The OECD Council adopted on 15 July 2014 the Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies. The Recommendation provides a set of 12 principles structured around 3 pillars. The OECD Secretariat is developing a Digital Government Policy Toolkit to support OECD member countries and non-member adhering countries with the implementation of the Recommendation. This practice was submitted by the government of Finland to be considered as a good practice in the implementation of one or more of the principles contained in the Recommendation.

**Description of the practice:**

**Organisation:** Ministry of Finance

**Name of the practice:** Open Data Programme (17 May 2003 – 30 June 2015)

**Principles implemented:**

- **Principle 1** – Ensure greater transparency, openness and inclusiveness in government processes and operations
- **Principle 2** – Encourage engagement and participation of public, private and civil society stakeholders in policy making and public service design and delivery

**Description:**

The Open Data Programme, led by the Ministry of Finance has been working on eliminating obstacles to the re-use of public data and creating the preconditions for making data open within the public administration. Ministries, government agencies, municipalities, enterprises, NGO’s, various organisations developing the sector and citizen bodies were collaborating in the implementation of the programme.

The aim was to make all significant public administration data available to citizens, enterprises and society as a whole in machine-readable format, free of charge and under clear terms of use.

**Examples of open public data resources**

- Environmental Information Resources have been available free of charge since 2008
- Helsinki Region cities and municipalities have an open data portal, [www.hri.fi](http://www.hri.fi), since 2011, since that many municipalities have started opening data
- Topographic data made available on 1 May 2012: The National Land Survey (NLS) has made its topographic datasets available to the public and to companies to be used freely and free of charge
Digital government toolkit

- The weather and climate data by the Finnish Meteorological Institute since 2013
- Digitraffic, real time and historical information and data about the traffic on the Finnish main roads.

No business case was prepared for the Open Data Programme.

The management of the Programme was organised in

- A steering group led by the political State Secretary to the Minister responsible for public management (Ministry of Finance) with representatives from ministries, government agencies, municipalities, NGO’s and organisations developing the sector
- A coordinating group with representatives from essential ministries working with the issues related to open data (Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Justice)

A secretariat (including a programme manager) working at the Ministry of Finance.


More detailed information in Finnish [http://vm.fi/avointieto](http://vm.fi/avointieto)

**Results**

1) Systematic, gradual opening of information resources in accordance with the related needs, policies and central government decisions on spending limits
2) National open data portal covering also interoperability tools ([www.avointieto.fi](http://www.avointieto.fi)) See also [https://www.avointieto.fi/en/about](https://www.avointieto.fi/en/about)
3) JulkICTLab, a platform for the development of open data based services [http://julkictlab.fi/en/](http://julkictlab.fi/en/)
7) Pilot projects including the opening up of state financial data and other specified data resources
8) Open Data Handbook with related online courses (first version will online in the end of the year)
9) Measures for enhancing democracy in collaboration with the open government project (international Open Government Partnership initiative)
Digital government toolkit

2) The Open data policy: key goals and further actions 2015-2020

**Development**

**Design:** Conceptual work: drafting the goals, actions, preconditions and engaging the collaborating ministries and other actors for the Open Data Programme 1-5/2013

**Stakeholders:** They were involved in drafting the goals, actions and preconditions for the Programme as well as participating in the different action points in the Programme (see F. Results)

**Testing:** Testing was not done, but certain actors on the field of open data were asked to comment on the drafted programme

**Implementation:** The Open Data Programme was launched in May 2013

- National open data portal covering also interoperability tools ([wwwavoindata.fi](http://wwwavoindata.fi)) See also [https://wwwavoindatafi/en/about](https://wwwavoindatafi/en/about) - launched in September 2014

The instrument for funding public sector organisations in opening up data by covering for the income they will lose when they give data free-of-charge and to open up large or otherwise demanding data resources (the central government budget). Open data was as a part of government budgeting process. Proposals collected and decisions were made as a part of budgeting process. Many public sector organisations opened up their data resources without extra funding.

**Resources:** The budget for the Programme was very moderate – around 250 000 Euros. There was one programme manager for the Programme and other civil servants to give the substantial expertise. About 3 – 6 million Euros per year were reserved for extra funding (see above)

**Diffusion and scaling:** During the Programme period:


The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities ([http://wwwlocalfinlandfi/en/association/Pages/default.aspx](http://wwwlocalfinlandfi/en/association/Pages/default.aspx)

has been promoting open data issues in municipalities (General guidelines for municipalities) as well as The Six City Strategy – Open and Smart Services [http://6aikafin/in-english/](http://6aikafin/in-english/)
Open Finland event in September 2014 focusing on open data and its uses

Participating in Apps4Finland, now Open Finland Challenge http://openfinlandchallenge.fi/en/ and contests with challenges on open data

Organizing Open Data Support Training by the EU in Finland

Meet ups, seminars and communication (press releases, other information) on open data with public sector organizations.

Even after opening up extensive information resources, the Finnish public sector still has a lot of unopened data that should be opened in order to benefit various actors in society.

Opening up information resources, taking user needs into account, and monitoring the effectiveness of opening are not yet part of the everyday activity of the Finnish public authorities.

**Partnerships:** Private Sector, Civil Society, Academics and Research Bodies and Public Sector Organisations


Open Knowledge Finland http://fi.okfn.org/, Creative Commons Finland http://creativecommons.fi/,

The Six City Strategy – Open and Smart Services http://6aika.fi/in-english/

Nature of the partnership:

**Lessons learned**

A good start has been made in Finland regarding the opening of information resources, as confirmed by international comparisons. However, much work remains to be done and the opening of information resources is not yet part of the everyday activity of all central government agencies and municipalities.

Open data must become an integral part of the public sector’s performance management, innovative administration culture and new operating practices.

As a follow-up to the Finnish Open Data Programme, the utilisation of public sector information resources will be improved through the following actions, with the goal of boosting public sector productivity and using information effectively in society:

1) Continuing support for the systematic opening up of information resources to ensure all significant public information resources are available to society as a whole by the end of the decade, in machine-readable format, free of charge and under clear terms of use.
2) Plan a common model for the production, management and services of key basic information resources. The objective is to make basic information resources available free of charge to public authorities, ensure efficient flows of information between local and central government, and utilise information widely in society, taking the limitations of legislation into account.

3) Enhance information skills by establishing a cross-sectoral national information skills programme. Diverse skills in the production, dissemination, opening up, analysis and utilisation of information are required to operate and prosper in the digital information environment.

The programme of the Finnish Government formed in May 2015 includes the objective of creating favourable conditions for new business ideas with the aid of open data and better utilisation of information resources. The Government Programme also seeks to strengthen knowledge-based decision-making and openness.

What worked well:

The Open Data Programme involved the key actors in open data in Finland (Open Knowledge Finland http://fi.okfn.org/, Creative Commons Finland http://creativecommons.fi/, The Six City Strategy – Open and Smart Services http://6aika.fi/in-english/ and others) which has given the Programme a wider perspective.


What worked less well:

More resources and will be needed to give the ministries, agencies and local authorities enough support in opening up data.

Conditions required:

In the future, open data will be an absolute prerequisite for local and central government steering and operational transparency. Openness of data strengthens democracy through empowerment and creates conditions for civic engagement. The principles of open science and research will benefit society extensively.

In the future, the development emphasis will shift from the opening up of information resources to utilizing the data and enhancing information skills within the whole public sector. The opening up
and utilization of information resources and the enhancement of information skills should be taken into account when formulating a unified national data policy and drafting legislation based on it.

Additional information: Open data in future: key goals and further actions 2015-2020