joined-up movement in order to bring about a far-reaching and broad-based change in the way in which government and society, civil servants and individual citizens deal with each other. This is the driving force that prompted the launch of the Open Government programme.

1 For example: the Future Government Communication Committee, *In dienst van de democratie* (2001), National ombudsman, *Naar een open Nederlandse overheid*. *Visie van de Nationale ombudsman op een open overheid* (2011), Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), *Vertrouwen in burgers* (2012), Council for Public Administration (ROB), *Gij zult openbaar maken* (2012).

Ambitions

The Netherlands is a fairly open country with high levels of political participation (high election turnout),² participation in training and education,³ and internet connectivity and online communication⁴. Various effective mechanisms are in place to ensure public accountability and promote the integrity of government, such as the parliamentary checks and balances and ministerial responsibility, courts of audit and ombudsmen, Certificates of Good Conduct, the Freedom of Information Act (*Wet Openbaarheid Bestuur*), the mandatory oath or pledge for civil servants, integrity codes and policy protocols.

But there is still room for improvement, particularly with regard to the active publication of government information via various – online and offline – channels and the provision of access to open data.⁵ In addition, the open government efforts can “benefit from the fact that many citizens and businesses are keen to contribute ideas and play an active role in finding and implementing solutions [to social issues].”⁶

The Netherlands is therefore focusing its Open Government efforts on pro-active openness⁷ linked to civic participation: “If you want to reinforce the connection between government and citizens, the obvious way forward is to assign greater weight to pro-active openness than has been done in practice so far. Citizens must be properly informed at an early stage of the policy-making process and be given room to participate.”⁸ After all, “transparency and openness of government” are “crucial in enabling citizens to scrutinize and check government and its activities in the public sector.”⁹

The greatest challenge in the framework of Open Government is to effectuate the transition from theoretical possibility to practical application, harnessing new technology wherever appropriate. For instance, the ‘make public unless’ principle as laid down in the Freedom of Information Act should not merely be a commitment on paper, but must be actively pursued in practice by bringing about a change in attitude in the public sector.¹⁰

The ambitions have been translated into an Open Government Action Plan 2014-2015, mainly by bringing together activities that were already in progress and intensifying the ambitions on open data and active publication.

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- 2 See, for example, Kiesraad databank, or Flash Eurobarometer 189a, 2006: “online participation in political discussions is the most widespread in Denmark (30%), the Netherlands and Finland (both 21%)”
 - 3 OECD, *Education at a glance 2014*
 - 4 Eurostat 2013: “In most Member States, the level of internet access was high in 2013, with shares of more than 90% in the Netherlands (95% of households)” and “More than half of all individuals in Denmark (85%), the Netherlands (79%), Sweden (78%), Finland (69%), France (60%), Luxembourg (56%), Austria (54%) and Slovenia (52%) reported in 2013 that they have used the internet to contact or interact with public authorities and services.”
 - 5 See e.g. ROB *Gij zult openbaar maken 2012* and WRR *Vertrouwen in burgers 2012*
 - 6 Open Government Vision (*Visie Open Overheid*) p. 8
 - 7 Open Government Vision (*Visie Open Overheid*) p. 5
 - 8 Open Government Vision (*Visie Open Overheid*) p. 8
 - 9 Open Government Vision (*Visie Open Overheid*) p. 9
 - 10 Open Government Vision (*Visie Open Overheid*) p. 10

Developing the Vision and Action Plan

In September 2011 the Netherlands announced its intention to join the Open Government Partnership. The Netherlands has thus committed to the Open Government Declaration¹¹ and the four OGP pillars: access to information, civic participation, public accountability and innovation.

A draft action plan was prepared, after which the Month of Open Government was organized in October 2012. In that month various meetings were organized with diverse public and civil society organizations and citizens. Reports were shared online and participants in the meetings were kept informed of developments in the ensuing period.

During the preparations for the Month of Open Government, the then cabinet resigned and took on caretaker status. As a caretaker cabinet merely handles day-to-day government business and initiates no new policies, the communication on Open Government initiatives had to be adapted accordingly in this period. In concrete terms, this entailed that extensive use was made of Facebook, Twitter, direct mailing and the open.overheid.nl portal to make sure people remained involved, but without undertaking active efforts to generate new ideas and projects. The caretaker cabinet deliberately refrained from setting out any further Open Government ambitions; this was left to the next cabinet.

Under the responsibility of the current minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Minister Plasterk, a civic participation event entitled 'Oploop Open Overheid' was organized on 4 March 2013. All previous participants in the Month of Open Government were invited to attend. In addition, social media were again mobilized to advertise the event to a wider public. At the event, people could take part in various workshops on Open Government subjects. The government also took advantage of the occasion to present the draft version of its Open Government Vision. The feedback on this document was incorporated in a second version which was presented in April 2013 for consultation together with the Action Plan.

In May 2013 the draft Open Government Vision and Open Government Action Plan were discussed in a meeting with the Open Government Inspiration Team. This Inspiration Team basically consists of a network of stakeholders and interested parties who have indicated a willingness to actively support the development towards Open Government.

From May to August the vision document and action plan were discussed with the ministries.¹² This consultation took more time than anticipated, mainly because the funding of the various actions required further clarification. In September 2013 the Open Government Vision and the Open Government Action Plan were presented by the cabinet to the House of Representatives.

The Vision is aimed at the transition towards open government over a period of ten years or more. The Action Plan relates to activities that will be undertaken in the next two years with a view to achieving these long-term changes.

The general objective and the underlying motivation are set out in the Vision. This document explains in detail the background of and reasons for the drive towards Open Government. It also mentions the projects and programmes that contribute to or promote Open Government.

11 <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/open-government-declaration>

12 Ministries of General Affairs, the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Economic Affairs, Finance, Infrastructure and the Environment, Education, Culture and Science, Social Affairs and Employment, Security and Justice, Health, Welfare and Sport.

The Action Plan for the years 2014-2015 lists examples of projects as well as projects that are to be newly launched in support of the vision. The document states that “the drive towards Open Government is not just about all sorts of actions being launched from government organizations, but above all about creating a platform for all initiatives being undertaken to promote more openness.”¹³ In other words, apart from the programmes and projects set out in the Action Plan, further initiatives that contribute towards the four OGP pillars are also being undertaken in wider society.

Though the strategy is not specifically described as such, the implication is that the policy aims both to support and implement concrete projects as well as to connect government and civil society organizations that are working in some way or other on more Open Government. The Open Government programme assumes that more openness is achieved above all “in a very practical way, quite simply by doing and experimenting, with ideas and instructive experiences starting on a small scale and slowly developing into new working methods and insights.”¹⁴

13 Open Government Action Plan (*Actieplan Open Overheid*) p. 11. Though this quotation refers to ‘all initiatives’, other references mention that the list is not complete.

14 Open Government Vision (*Visie Open Overheid*) p. 5

Background documentation

The reference framework for Open Government is set out in the Open Government Declaration, in the Open Government Vision, in memoranda of Dutch delegations to OGP meetings and in introductory talks given by stakeholders at Open Government meetings. It is clear what Open Government is about – transparency/ access to information, civic participation, public accountability and innovation – and the need to promote these in our present-day society is broadly acknowledged and recognized.¹⁵

The introduction of the vision document explains that in the networked information society the government is an important provider and user of information, and that this leads to more openness.¹⁶ This new information landscape, which gradually evolved in the first decade of the 21st century, has been extensively analysed in countless publications of advisory bodies, scientific researchers and internal and external strategic advisers. These analyses can be found in e.g. project proposals aimed at advancing various aspects of Open Government.

15 As is evident from reports of Open Government meetings and the focus group research

16 Open Government Vision (*Visie Open Overheid*) p. 7

Programme

Before the Netherlands signed up to the Open Government Partnership, various initiatives were already being undertaken, albeit not under the name of 'Open Government'. These concerned open data, digitization and citizen-focused services. When the request came from the House of Representatives to join the Open Government Partnership, the connection between these initiatives was self-evident: all these initiatives fit in with good and open government in the networked information society.

Since the implementation of the Action Plan started in January 2014, a programme team at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has been busy assisting the process.

The programme structure:

- Project teams at diverse public and private organizations carry out action points. The Action Plan describes who the 'action owner' is;
- The Programme Team, consisting of 5 FTEs and positioned within the Citizenship and Information Policy Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, is responsible for managing (directing, budget control and accountability) and implementing the Open Government programme. The team is under the direction of a coordinator and falls within the responsibility of the head of the Interaction Department;
- There is a Stimulation Group comprising high civil servants which discusses the progress of Open Government at strategic level under the direction of the secretary-general of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. These are senior civil servants from public and semi-public organizations (Ministry of Finance, Tax Department, National Road Traffic Authority (RDW), etc.), research (Professor in Public Administration) and civil society organizations (ProDemos, Open State Foundation). The Stimulation Group makes no decisions, but acts as a driver, stimulating the process from a constructive/critical perspective. Some members of the group fulfil an active role in the progress of specific initiatives.
- An Inspiration Team consisting of "various stakeholders and interested parties who have indicated a willingness to actively support the development towards Open Government"¹⁷ meet twice a year to support the Programme Team. This team now comprises over 400 individuals who are engaged in Open Government from their role in government or civil society organizations or as independent individuals. In addition to the half-yearly meetings, they are also invited to attend lunchtime talks that are organized several times a year by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations;
- The Open Government Learning and Expertise Centre (LEOO Expertise Centre), which is positioned within ICTU (ICT Implementing Organization of and for the government) on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The LEOO Expertise Centre consists of two ICTU staff members. Their tasks are to develop a website (before the end of 2014) containing practical information for the implementation of Open Government and to expand the LEOO Expertise Centre in 2015.

17 Open Government Action Plan (*Actieplan Open Overheid*) p. 11

Public participation

During the development of the Vision and the Action Plan, a great deal was invested in consultation with citizens (by means of focus groups) and enthusiastic public and semi-public professionals (by means of meetings). The reports on the focus groups/citizen panels and inspiration meetings were used to describe Open Government and to form a clear picture of the needs and wishes of society. In addition, attention was devoted to setting up an organizational structure, with an inspiration team and a stimulation group, in order to facilitate broad-based consultation. Various online media such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook were, and still are, used to communicate with interested parties, while online surveys and consultations were performed where possible. All these efforts are designed to 'practise what we preach' by achieving alignment with society's concrete needs for more Open Government.

Experience shows that there is enthusiasm and support for Open Government among individuals and organizations both inside and outside government, but that few parties take a comprehensive broad-based approach to Open Government. The challenge, therefore, is to join up the diverse sub-movements that are aimed at specific areas and specific pillars of the programme in order to arrive at a single overall approach.

Results

Various results have been achieved in the Netherlands in relation to the four aspects of Open Government: access to information, civic participation in policy and decision-making, transparency and accountability, and innovation. There is a system for internet consultation, a legislative calendar and government documents are published online. Innovation is encouraged by means of an innovator network called Slimmernetwerk. In a short space of time, numerous public organizations have joined the open spending initiative and considerable efforts have gone into promoting open data. There is an integrity monitor and various government agencies and public organizations pursue a targeted integrity policy. The LEOO Expertise Centre is developing a website, keeps up a blog, runs a Twitter account and co-organizes meetings. Among other things, the LEOO Expertise Centre works together with municipal experts who have joined forces in the learning community of large municipalities to search for answers to numerous questions about Open Government. Many government institutions are also taking part in projects aimed at improving their interaction skills (the Informal Proactive Approach Model (*Prettig contact met de overheid*)) and promoting citizen-focused services. Two ministries are trialling the active publication of reports and opportunities for more 'tailor-made' government information are being explored.

The Action Plan indicates for each action point what the project entails (what is going to be done). In some cases the envisaged results and effects are also stated. In the Appendix, a progress update is given for each action point.

Analysis

A picture has been sketched of the Open Government programme based on the texts written in connection with the Open Government programme, current and past research for a social cost/benefit analysis, interviews and consultation with stakeholders.¹⁸ This picture was reviewed and assessed against general standards of good policy.¹⁹ This was mainly done to learn how the Open Government programme can be improved in order to bring the vision closer to reality.

Strategic

Open Government is a programme that is being driven by a great deal of idealism and positive thinking, both internationally and in the Netherlands. Investments have been made in gauging society's questions, wishes and needs in relation to Open Government. What Open Government entails and why it matters has been described and discussed. An initial list has been made of the actions that can contribute towards more open government. Moreover, many activities have already been undertaken to promote a broad-based movement towards more Open Government.

Certain specific challenges have also been identified. Experience shows, for instance, that despite the broad interest in more Open Government, few parties adopt an overall approach that comprises all aspects of Open Government. The number of special interest groups that engage at a general level in Open Government (such as Open State Foundation) is similarly limited. A restricted focus on a specific area makes it easier to find such special interest groups, but can also lead to one-sided input and a lack of dissent. The challenge, therefore, is to establish a connection between specific organizations and networks that are active in sub-areas and domains of Open Government (such as Digitale Steden Agenda, Active Democracy (*Doe-Democratie*)) and the wider objectives of the programme.

The self-assessment also reveals that, after a flying start, the programme now requires consolidation and a sharper focus. Various aspects of the Vision and Action Plan need to be worked out into more concrete objectives and focused actions in order to permit better feasibility assessments (prior to implementation) and make results more measurable (after implementation). This will result in smarter allocation of capacity/time/budget, thus making it easier for the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to mobilize expertise and support that is not necessarily present within its own organization, such as technical knowledge (digitization, IT). An additional benefit is that this will also help to ensure the accountable use of resources and reduce the risk of energy draining away.

The plans, objectives and results must therefore be described in more concrete and, above all, SMARTer terms. The current Action Plan, in which eighteen action points are identified and linked to action owners, provides a solid foundation. This, as noted, must now be developed into more detailed objectives, timelines for deliverables, explanations of how the deliverables help to achieve the general objective of Open Government, the indicators and methods used to measure progress, and the input necessary to deliver the results. More attention should also be devoted to the possible side-effects and risks attendant on the diverse actions. Finally, a communication plan, linked to a target group or context analysis, can also assist the more effective use of resources. The steps undertaken in the summer of 2014 to draw up a communication strategy seem to be a positive development in this direction.

Consolidation and a sharper focus can also mean setting clearer priorities, i.e. choosing what to do and what not to do. This will become simpler when objectives have been described in concrete terms and when a more detailed policy theory is available. A policy theory indicates why the existing situation deviates from

¹⁸ See Appendix 1 for the explanation of how this self-assessment was made.

¹⁹ See 'integraal afwegingskader voor beleid en regelgeving IAK': <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/nieuws/2010/10/12/integraal-afwegingskader-voor-beleid-en-regelgeving-iaak-gepresenteerd.html>

the ideal and what factors influence this. This, in turn, leads to a clearer formulation of the problem and objective, as well as better insight into the causal relationship with instruments. Crucial in this context is the awareness that Open Government is a political project that is driven by civil servants and will mainly have noticeable consequences for the civil service organization. Continuing alignment with political wishes and social effects must therefore be closely monitored on an ongoing basis.

A final observation is that an organizational structure has been put in place to carry out the Open Government programme. To make this structure even more effective, the roles, duties and responsibilities of the Programme Team should be made more explicit. A clear description of duties and roles also provides more clarity regarding the added value of the programme-based approach as expressed in the activities of the Programme Team.

Substantive

The interviews for the self-assessment revealed that more attention could be devoted to gathering examples from other countries (OGP partners) and translating the learning points into Dutch actions. The most appropriate party for this task must still be decided: the Programme Team, the LEOO Expertise Centre or a different organizational unit.

Some organizations that contribute towards this already exist, such as Slimmernetwerk (innovator network), Open State Foundation, Kennisland, ECP, ProDemos and – from 2001 to 2005 – the Xpin programme. The LEOO Expertise Centre could possibly also make a contribution to these efforts in 2015 on top of the results to be agreed upon in the LEOO year plan. The LEOO Expertise Centre can be expected to provide an analysis of the required functions (e.g. by studying the success or failure of Xpin) as well as a description (in SMART terms) of its contribution to Open Government.

Given the changed context of advisers, software developers and the active civil society sector – ranging from large consultancies with client acquisition capability to small start-ups and self-employed people who cannot afford to spend much time on consultation in The Hague – more effort could be invested in seeking out relevant actors and responding to their ideas or needs.

One of the most frequently heard comments about open data, online government communication and digital services relates to the lack of knowledge at government organizations regarding information management and digitization. The Open Government programme, which is explicitly focused on bringing about changes within government, could address this through e.g. the LEOO Expertise Centre which is tasked with the joint learning and development of knowledge and expertise.

Complaints from citizens about government, as picked up by e.g. the National Ombudsman, often concern difficulties finding the correct person, the correct agency or the correct information within government. Another problem is that many citizens see digitization of services as an *obstacle* and a restriction of good services and personal contact. The Open Government programme could tackle these issues,²⁰ possibly in conjunction with the 2017 Digitization programme.

20 *Persoonlijk, of niet? Digitaal, of niet? Jaarverslag van de Nationale Ombudsman 2013*, House of Representatives, session year 2013–2014, 33 876, No 2, p. 11

Learning points and challenges

1. The programme can become more focused by making the ambitions and objectives more specific and linking these to direct or indirect social added value. The IAK (Comprehensive Assessment Framework) could be helpful in this connection as this model makes objectives, results, policy theory and input more explicit and, as such, facilitates public scrutiny of government. In combination with the new communication strategy, this could help to create a clear message and powerful movement.
2. Clear insight into the material benefits and costs of more open government will also enhance the programme's credibility and appeal. Ensure that success is demonstrable, so that it can be used to justify further activities.
3. Pro-active openness and transparency has been one of the key pillars of the vision since the outset. This could be reflected even more in the activities by linking the findability and accessibility of information to more concrete activities, ideally based on input from citizens (requests, wishes, bottlenecks and problems) regarding access to, or information from, the government.
4. The vision has a strong positive motivation. More attention devoted to the disadvantages, risks and possible undesirable side-effects of openness could help to work out the best way of dealing with these.
5. By organizing consultation and actively looking for information, parties or individuals with objections to Open Government and the nature and background of these objections can be identified. Support for the programme can be determined and assessed in the same manner. This knowledge can be used to review the programme and measure results. Ongoing progress assessments are important, particularly as Open Government is partly about culture change.
6. The programme has the ambition to bring ongoing initiatives closer together – not in order to control the process, but to facilitate exchange of knowledge and expertise, and fruitful connections between initiatives. This can be achieved by developing a mechanism whereby all existing activities and active professionals are brought to the knowledge of the Programme Team, for instance by means of an open call, a government-wide survey or recognizable network meetings. The LEOO Expertise Centre is well-placed to carry out this task at the request of and in cooperation with others, making use of interactive tools. One option that could be considered would be to set up an accessible online document-archiving, administration and information sharing website with e.g. Pleio or other open platform.
7. The involvement of civil society organizations can be assured on a more structural basis by giving interest groups a greater say (also on specific issues). The biennial meetings of the Stimulation Group comprising several representatives of such organizations is a start, but alternative or more intensive forms of listening to stakeholders should be considered.
8. The Netherlands could make even more use of the added value of the Open Government Partnership, both by learning from Open Government projects in other countries and at other government agencies as well as by promoting wider knowledge of experiences in the Netherlands. This can have a stimulating and connecting effect for the Dutch Open Government movement.

Sources

- Open Government Partnership Website, *Requirements*
- OGP UK 2011 National Action Plan – Self-Assessment Report
- TNO, Tijs van den Broek, *Dromen over Open Government* (2011?)
- House of Representatives, 10 February 2011 Questions of the MP El Fassed about the Open Government Initiative
- Report of Judith van Male about focus group research, 26 March 2013, *Open overheid*
- Letter to House of Representatives, 25 November 2013, *Beantwoording vragen AO digitale dienstverlening*
- Vision Document (*Visiedocument*), September 2013
- Action Plan (*Actieplan*), September 2013
- Self-assessment report guidance, incl. Commitment completion templates, Open Government Partnership
- 28 November 2013, *Open Government* meeting, Twynstra-Gudde
- 20 January 2014, *Open Government* meeting, auditorium Ministries of the Interior and Kingdom Relations/ Security and Justice
- Netherlands Court of Audit, 25 March 2014, *Tendrapport open data*
- Interview Mirjam Kalverda (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations), 1 August 2014
- Interview Mikis de Winter (LEEO Expertise Centre), 20 August 2014
- Interview Imke Arts-Vrijling (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations), 25 August 2014
- Interview Lex Slaghuis (Open State Foundation), 26 August 2014

Appendix 1

Process Overview

Developing the Self-Assessment

The preparations for the self-assessment of the Open Government Action Plan started in late June 2014. The self-assessment is modelled on the guidance from the Open Government Partnership.²¹ A draft self-assessment was drawn up on the basis of literature, records and interviews. This draft was discussed with the various action owners who are working on the implementation of the Action Plan. Consultation was also held with an important civil society player, namely the Open State Foundation.

Consultation

From Wednesday 17 September the draft self-assessment was made available online for comments during a two-week period. For this purpose, the ministry made use of VOLIS, an interactive platform that was developed by Estonia and is currently being used by Sweden and the Netherlands in several concrete projects. The link to the VOLIS consultation page was shared with the Open Government Inspiration Team; a network of over 400 people working in government and social organizations as well as in business and industry. Several reminders of the possibility to respond to the self-assessment were sent out within this network.

Incorporated reactions

Only a few reactions were received via VOLIS and e-mail. These were partly explanatory questions, partly substantive suggestions. The following comments were adopted:

- “In the first text block of the introduction it is not entirely clear why open data are offered in response to citizens’ changed expectations of government.” In response to this comment, the underlying motivation was added to the phrase about making open data available for re-use: to promote innovation and entrepreneurship.
- “The fifth text block of the introduction contains certain concrete information that actually belongs at the start of the introduction, i.e. before starting to describe the self-assessment.” This text block was brought forward in response to this comment.
- The suggestion to mention the actual launch date of the Open Government programme in the ‘Moving towards Open Government’ chapter was adopted.
- The suggestion to include in the ‘Moving towards Open Government’ chapter some concrete examples of open government studies published by research and advisory councils was also adopted. Several examples are given in a footnote.
- A text block in the first section of the ‘Analysis’ chapter contains a comment about a small number of interest groups that are actively engaged in Open Government. As this raised questions, concrete examples were added between brackets.
- In the ‘Analysis’ chapter one suggestion that had been made in the interviews, but had not yet been properly incorporated, was made more explicit. This concerns the required technical knowledge (digitization, IT) that is not necessarily present at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.
- The fifth text block in the ‘Analysis’ chapter states that more priorities could be set. One suggestion was that the reader would expect a link here to the conclusion in the second text block of the section. This suggestion was not adopted as the authors are of the opinion that the reference in the second sentence already provides a sufficiently clear link to the previously mentioned conclusions.

21 Self-assessment report guidance, incl. Commitment completion templates, Open Government Partnership

Appendix 2

Commitment Completion Templates

Format: Open Government Partnership

Commitment Completion Template				
1a designate categories of government information for active publication				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Citizenship and Information Policy Directorate (designate information categories and adjustment of General Government Terms and Conditions for Public Service Contracts (ARVODI)) and all other departments (active publication of research reports, implementation assessments, procurement information and subsidy information)		
Other involved actors	Government	See above		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	A needs assessment is carried out among citizens/users of government information		
Main Objective		Objective is to apply the 'yes, unless' principle to the availability of government information, so that a gradually growing amount of government information is actively made public.		
Relevance		Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability
		Highly relevant for transparency and access to information	Relevant for civic participation as citizens require sufficient information to participate	Relevant to enable the government to be accountable for activities, decision-making and financial information
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
			x	
Ambition		The ambition is for the government to make both structured information (open data, see action point 2) and unstructured information (policy information) more actively public. However, it is not technically and financially possible to make all public government information immediately and actively public. Many conditions need to be satisfied before information can be made public (implementation), particularly in relation to unstructured information. For this reason, categories of information that can be made available with priority are to be designated. Some initial ideas are: research reports, implementation assessments, procurement information and subsidy information. However, to meet society's demand for public information as closely as possible, a survey will be performed first to assess society's needs and wishes regarding active publication; this survey will be carried out on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, in close cooperation with the Ministry of General Affairs.		

Commitment Completion Template	
1a designate categories of government information for active publication	
Description of the results	<p>The envisaged result is that citizens and other interested parties receive better information on plans, activities, decision-making and other relevant issues so that they can actively participate in society. The provision of information within government itself will also be improved to enable civil servants to make more use of each other's information.</p> <p>The needs assessment has not yet made as much progress as originally thought, because the initial survey design did not produce practicable proposals. A new survey design (needs assessment) was adopted and will be implemented in 2014. Due to the delay, specific information categories have not yet been selected, other than those mentioned in the Action Plan. However, two ministries are currently trialling the active publication of research reports (see action point 14). No adjustments have been made to the General Government Terms and Conditions for Public Service Contracts (ARVODI) as yet.</p> <p>Regarding subsidy information: the Ministry of Finance, acting in cooperation with the departments, has arranged (in conformity with the wishes of the House of Representatives) for subsidy information to be published annually in the form of open data.</p>
End date	<p>The needs assessment is being carried out in 2014.</p> <p>The trial projects at two ministries will be carried out at the end of 2014 and will be evaluated at the start of 2015 (see action point 14).</p>
Next steps	<p>The outcomes of the needs assessment will be used to select which information (that is not yet made available) must be actively published because there is a need for this in society.</p> <p>The pilot projects involving active publication of research reports should lead to broader application of active publication within central government.</p>
Additional information	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The success of the efforts to advance active publication depends on various factors: to what extent are the government's existing information management systems fit for purpose, to what extent does the organizational culture support active publication, to what extent does the socio-political context promote or inhibit active publication? 2. Alongside the primary focus of this action point, attention is also devoted to the connections between or context of the information. One example is the <i>Linked Data Overheid</i> project which clarifies the connection between government information and Dutch legislation. Formal government information – such as Parliamentary Papers, voting lists, articles of implementing regulations and specific information – contains links to the relevant sections of the law. This makes the legislative process and implementation more transparent. This project is being developed on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, in cooperation with ten government organizations. 	

Commitment Completion Template				
1b information management and active publication: four Open by Design pilots				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations		
Other involved actors	Government	Central government, municipalities, provinces, water boards and implementing agencies		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	Not applicable		
Main Objective		The objective is to realize fast and good access to government information.		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Highly relevant	Indirectly relevant: if the government's information management is fit for purpose and information is actively made public, this will benefit citizens and promote civic participation	Relevant as it makes it possible / easier for government to make (accountability) information available	
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
			x	
Ambition		<p>To realize fast and good access to government information, it is necessary that public openness and open standards are taken on board as much as possible in the design of information systems: Open by Design. To establish what Open by Design means for information systems, experience will be gained in (at least) four pilots. The results of the pilots serve as input for the realization of generic document storage facilities at central government (only the central departments). Pilots are carried out at the levels of central government, municipalities, provinces, water boards and implementing agencies. The pilots have several objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Assess the consequences of creating public access to a policy process in terms of documents, document flows and document archiving; – Assess how the publication process can be made possible and/or easier; – Assess the organizational consequences of the change of information systems (including privacy and security implications); – Assess financial consequences. <p>The outcomes of the pilots can be used to determine to what extent, when and at what costs Open by Design is possible within the government's information management and implementation processes. As with action point 1a, this concerns both structured and unstructured information. The design of both databases (structured information) and information systems (unstructured information) must take account of aspects that contribute towards openness, the degree of openness and permanent, lasting digital access (archiving). These aspects at least comprise open standards and open formats (re-usability of data), meta-dating (searchability and findability of data), linked data (connections between data), privacy, security and accessibility.</p>		
Description of the results		Exploratory talks will be held about the pilots. At the same time, information will be gathered about Open by Design projects already in progress within central government. A direct (causal) social effect can probably not be named. This action point facilitates the other action points relating to active publication (action points 1a, 3 and 4) and open data (action points 2, 3 and 4).		
End date		Timeline: two to three years from September 2013. In autumn 2015/2016 the first generic document storage facilities will be made available for central government. Publication is obviously a key aspect in this connection.		
Next steps		Further implementation of pilots.		
Additional information				
The action point must be realized within the existing cabinet arrangements regarding cost savings and the Reform Agenda. This implies that an attempt will be made to plan the implementation to coincide with 'natural events', such as the replacement of information systems, so that changes can be as cost-neutral as possible. The financial consequences of the action point will be investigated further during and after the pilots.				

Commitment Completion Template				
2 further development and promotion of open data and usage				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations		
Other involved actors	Government	All government organizations		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	Entrepreneurs, civil society organizations, knowledge institutions		
Main Objective		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open data creates more transparency. Capitalize on opportunities to generate economic and social added value from open data. More effective and efficient government. 		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Highly relevant	Indirectly relevant, as citizens can use open data to take initiatives of their own, such as developing handy apps	Highly relevant	
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
			x	x
Ambition		Make high-quality data available on a lasting, permanent basis.		
Description of the results		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open Data NEXT: assemble a list of economic and social issues that can be solved with open data in order to demonstrate the potential and opportunities of open data for government. The solutions are re-usable examples for government agencies and re-users of the data. Breakthrough project entitled 'open geo data as raw material for growth and innovation': public-private partnership (PPP) in which government agencies, entrepreneurs and knowledge institutions are brought together so that the supply and demand sides of open data can find each other more easily. This includes the organization of relay meetings on certain themes based on the needs in the market. Knowledge network: the distribution of knowledge to government agencies that are working, or want to work, on open data initiatives. This includes providing government agencies with guidance on creating access to public data (available via data.overheid.nl), exchanging examples and action plans and an annual conference on open data. Inspiring stories underlining the added value of open data have been drawn up in cooperation with Digitale Steden Agenda. These stories form the basis for a top 20 of data sets which municipalities can make available as open data. Municipalities are encouraged to publish the stories + list of data sets on their own website. Data.overheid.nl: the central site for finding all open data information of the Dutch government will be developed further in order to better meet the wishes and requirements in relation to meta-dating, standardization and the searchability/ findability of open data sets. In addition, data.overheid.nl offers information and knowledge on open data, including the guidance and the best examples and results from the knowledge network (see 3 below), as well as information about the various open data projects. 		
End date		Not applicable		
Next steps		A schedule has been made for the implementation of the five components for 2014. The emphasis for 2015 will be on strengthening the policy principles for open data and an assessment of the most appropriate resources for this purpose.		
Additional information				
Data.overheid.nl				

Commitment Completion Template				
3 financial transparency via Open Budget and Open Spending experiments				
Lead agency		Ministry of Finance (Open Budget) and Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (Open Spending)		
Other involved actors	Government	Ministries of Finance and of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Netherlands Court of Audit		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	Budget Monitoring Amsterdam, Open Knowledge Foundation, Open State Foundation		
Main Objective		Extend the application of the 'open, unless' principle to financial data.		
Relevance		Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability
		Highly relevant	Budget monitoring in Amsterdam has shown that Open Budget can be relevant for civic participation at local level.	Highly relevant
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
			x	
Ambition		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open Budget: at the presentation of the National Budget in 2012 the Ministry of Finance made all departmental budgets available as open data. In 2013 and beyond the ministry wants to make the National Budget available at a more detailed level. Each year, one data set will be added on Budget Day and Accountability Day. The Ministry of Finance creates a data template indicating which information must be made available as open data. In other words: departments already deliver budget information; the aim now is to deliver more actual data (i.e. results). At interdepartmental level it has been agreed that the Ministry of Finance will lead this process, obviously in cooperation with other departments. Actions undertaken by ministries, such as the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, (see hereinafter), take place in this context. Open Spending: under the motto 'practice what you preach' the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is exploring the opportunities and key enablers (substance, technology, process) for opening up the ministry's own spending data with the intention of actively making this available. The aim of the exploratory study is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide insight into the implications of the structural publication of spending information, including an action plan for the implementation of Open Spending at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations; Share the acquired knowledge with other parties within central government, and particularly with the consultative bodies of the 'financial column'. 		
Description of the results		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open Budget: the data template currently being developed by the Ministry of Finance will be ready at the end of 2014. This will be followed by implementation in the financial systems. In addition, a data hunt has taken place at the ministry. The identified data sets will be opened up in the coming years. Other data sets are also being examined in consultation with the departments. 		
End date		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open Budget: 2016 Open Spending: the exploratory study is expected to be completed in the autumn of 2014 		
Next steps		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open Budget: complete and roll out data template across central government Open Spending: discuss outcomes of exploratory study at interdepartmental level and then open up the ministry's own spending data at the same time as other ministries 		
Additional information				
<p>The Open Budget activities are being carried out within the existing budget.</p> <p>The Netherlands Court of Audit has published its spending on the 2013 Report as open data. "This fits in with our ongoing movement towards transparency and open spending: you can trace what we have done and how much money we spent on our activities." The Netherlands Court of Audit hopes that other (central) government bodies will follow its example.</p>				

Commitment Completion Template	
4 openness in the House of Representatives	
Lead agency	House of Representatives
Additional information	
The House of Representatives is positive about the movement towards more Open Government. As an independent institution, the House of Representatives organizes the evaluation of its projects and activities independently.	

Commitment Completion Template				
5 instruments aimed at integrity				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations		
Other involved actors	Government	Central government, Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG), Interprovincial Consultative Committee (IPO), Dutch Water Authorities (UvW), Dutch National Integrity Office (BIOS)		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	Not applicable		
Main Objective		The ultimate objective is to give Dutch society more insight into the integrity of public administrative organizations.		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Highly relevant	Based on the assumption that integrity in public administration is crucial to secure the trust of citizens, this action point is highly relevant for (the promotion of) civic participation	Highly relevant	
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
			x	
Ambition		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrity Monitor: the Integrity Monitor gauges integrity within public administrative bodies (central government, provinces, municipalities, water boards) once every four years and the findings will be made available to society through various channels, including via an online knowledge database (<i>Kennisbank Directoraat-generaal Bestuur en Koninkrijksrelaties</i>) launched on 1 September 2014. Among other things, the monitor comprises the implementation of the integrity policy within public administration, employee perception of integrity and the number of integrity violations recorded by the organizations themselves. 2. Publication of outside positions: the publication of up-to-date information on outside positions of senior civil servants and public administrators is a statutory requirement under the Municipalities Act (Art. 41b:3 and 67:3), Province Act (Art. 40b:3 and 66:3) and the Water Board Act (Art. 44a:3 and 48:3). This information is available for inspection at the town hall, the provincial government building and the water board office respectively. In view of the statutory nature of this instrument, the principal added value of this action point in the context of Open Government is to promote compliance with this requirement, the sharing of best practices and the streamlining (standardization) of publications. Improvement is necessary because there are currently still too many compliance shortcomings (Integrity Monitor 2012). The target is 90-100% compliance. 3. Registration of integrity violations: all integrity violations are already registered at central government level based on uniform categorization of integrity violations. The action point aims to ensure that other government organizations apply similar registration procedures, the first focus being on municipalities. The goal is to provide better insight into the nature and extent of violations. Together with partners, opportunities for further improvements to the registration of integrity violations (e.g. through adjustments to existing registration systems) will be explored. 		
Description of the results		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The aim of the Integrity Monitor is to provide a periodic snapshot of integrity in public administration. In due course, as more editions of the monitor become available, it will be possible to analyse trends. 2. Thanks to the publication of outside positions, society can remain continuously informed of the outside positions held by senior civil servants and public administrators. This gives citizens better insight into outside positions and possible conflicts of interests. The ultimate aim is to build and consolidate trust in government. 3. The registration of integrity violations should lead to more transparency on and insight into the number and nature of these violations. It is not yet clear how long it will take for the first effects to become visible, how parties outside government will experience the effects of registration and which parties this will concern. 		
End date		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrity Monitor: since 2012, four-yearly, ongoing 2. Publication of outside positions: from mid/end 2014, unknown end date 3. Registration of integrity violations: since 2008, start mid-2013, unknown end date 		

Commitment Completion Template	
5 instruments aimed at integrity	
Next steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrity Monitor: continue current approach 2. Publication of outside positions: raise compliance percentage 3. Registration of integrity violations: ensure that more organizations register integrity violations
Additional information	
<p>A bottom-up approach is deemed to be the most effective approach for some of the action points. As the organizations themselves are responsible for making the changes, support for the initiative at all levels is crucial. However, this does make the ministry largely dependent on the efforts of other parties for the implementation of the action points.</p>	

Commitment Completion Template				
6 renewal of the legislative calendar				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Ministry of Security and Justice		
Other involved actors	Government	The legislative directorates of all other departments		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	Not applicable		
Main Objective		Provide (better) insight into the current phase of upcoming legislation and orders in council.		
Relevance		Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability
		Highly relevant	Relevant insofar as access to legislative information encourages and facilitates civic participation	Highly relevant
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
				Under construction, operational before end of 2014
Ambition		A Legislative Calendar already existed, but was less complete and extensive than envisaged. The principal cause was that the information was delivered manually, which meant that some departments only supplied partial information, while others supplied none at all. In the new Legislative Calendar the data are automatically extracted from the interdepartmental legislation progress system (Kiwi) and systems for the publication of parliamentary papers, announcements and consolidated legislation.		
Description of the results		In 2013 work started on the functional design of the new Legislative Calendar. This provides a detailed description of the operation of the Legislative Calendar, including the built-in search function. The finishing touches were put on the functional design in early 2014. The system is now being built and is due for completion before the end of 2014. This is also the first time that parties outside the government can make use of the Legislative Calendar.		
End date		The Legislative Calendar will be available for online consultation before the end of 2014.		
Next steps		Measurement of the usage and of user wishes. Adjustments to functionality where necessary.		
Additional information				
The realization of the interdepartmental legislation progress system will make it possible to achieve the longstanding wish to provide the public with good and complete information on upcoming legislation. This wish is evident from the existence of commercial products for lobbying activities and the existence of many partial legislative calendars of interest groups in their specific field (e.g. the Netherlands Association of Municipalities (VNG)) and also from the overviews that the Senate and House of Representatives have on their own websites, as well as proposals in the legal literature.				

Commitment Completion Template				
7 Internet Consultation				
Lead agency		Ministry of Security and Justice		
Other involved actors	Government	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)		
Main Objective		The cabinet regards internet consultation as important to promote participation and to provide good and timely information to citizens, businesses and civil society organizations. Moreover, a lot of knowledge is available within society about legislation and policy which is not yet or not yet fully used, particularly in the case of less organized parties.		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Highly relevant	Highly relevant	Relevant when accountability questions need to be answered about the influence of internet consultation on legislation/policies	
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
				x
Ambition		This action point aims to promote the use of internet consultation. Internet consultation has been used since 2009. The first phase from 2009 to 2011 was an experimental phase. In 2011 the pilot was completed and since then internet consultation has become standard practice instead of a project: it is now a structural part of the legislative process. The ambition is to adjust the instrument wherever possible (with limited budget) to the users' wishes.		
Description of the results		<p>In addition to legislation, policy papers and EU regulations are now also consulted via the internet. Another new development is that from now onwards the answers to the seven IAK* questions are also published together with internet consultations, as are the results of impact assessments.</p> <p>Each department has a contact person for internet consultations, who is tasked with raising awareness of the instrument among staff and management. Each department is responsible for embedding the instrument in the departmental legislative process. The Ministry of Security and Justice and the contact persons meet several times a year to share experiences and tips.</p> <p>The assumption is that the quality of and support for legislation will increase. The speed of the legislative process can also be accelerated.</p> <p>The pilot (2009-2011) was evaluated in both quantitative and qualitative terms. House of Representatives 29 279, No 121, 2011.</p> <p>Since the completion of the pilot in 2011, internet consultations are carried out more often on a cross-government basis. During the cross-government experiment, there were 4 consultations per month on average; two years later, the number had risen to 5 per month and since February 2013 there have been 7 internet consultations per month. Since the site became operational, there have been 250 internet consultations in total. These elicited 22,383 reactions from citizens, businesses and institutions. The site receives an average of 800 to 2,000 visitors per day. Experience shows that publicity has a positive effect on the number of visitors. The number of visitors is higher than the number of reactions due to the fact that some visitors are only looking for information on legislation that is under preparation.</p>		
End date		No end date		
Next steps		Ongoing		
Additional information				
*The Comprehensive Assessment Framework (<i>Integraal Afwegingskader, IAK</i>) for policy and regulations comprises 7 principal questions about proposed laws: 1. What is the background? 2. Who are involved? 3. What is the problem? 4. What is the objective? 5. What justifies government intervention? 6. What is the best instrument? 7. What are the consequences?				

Commitment Completion Template				
8 Volgdewet.nl				
Lead agency		Network Democracy (Stichting Netwerk Democratie)		
Other involved actors	Government			
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals			
Main Objective		Making government processes more transparent.		
Relevance		Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability
		Relevant	Relevant	Relevant
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
				Completed
Ambition		The website sets out how current laws are made in order to show how people can influence the legislative process. The open data of the wetten.nl website are used for this purpose.		
Description of the results		A broad audience is introduced to the workings of the general legislative process, the progress of concrete legislative proposals and the opportunities to participate in that process. A further aim is to form networks in order to promote transparency and participation/advocacy in general and particularly in relation to concrete legislative proposals.		
End date		One difference with the Legislative Calendar is that volgdewet.nl also provides background and explanatory information on laws that are under development. Another difference is that a network of researchers and civil society parties has been formed around the online platform.		
Next steps		Not applicable		

Commitment Completion Template					
9 applying the informal approach when handling FOI (Wob) requests					
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations			
Other involved actors	Government	Ministries of Security and Justice, Education, Culture and Science, and Health, Welfare and Sports, the municipalities of Gouda, Pijnacker-Nootdorp and Eemsmond, the province of Noord-Holland and the National ombudsman.			
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	Not applicable			
Main Objective		FOI (Wob) requests are requests to receive information from government organizations pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (<i>Wet openbaarheid van bestuur</i> , Wob). The aim of the action point is to make the handling of FOI requests less burdensome (in terms of time, effort, costs and annoyance) for government, citizens and businesses.			
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability		
	Highly relevant The informal approach to FOI requests means that the requester can rapidly receive the information he is looking for. When there are restrictions on the provision of information, the informal approach also makes it possible to inform the requester of the various interests that are weighed up and to explain the government's procedure for handling the request.	Highly relevant By personally involving citizens in the handling and decision-making process, their FOI requests can be dealt with more quickly and effectively. The informal handling of FOI requests usually gives citizens the feeling that they have been treated more seriously and fairly. The result is a greater sense of satisfaction and more willingness to accept the outcome, particularly when the request cannot be granted (or not granted in full).	Highly relevant With the informal approach to FOI requests, the handler has an informal telephone conversation with the requester, explaining what is and what is not possible and why, as well as the various interests that need to be taken into account and how the selected procedure will take place.		
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed
			X	X	
Ambition		<p>The public interaction skills project entitled the Informal Proactive Approach Model (<i>Prettig Contact Met de Overheid</i>, PCMO) has revealed that informal interventions during government decision-making procedures and the handling of complaints/objections lead to better decisions, to significantly fewer objection/appeal procedures, significantly lower costs, shorter handling times, an increase in the trust and satisfaction of citizens, and greater job satisfaction among civil servants.</p> <p>Opportunities for the informal approach to FOI requests exist in the field of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Active publication (which prevents the need to submit an FOI request) Personal contact with the requester (e.g. to improve the wording of the request and to provide an initial informal reaction) Prevention of 'cramped approach' among government agencies (fear of negative reporting) <p>The desired effects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More active publication of information for which there is a need; Fewer objection and appeal procedures; Less time-consuming procedures for citizens and businesses; Shorter FOI request handling times; Greater satisfaction among citizens; Greater job satisfaction among civil servants; Lower handling costs for government. 			

Commitment Completion Template	
9 applying the informal approach when handling FOI (Wob) requests	
Description of the results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completed research report exploring the opportunities and effects of applying the informal approach to FOI requests - Two completed skills training courses for the participating civil servants - Overview of the FOI request handling procedure with possible informal interventions - Fully developed monitoring system
End date	Started autumn 2013, duration of the pilots and monitoring is one year.
Next steps	Organize monitoring support and plenary peer-to-peer meetings. An interim report will be drawn up after 6 months and a final report after 12 months.

Commitment Completion Template				
10 from rules to flexibility				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG)		
Other involved actors	Government	Government organizations with policy responsibility		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	Citizens, businesses, institutions		
Main Objective		The aim is to give citizens, businesses, institutions and other government agencies an opportunity to suggest ideas or alternatives for improving public services, creating more flexibility for professionals and entrepreneurs, and promoting civic self-reliance.		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Less relevant, though inviting feedback from society obviously calls for a certain degree of transparency	Highly relevant	Highly relevant; a government that is willing to listen to society's needs and adjust its working method to these needs is de facto an accountable government	
Completion level	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed
				x, when project is completed, but approach will be applied where necessary and possible by the Regulatory Burden team
Ambition		The intention is that the suggested ideas/alternatives are tried out in pilots. If the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations issues a positive opinion on the request, it is developed further into a business case in consultation with the submitter. Subject to certain conditions, temporary departures from laws and regulations are possible, either in the form of a pilot in implementation or an immediate legal amendment. The elaborated business case is then transferred with a recommendation via the departmental regulatory burden coordinator to the organization that is responsible for policy (ministry, municipality or province). The pilot is used to assess what the consequences would be if a rule were amended or abolished. The ambition is that successful pilots should lead to structural regulatory adjustments. The original ambition was to perform about 30 experiments per year.		
Description of the results		The ambition to perform about 30 experiments a year has been gradually scaled down to 10-15 because many requests failed to satisfy the criteria; either because it was not based on a regulatory obstacle and/or because it contained no alternative. Examples of experiments that are still ongoing: lost travel documents (citizens no longer need to report the loss to both the police <i>and</i> the municipality, but only to the municipality. In case of suspected fraud, the police is involved); home delivery of travel documents (citizens can choose to have the travel documents sent to their home address or collect them at the town hall). Examples of completed experiments that have led or will lead to policy adjustments: automated exemption from municipal tax and water levies and automated income assessment for income support purposes.		
End date		Started spring 2012, ended June 2014.		
Next steps		Continue applying the From Rules to Flexibility (<i>Van Regels Naar Ruimte</i>) approach where necessary and/or possible in order to achieve a visible reduction of regulatory pressure.		
Additional information				
It was not possible to indicate in advance what requests would be submitted, whether these requests would fit within the project, whether these requests would lead to pilots and what the qualitative and quantitative effects of these experiments would be. The main thing is to listen to the needs of businesses and citizens, to assess whether requests are justified and then to see whether government organizations are prepared to experiment with solutions.				

Commitment Completion Template				
11 change in attitude and working method via smarter working practices and Ambtenaar 2.0				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations		
Other involved actors	Government	Slimmernetwerk ¹		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	Stichting Nederland Kennisland, the Kafkabrigade and the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research TNO		
Main Objective		Achieve more with fewer people, while maintaining quality of services and job enjoyment. Increase the innovative capability of professionals working for the government.		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Not directly relevant	Highly relevant because government professionals learn to tailor solutions more to social issues and needs	Relevant because it helps government to achieve more with fewer people; government is thus de facto accountable for what it can do for society with fewer public resources (value creation)	
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
				Almost completed
Ambition		<p>The trigger was the dilemma that the public sector wants to deliver quality to citizens, but that its available resources are steadily shrinking. This is why innovations in work processes and the resolution of social issues are necessary. The objectives for 2014 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase social impact/public value; – Action research into how public value can be increased by the various parts of the action plan (value creation); – Use the Slimmernetwerk on a more permanent basis by developing and offering modules, such as standardization of <i>Doetanks</i> (multidisciplinary group of innovators). <p>The Slimmernetwerk consists of four components: an online community of innovative professionals, <i>Doetanks</i> (new forms of collaborating or organizing), Slimmernetwerk Café events (network get-togethers) and a knowledge portal (connection between research and practice).</p> <p>The project forms part of the Innovation by Professionals subsidy programme that falls within the Better Working Practices in Public Administration programme. It is therefore not a new Open Government action point, but there is a clear connection with the Open Government principles, particularly the quality of service and innovation within the public sector.</p>		
Description of the results		<p>The Slimmernetwerk network has over 4,000 members and about 30 <i>Doetank</i> meetings were held.</p> <p>Based on the 2014 implementation plan, work on the design and development of Social R&D Labs started in 2014. This can be seen as a further development of the <i>Doetank</i> model based on lessons learned in 2012-2013. The aim is to solve social issues via social design (prototyping), such as the problem of long-term income support claimants.</p> <p>Other sectors and employers (e.g. central government, Association of Dutch Municipalities) have already used – or are planning to use – methods from Slimmernetwerk in order to find innovative solution strategies for issues or bottlenecks in their organization and services, and they intend to continue using these methods. Consultation is held 2-3 times per year with the subsidy provider (the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations), leading to adjustments to the programme.</p> <p>Reports and articles have appeared in digital and printed media and scientific literature (or are under preparation). Most recently, for instance, in PM magazine: http://www.pm.nl/zoeken/results/slimmernetwerk</p>		
End date		2010-2014; subsidy runs from December 2011 to December 2014		
Next steps		A closing public administrator meeting for the Better Working Practices in Public Administration programme is being prepared. This is taking place in cooperation with the Association for Public Management (VOM) and the Association of Municipal Secretaries (VGS). Innovation by public administration professionals (incl. benefits and lessons learned from Slimmernetwerk) will also be touched on in this meeting.		

1 A network of innovators within central government, provincial and municipal authorities, water boards and police.

Commitment Completion Template

11 change in attitude and working method via smarter working practices and *Ambtenaar 2.0*

Additional information

Subsidy is provided in conjunction with the Better Working Practices in Public Administration programme. This programme will terminate at the end of 2014. The accountability report on the subsidy must be received by the end of March 2015. The intention is to create lasting, permanent improvements. Therefore, after the subsidy relationship ends, the achieved progress is to be consolidated and maintained by making the Slimmernetwerk methods, benefits and infrastructure available for free in order to support professionals in their aspirations to achieve smarter working practices and/or to encourage consortium partners to team up with other public employers so that they can jointly use these instruments for the resolution of bottlenecks in the organization of labour and/or social issues.

Commitment Completion Template		
12 Water Coalition		
Lead agency	Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment	
Other involved actors	Government	Municipalities, water boards and drinking water companies
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	The Water Coalition is a body comprising public and private parties and civil society organizations aimed at organizing the water chain (consisting of drinking water, sewers and water treatment) in a more sustainable way in order to anticipate changing climate conditions
Additional information		
Consultation is being held with the Water Coalition to ascertain whether the connection with the Open Government programme is still sufficiently strong to continue including the Water Coalition as an action point in the Open Government Action Plan.		

Commitment Completion Template				
13 developing and implementing participation policy				
Lead agency	Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, Participation directorate			
Other involved actors	Government	See above		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 1,800 contacts on the members' domain of the consultative platforms; In principle everyone via www.platformparticipatie.nl, where ideas and suggestions on current issues can be contributed 		
Main Objective	<p>Involve citizens, civil society organizations and businesses in government policy. Seek cooperation with parties in society in the policy field of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. Facilitate social initiatives where appropriate and expedient.</p>			
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Transparency and accessibility of information are perceived in this action point as key enablers of participation	Highly relevant; this is the essence and central purpose of this action point	Participation also involves being accountable to the participating parties about what the government does with their input. A good participation policy is therefore also highly relevant for public accountability	
Completion level	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed
			Continuous process	
Ambition	The directorate actively seeks to promote an energetic society, transparent government and the use of social media by the government with a view to encouraging participation.			
Description of the results	The directorate offers its services within its own ministry and to other ministries, decentralized authorities, civil society organizations and citizens. It advises on ways to involve citizens, civil society organizations and businesses, and develops a participation policy for this purpose. Within government, efforts are undertaken to create awareness of the various roles and ways of involving society or connecting with initiatives. This is then translated into e.g. different behaviour, including more transparency. Various pilot projects have been underway since early 2014, such as 1. Climate Agenda and the Utrecht Station Area and 2. the <i>Duurzaam Doen</i> sustainability programme			
End date	No specific end date; pilot projects started 1-1-2014.			
Next steps	Continue developing and deploying the vision on participation policy, in the first instance within the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment.			
Additional information				
Knowledge transfer is taking place within the Active Democracy (<i>Doe-Democratie</i>) programme of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. Further opportunities for creating synergy are being explored.				

Commitment Completion Template				
14 accessible and findable government information				
Lead agency		Information Council (communication directors of central government, supported by Ministry of General Affairs), Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG)		
Other involved actors	Government			
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals			
Main Objective		The publication of information must be communicated in a clear and accessible manner, so that citizens and stakeholders are genuinely able to independently form their own opinions and make their own decisions.		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Highly relevant; this is the essence and central purpose of this action point	Highly relevant; the citizen needs sufficient information to be able to participate	Indirectly; accountability information must also be accessible	
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
				x
Ambition		Active publication goes beyond simply providing access to data. This action point is aimed at three characteristics of information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicative accessibility: government information must enable citizens and other stakeholders to independently form their own opinions and make their own decisions 2. Context dependence: government information must link up closely with the situation or environment in which citizens and other stakeholders find themselves 3. Findability: government information must be easy to find via search engines, e.g. by means of demand-driven website design. 		
Description of the results		<p>This action point is approached along three tracks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context approach: research into the way in which information links up with the context or environment in which citizens or stakeholders act. This track was taken in hand with the research project on tailor-made information (<i>informatie op maat</i>), in which the Ministry of General Affairs/Information Council and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations were involved. The research was contracted out in 2014. The results with concrete building blocks for a government vision on recipient-friendly communication will be delivered in October 2014. - Communicative accessibility: this track is taken on board in the tailor-made information research - Top tasks: the Netherlands is following Liverpool's example by introducing the top task approach. This involves identifying which products and services are frequently searched on government websites and the search terms used for this purpose. These products and services are then given a prominent position on the website (i.e. a more demand-driven than supply-driven approach). - New: pilot projects for active publication of reports (<i>proefproject actieve openbaarheid</i>). In response to intentions set out in the Open Government Action Plan and a motion of the House of Representatives, the Ministries of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Education, Culture and Science are currently starting up pilot projects to see whether research reports promised to the House of Representatives can be sent to the House as quickly as is reasonably possible (these are already automatically published on www.rijksoverheid.nl) and whether other research reports can be actively made public as quickly as is reasonably possible (via publication on www.rijksoverheid.nl) 		
End date		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tailor-made information (<i>informatie op maat</i>): 2014-2015 - Active publication trial project (<i>proefproject actieve openbaarheid</i>): 2014-2015 and, if successful, structural embedment 		
Next steps		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tailor-made information (<i>informatie op maat</i>): The study is due for completion in October 2014. Vision on government communication will then be developed on the basis of the presented building blocks. - Active publication trial project (<i>proefproject actieve openbaarheid</i>): implementation at end of 2014, evaluation at start of 2015 		
Additional information				

Commitment Completion Template				
15 reinforce citizen's information position				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations		
Other involved actors	Government	Ministries of Economic Affairs, Social Affairs and Employment, Infrastructure and the Environment, Finance and implementing agencies		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals			
Main Objective		<p>Citizens can currently view certain basic databases via mijn.overheid.nl and other internet portals. The aim of this action point is to improve the citizen's right to view and correct data.</p> <p>There are two other portals at the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · www.platformparticipatie.nl (accessible for everyone); · Members' domain for consultation (accessible for members' only). 		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Highly relevant; this action point aims to establish a more reciprocal information relationship between citizens and government	Indirectly relevant; if citizens trust government to handle their details carefully and securely, this may benefit the relationship with the government (and hence improve participation)	Enable citizens to view, check and correct their details and to see which authorities have access to these details. Highly relevant for government accountability to citizens	
Completion level	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed
			x	
Ambition		Access and correction will improve the quality of databases, with positive knock-on effects such as fewer incorrect direct debits. Access to data flows has positive effects for checking and archiving data, as well as the use of data as evidence.		
Description of the results				
End date		2013-2019 (and beyond)		
Next steps				
Additional information				
A business case developed for this action point shows that the costs are greater than the benefits. For this reason, other possible benefits such as the social value of increased transparency for the citizen and increased civic trust in government are also being assessed.				

Commitment Completion Template				
16 open announcements and notices				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations		
Other involved actors	Government	Central government, provinces, municipalities and water boards		
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals			
Main Objective		Improvement of digital services by the government by exclusively offering official publications in digital form.		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	Highly relevant; on the one hand this will improve the digital services; the key question, however, is whether non-computer-literate citizens will retain sufficient access to official publications	Highly relevant; citizens can only participate on an equal basis if they have access to the required information (such as official publications)	Highly relevant; the government accounts for its actions through e.g. official publications, so accessibility to these publications is highly relevant	
Completion level		Not started	Limited	Substantial
			x	
Ambition		As a result of a legal amendment, official publications will exclusively be announced via digital channels with effect from 2017. The ambition is to improve the accessibility of official publications and reduce the administrative costs for citizens and businesses via e.g. a better search functionality and tailor-made subscriptions.		
Description of the results		An introductory memorandum was made at the end of 2013 and sent to the administrative costs assessment committee. A draft regulation was prepared in August 2014.		
End date		2017		
Next steps		This will be followed by interdepartmental discussions and consultation. The Bill for the new legislation will be sent to the House of Representatives at the start of 2015.		
Additional information				

Commitment Completion Template				
17 public services and the user's perspective				
Lead agency		Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG) and Quality Institute of Dutch Municipalities (KING)		
Other involved actors	Government			
	CSO, Private, working groups, multilaterals			
Main Objective		Improvement of municipal services based on the user's needs. This should increase the trust and confidence in government.		
Relevance	Transparency and Access to information	Civic Participation	Public accountability	
	It is highly relevant for transparency that municipalities are open about what citizens and businesses can expect in terms of services	If the services are tailored more to the user's perspective, this is also expected to encourage participation	Municipalities that are prepared to carry out client research, critically assess their performance and make relevant adjustments are de facto working on public accountability	
Completion level	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Completed
			x	
Ambition		<p>The ambition is to create a better understanding among municipalities of the needs of citizens and businesses regarding all of the government's service processes, including the online communication with public implementing agencies, and to provide transparency and openness about what citizens and businesses can expect from public organizations.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage client research by public organizations – A digital catalogue with descriptions of instruments to gain insight into the needs (or search behaviour) of users of digital services – A sounding board group (<i>Gebruikers eOverheid</i>) consisting of representatives of organizations with insight into user experiences – Promote the use of client-focused service standards <p>A parallel programme is Services 2017 (<i>Dienstverlening 2017</i>), which is aimed at the intensification of online public services.</p> <p>The four actions are communicated via an interactive platform where municipalities can respond or ask questions.</p> <p>Expected effects are: fast procedures, short waiting times, limited handling times, clarity about deadlines for submitting reactions, transparency about this via service standards, greater acceptance of decisions.</p>		
Description of the results		The platform has been operational since mid-2013. The Quality Institute of Dutch Municipalities (KING) organizes various meetings and supports the efforts of municipalities to improve their services.		
End date		2013-2017		
Next steps		Continue to organize interactive learning sessions, facilitate learning communities, maintain online platform, offer practical assistance to municipalities.		
Additional information				



Published by:

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
www.minbzk.nl

November 2014

